



The Book of Illusions: A Novel

Paul Auster

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A man's obsession with a silent-film star sends him on a journey into a shadow world of lies, illusions, and unexpected love

Six months after losing his wife and two young sons in an airplane crash, Vermont professor David Zimmer spends his waking hours mired in a blur of alcoholic grief and self-pity. Then, watching television one night, he stumbles upon a clip from a lost silent film by comedian Hector Mann. Zimmer's interest is piqued, and he soon finds himself embarking on a journey around the world to research a book on this mysterious figure, who vanished from sight in 1929 and has been presumed dead for sixty years.

When the book is published the following year, a letter turns up in Zimmer's mailbox bearing a return address from a small town in New Mexico—supposedly written by Hector's wife. "Hector has read your book and would like to meet you. Are you interested in paying us a visit?" Is the letter a hoax, or is Hector Mann still alive? Torn between doubt and belief, Zimmer hesitates, until one night a strange woman appears on his doorstep and makes the decision for him, changing his life forever.

This stunning novel plunges the reader into a universe in which the comic and the tragic, the real and the imagined, the violent and the tender dissolve into one another. With *The Book of Illusions*, one of America's most powerful and original writers has written his richest, most emotionally charged work yet.

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