



The Great Lover: A Novel

By Jill Dawson

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“A brilliant, complicated man is the centre of Jill Dawson’s *The Great Lover*, and while she draws extensively on historical records of Brooke and his contemporaries, it is her decisions as a novelist that make this account of his life fascinating as well as faithful. . . . The story that emerges is strong, satisfying, and memorable.” — *The Times* (London)

An imaginative, fascinating novel about one of the most enduringly popular and romantic figures of the First World War—the radical, handsome young poet Rupert Brooke.

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The Great Lover: A Novel By Jill Dawson Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Dawson (*Trick of Light*) adroitly weaves together fact and fiction in this artful account of British poet Rupert Brooke's mental breakdown in the years before WWI. Boyishly handsome, Brooke arrives in Grantchester, England, and quickly begins a series of tangled romances. He woos a reserved schoolgirl, loses his virginity to a male friend, and flirts shamelessly with numerous women. Observing these ill-advised exploits is a no-nonsense housemaid, Nell Golightly, who, recently orphaned, thinks of herself as immune to love. Then one fateful evening she comes across Brooke naked, on his way for a night swim. Their subsequent relationship is complicated by class and Brooke's bisexuality. For Nell, the relationship poignantly marks the boundary between childhood and adulthood, while for Brooke, Nell provides a counterpoint to his other sexually confusing relationships. Finally, insecure about his poetry, grappling with his brother's death, and shattered by his failed affairs, Brooke begins to come undone, eventually finding solace with a Tahitian woman. Burrowing deep inside Brooke's mind, Nell is a capable narrator, and the result is a believable, sensitive portrayal of a great lover's search for love. (*June*)

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Review

Moving, intelligent, beautifully written and hugely enjoyable Sunday Times Dawson brilliantly evokes Brooke's volatility, his inner dissolution and ultimate breakdown. Independent Strong, satisfying and memorable Helen Dunmore, The Times Not only engaging and seductive, it is also clever, witty and artfully designed Times Literary Supplement An exceptional book even from the prize-winning Dawson - clever, moving, sexy and with a mesmerising feel for that magical, optimistic, but doomed time just before the Great War Daily Mail Nell is a wonderful creation: resilient, intelligent and heart-breakingly innocent ...

[Dawson]manages not only an impressive evocation of Brooke's milieu but a compelling reassessment of a poet often dismissed by modern readers ... most of all, her novel digs Brooke out of that corner of a foreign field that is forever cliché Time Out Jill Dawson has created a convincing world of huge pathos; a subtle, evocative anti-fairy-tale of doomed youth by one of Britain's most subtle and accomplished writers Liz Jensen, Waterstone's Books Quarterly The Great Lover has many wonderful scenes ... But it is remarkable principally for its Rupert Brooke, glorious in all his agony and shame, particularly as he sees his sanity slipping away from him ... this novel shows a rare mastery of materials. Dawson has worked the imaginary character of Nell so seamlessly into the narrative of Brooke's life that Nell seems to belong there. It is difficult to see where the many direct quotations from letters and memories end and Dawson's imagination begins. Daily Telegraph

From the Back Cover

In 1909, sixteen-year-old Nell Golightly is a housemaid at a popular tea garden near Cambridge University, and Rupert Brooke, a new tenant, is already causing a stir with his boyish good looks and habit of swimming naked in nearby Byron's Pool. Despite her good sense, Nell seems to be falling under the radical young poet's spell, even though Brooke apparently adores no one but himself. Could he ever love a housemaid? Is he, in fact, capable of love at all?

Jill Dawson's *The Great Lover* imaginatively and playfully gives new voice to Rupert Brooke through the poet's own words and through the remembrances of the spirited Nell. An extraordinary novel, it powerfully conveys the allure of charisma as it captures the mysterious and often perverse workings of the human heart.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ryan Calhoun:

Book is to be different for every grade. Book for children until finally adult are different content. As it is known to us that book is very important usually. The book *The Great Lover: A Novel* has been making you to know about other knowledge and of course you can take more information. It is rather advantages for you. The book *The Great Lover: A Novel* is not only giving you far more new information but also to become your friend when you really feel bored. You can spend your own personal spend time to read your publication. Try to make relationship with the book *The Great Lover: A Novel*. You never sense lose out for everything if you read some books.

Susan Gagnon:

As people who live in the actual modest era should be change about what going on or info even knowledge to make all of them keep up with the era which is always change and move forward. Some of you maybe will certainly update themselves by examining books. It is a good choice for you but the problems coming to you is you don't know what type you should start with. This *The Great Lover: A Novel* is our recommendation to make you keep up with the world. Why, as this book serves what you want and wish in this era.

Andrew Nixon:

Are you kind of busy person, only have 10 or 15 minute in your day to upgrading your mind expertise or thinking skill possibly analytical thinking? Then you are having problem with the book than can satisfy your short space of time to read it because this time you only find guide that need more time to be learn. The *Great Lover: A Novel* can be your answer as it can be read by an individual who have those short spare time problems.

Heather Lanham:

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