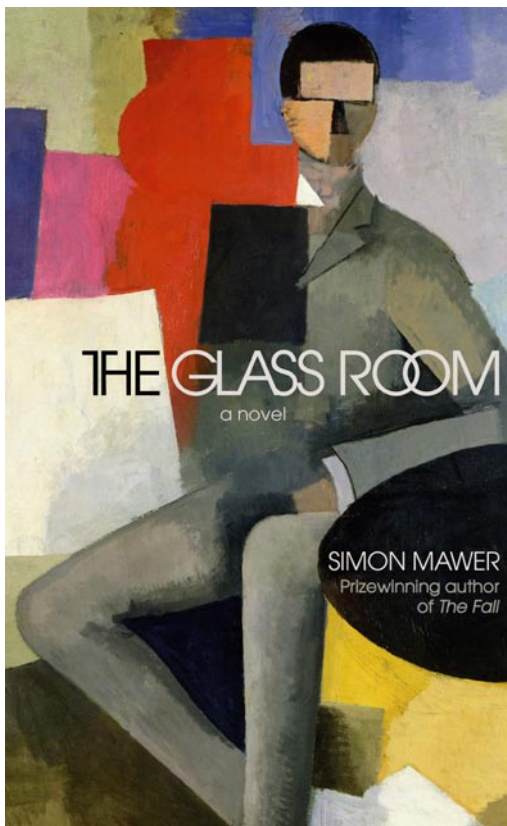


Reader's Guide



Other books by Simon Mawer

Chimera (1989)
The Bitter Cross (1992)
A Jealous God (1996)
Mendel's Dwarf (1997)
The Gospel of Judas (2000)
The Fall (2003)
Swimming to Ithaca (2006)

The Glass Room Simon Mawer

Published by Little, Brown
Price £16.99

www.themanbookerprize.com

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About the author

Simon Mawer was born in 1948 in England, and spent his childhood there, in Cyprus and in Malta. He now lives with his wife and two children in Italy, and teaches at the English School in Rome. *Mendel's Dwarf* was unofficially longlisted for the Booker Prize in 1998 and he is also the author of *The Fall* for which he won The Boardman Tasker Award.

The Glass Room

High on a Czechoslovak hill, the Landauer House shines as a marvel of steel, glass and onyx. Built specially for newlyweds Viktor and Liesel Landauer, a Jew married to a gentile, it is one of the wonders of modernist architecture. But the radiant honesty and idealism of 1930 that the house seems to engender quickly tarnishes as the storm clouds of World War Two gather. Eventually, as Nazi troops enter the country, the family, accompanied by Viktor's lover Kata and her child Marika, must flee.

Yet the family's exile does not signify the end of this spectacular building. It slips from hand to hand, from Czech to Nazi to Soviet and finally back to the Czechoslovak state, the crystalline perfection of the Glass Room always exerting a gravitational pull on those who know it. It becomes a laboratory, a shelter from the storm of war, and a place where the broken and the ruined find some kind of comfort, until with the collapse of Communism, the Landauers are finally drawn back to where their story began.

Discussion points

Would you describe *The Glass Room* as a historical novel?

Would you agree that 'a few dark corners and dead ends' (Philip Olterman, *The Times*) would have improved the *The Glass Room*?

In what ways do you think the house mirrors the history of the time?

Is the Landauer House the most important character in Simon Mawer's novel?

Do you agree that the ending of *The Glass Room* is 'infinitely moving'?

Themed reading

Buddenbrooks Thomas Mann
Spies Michael Fryan
Tender is the Night F Scott Fitzgerald

Useful links

www.themanbookerprize.com
www.simonmawer.com
www.littlebrown.co.uk