



Solar

By Ian McEwan

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A best-selling work of wit from the Booker Prize-winning author, *Solar* brilliantly traces the arc of a Nobel Prize-winning physicist's ambitions and self-deception.

Dr. Michael Beard's best work is behind him. Trading on his reputation, he speaks for enormous fees, lends his name to the letterheads of renowned scientific institutions, and halfheartedly heads a government-backed initiative tackling global warming. Meanwhile, Michael's fifth marriage is floundering due to his incessant womanizing. When his professional and personal worlds collide in a freak accident, an opportunity presents itself for Michael to extricate himself from his marital problems, reinvigorate his career, and save the world from environmental disaster. But can a man who has made a mess of his life clean up the messes of humanity?

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Solar By Ian McEwan Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In the afterglow of winning a Nobel Prize, Michael Beard lives a dismal life marked by multiple marriages, figurehead positions, and his own gluttony. However, after his most recent wife leaves him, Beard attempts to start living life to the fullest. He stumbles into this new life with a great deal of fanfare and catastrophe: covering up murder, nearly losing his penis to frostbite, and devising a plan to harness the power of the sun to save the planet. Roger Allam's English accent and gravelly voice balances a range of characters and emotions, especially Beard's arrogance and self-righteousness. More importantly, Allam's straightforward delivery of Beard's zany adventures enhances the humorous quality of McEwan's text. A Doubleday hardcover (Reviews, Feb. 1).

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Critics expressed decidedly mixed opinions about McEwan's latest work--and perhaps it's no surprise that he was better-reviewed on his UK home front. While most critics on either side of the pond praised the author's intelligent plot (especially his command of science) and ample storytelling gifts, the majority agreed that *Solar* is not his best novel to date. A few commented that the several narrative strands, which take place over more than a decade, do not cohere; Beard's jaunt to the North Pole, for example is interesting but tangential. Tired jokes, a rushed climax, and Beard's own piggish character felt claustrophobic to others. But most contentious of all was the satirical, comic tone superimposed on the very serious subject of climate change. Though *Solar* is a worthy inquiry into truth, morality, and the future of humanity, some critics could not get past McEwan's approach.

From [Booklist](#)

Customarily, McEwan's novels spring from a catastrophic incident in someone's life, either a calamity that causes physical distress or a psychological trespass that causes emotional instability. For instance, in *Enduring Love* (1998), a man plunges to his death from a balloon, and in the aftermath, one witness continues to menace another witness. On *Chesil Beach* (2007) centers on an emotionally devastating wedding night. In his new novel, McEwan outdoes himself in terms of catastrophic occurrences. The protagonist, physicist Michael Beard, won a Nobel Prize several years ago and has been resting on his laurels ever since. A serial cheater, he is now married to his fifth wife, who leads a totally separate life, indicating her complete disdain for his wandering eye. His lack of effort in applying himself to either career or fidelity only increases our dislike of him. Even he says of himself, "No one loved him." An accidental death in which he was involved and which he covered up, a politically incorrect statement aired before a professional audience, and his usurpation of the research of a deceased colleague: readers are taxed to even care about these crises. This draggy novel stands in stark contrast to its many beautiful predecessors, but McEwan is regarded as a major contemporary British novelist, so expect demand on that basis. --Brad Hooper

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Shane Bodine:

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Melissa Kim:

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