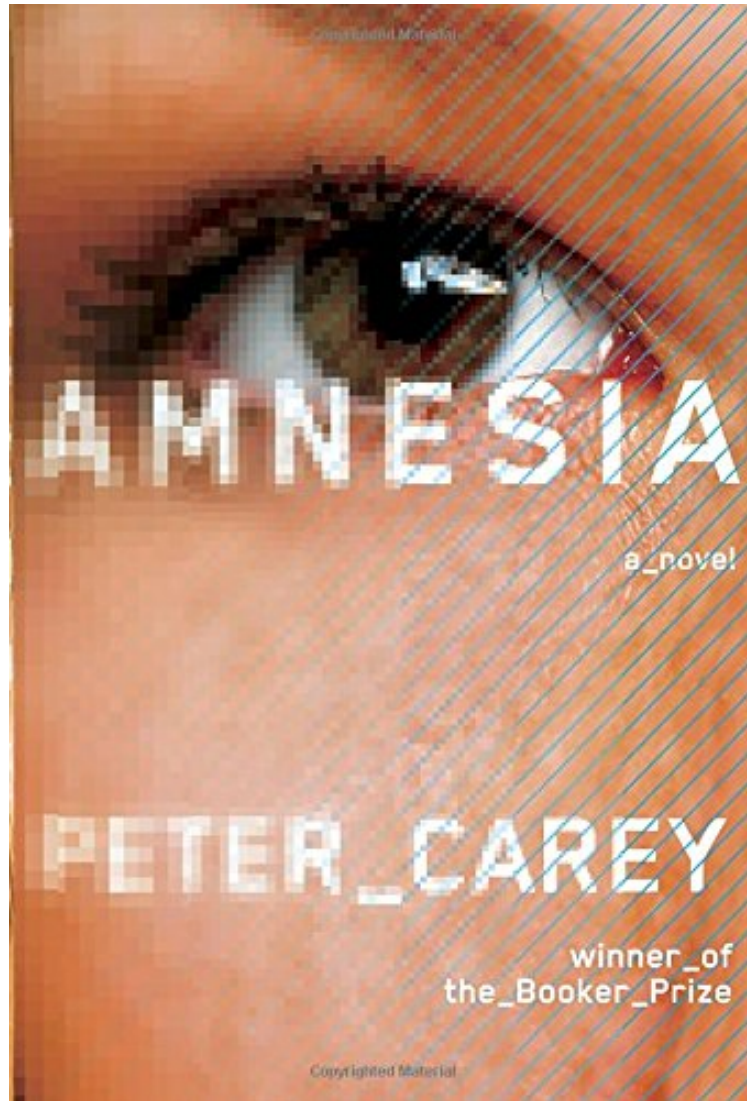


[Free] Amnesia: A novel

Amnesia: A novel

Peter Carey

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#781519 in Books 2015-01-13 2015-01-13 Format: Deckle Edge Original language: English PDF # 1 9.49 x 1.09 x 6.59l, 1.25 #File Name: 0385352778320 pages Signed First Edition | File size: 64.Mb

Peter Carey : Amnesia: A novel before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Amnesia: A novel:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Without Memory By prisrob 'Amnesia' is a difficult book to put together that makes sense. The first third of the novel sounded promising like most of the Carey novels I have read. I am a Peter Carey fan, and understand most of his Australian words and terms. However, the middle third of this novel is a mish-mash, that does not hang together. The last third gave me the answers I was looking for, and is the kind of novel I expected. Felix Moore, a journalist, has just finished a trial that he lost, sued for defamation. His entire career

was down the toilet, he had spent all his money on the trial, his wife wanted him out of the house after a careless fire. His biggest friend, Woody Townes, a millionaire of nefarious means, offers him a job writing a positive biography of a young girl, Gaby Baillieux, an activist who hacked into the Australian penal systems computer network in order to free migrants. The computer virus spread to dozens of American prisons, and the US government wanted to extradite Gaby and put her on trial. Felix knows Gaby's mother, Celine, from his college days. Celine does not trust Woody, says he works for the CIA, and ships Felix to the dense forest in a hidden conclave to write the book. As Felix listens to the tapes he comes to understand Celine's background, and he enters the political fray of 1975, when the Australian Prime Minister was ousted with the help of the CIA. All of this comes to the fore, when he enters the computer/digital world of security leaks vis a vis, Snowden. Frederick, Gaby's boyfriend is the computer genius, and we see the level of intelligence it takes to enter this world. Much of the recordings of Gaby and Celine are too much, and the resultant conversations on the page bog this novel down. The politics, the Battle of Brisbane in 1942 and the 1975 interference by the US are all part of this novel that bear reference to the 'Amnesia' of the title. This is too bad, this novel could have been great, as is the last third of the novel. Recommended. prisrob 01-17-151 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Remembering Amnesia By Chris Morrow Peter Carey has delivered again. This book is essential reading and the story will prevent revisionism from forgetting the Brisbane battles. My "Uncle Stan" said that he learnt everything he knew about pricing and economics from standing in brothel lines in WWII in Brisbane and selling his spot to American servicemen trying to work out if your overall revenue would be greater selling your spot three from the door or four from the door and then rejoining the end of the line. Reading the review in the New York Times they have largely got it in contrast to "Oliver and Parrot go to America" where they missed the point completely "If you don't have an aristocracy you will end up with Rap Music and America the way it is today". Do yourself a favour and read both books - messier syntheses of actual events to produce fiction. Doing what fiction is all about - The Big Lie - Convincing us that there is meaning in life 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I thoroughly enjoyed Peter Carey's Amnesia By Francis Sheehy I thoroughly enjoyed Peter Carey's Amnesia. As an Australian living in the U.S. I was impressed with the authenticity of the book. I grew up in Coburg in the shadow of Pentridge, and my parents both grew up in Carlton. In fact, my mother lived in a house on Canning Street, which features in the story. The story line is compelling and contemporary, with its environmental concerns well-covered. The political overtones and reminiscences of the Gough Whitlam era could have been better developed, since they are not explained in the book--just referred to in passing, as if the reader should be aware of the political machinations surrounding the demise of Whitlam as Prime Minister in 1975. However, it was great to read of places, like Swanston Street, Dorcas Street in South Melbourne, Nicholson and Lygon Streets in Carlton, the Brunswick Baths (where I learned to swim) and Merri Creek. I look forward to reading more of Peter Carey's writings and recommend this one highly. Just one further note: his use of metaphors in the novel is stupendous and highly original.

The two-time Booker Prize winner now gives us an exceedingly timely, exhilarating novel at once dark, suspenseful, and seriously funny that journeys to the place where the cyber underworld collides with international power politics. When Gaby Baillieux releases the Angel Worm into Australia's prison computer system, hundreds of asylum-seekers walk free. And because the Americans run the prisons (let's be honest: as they do in so many parts of her country) the doors of some five thousand jails in the United States also open. Is this a mistake, or a declaration of cyber war? And does it have anything to do with the largely forgotten Battle of Brisbane between American and Australian forces in 1942? Or with the CIA-influenced coup in Australia in 1975? Felix Moore, known to himself as our sole remaining left-wing journalist, is determined to write Gaby's biography in order to find the answer to save her, his own career, and, perhaps, his country. But how to get Gaby on the run, scared, confused, and angry to cooperate? Bringing together the world of hackers and radicals with the special relationship between the United States and Australia, and Australia and the CIA, Amnesia is a novel that speaks powerfully about the often hidden past but most urgently about the more and more hidden present.

[This] lively 13th novel from the Australian magus Peter Carey will leave the mind reeling. It is tremendous fun, a satiric burlesque as fast as a speeding car, barbed as only Carey can be, seething with benign rage and as black as reality. . . . Carey is an intellectual magpie. Not much escapes the cerebral writer's notice. . . . [Carey's] inventive unpredictability is part of his appeal. The narrative energy of Amnesia is impressive, as are his brilliant handling of the many voices and his always fluent prose. . . . Carey has always been a gifted ventriloquist, and the dialogue in this fast-moving narrative gives the impression that the speakers are in the next room. We don't so much read the dialogue as overhear it. Amnesia contains some of the sharpest characterization Carey has written. . . . Carey has always been a clever, entertaining writer with an adroit grasp of how things work, as well as a subtle feel for the political in everyday life, but this time he has created characters that are unnervingly human. . . . Amnesia is blunt and funny, brave and outspoken. . . . Carey says a great deal in an entertaining, provocative novel, weighty with polemical intent, yet he never forgets to tell a story that is as large as life and as exuberantly complicated, and, as regards setting the record straight, long overdue. If fiction can summon the now, this novel has. Eileen Battersby, The Irish Times The brilliant

Australian author explores digital activism, legacy journalism, US political interference and Australia's collective forgetfulness about its past in this probing but rollicking novel. . . . Amnesia crackles with energy, inventive in its language (not least in its profanities) but never pretentious, emphasizing the value of straight talking and laughter. Jake Kerridge, Sunday Express Peter Carey is such a varied and intriguing novelist there are times when it seems he can write anything. . . . [Amnesia is] exhilarating. It even has a viral twist at the end. As I said, Peter Carey can do anything. James Runcie, The Independent Amnesia is exhilaratingly suffused with Careys wild prodigality of invention. . . . Amnesia glitters with nervy verbal inventiveness and pungent characterization. Carey conjures the longings and anxieties of his wayward teenaged idealists with the same pathos and precision with which he depicts the pains and disillusionments of middle age. Jane Shilling, Evening Standard A novel about the new American empire and its repercussions around the world, about technology and, most movingly, about family. It is slippery and compelling, written with the vivid precision that marks Mr. Careys best work. It appears at first as though he might, like Thomas Pynchon in Bleeding Edge or Dave Eggers in The Circle, be attempting to recreate the constantly shifting virtual world in the fixed text of a novel. But humanity, not machinery, lies at the books heart. . . . Mr. Carey, who has already won the Man Booker prize twice should be in with a chance for a third prize next year. The Economist A twisting, thriller-ish tale . . . A sharp ripost to those who say fiction cant cope with the cyber age. . . . Intriguing. Paul Dunn, The Times All kinds of political trickery is afoot in this indignant, robustly and funny novel. The Sunday Times (best recent books) Carey has twice the energy of most writers; but comedy, its clear, is something he takes very seriously indeed. . . . An ambitious novel that mixes the story of an Assange-like activist on the run from the US government with stories of political betrayal and bad faith stretching back to the Second World War. Tim Martin, The Daily Telegraph When you open a new novel by Peter Carey youre never sure whats going to leap out at you. . . . [Amnesia] sizzles with indignation . . . Often rumbustiously funny, it has an almost Dickensian zest for colourful characters. . . . The cyber-underworld and its bizarre obsessives buzz with fascination. . . . Metaphorical vitality pulses through Careys prose. . . . Australia's natural beauty . . . is as sensuously celebrated as the treacheries and lies he sees infesting its politics are scathingly portrayed. Peter Kemp, The Sunday Times Australia's greatest living writer. David Robinson, The Scotsman A tale of betrayal, paranoia and conspiracy . . . Amnesia is at once a bold account of Australia's uncomfortable and slippery relationship with the United States and an ambitious meditation on the writers uncomfortable and slippery relationship with facts and their audience. . . . A terrific book. James Kidd, The Independent Peter Careys fiction is turbo-charged, hyperenergetic . . . Careys book is whirling and intricate, yet such is the excitement of the writing, we take the ride very gladly. . . . Like many of Careys books, Amnesia generates an aura of the fantastical but is completely grounded; it is high-spirited but serious, hectic but never hasty. . . . It responds to some of the biggest issues of our time, and reminds us that no other contemporary novelist is better able to mix farce with ferocity, or to better effect. Andrew Motion, The Guardian Peter Carey, like John le Carre, has an uncanny knack of timeliness. . . . A remarkable novelist . . . The novel moves like wildfire. . . . Carey does intellectual ambition with a comic hand. . . . A wild ride . . . exhilarating . . . Carey is Australia's lyrebird master of dialogue, perfectly tuned to every nuance, or upward intonation. . . . Effortlessly lyrical . . . In the great tradition, novelists (Dickens included) . . . [Carey] reconfigures life and times into provocative fictional form that we might better ponder who we are and what we mightor mustdo next. Morag Fraser, Sydney Morning Herald Never have I read a novel in which I could see the genius of the writers mind so phenomenally at work. Melbourne and the Australian language have never been so celebrated. I laughed and laughed, too. Carmen Callil Fantastically brilliant, gripping and astonishing it is . . . I couldnt believe I was so completely caught by the throat by a story about malware and cyberspace and sabotage, with all its bravura language of the system, but then I began to realise its also about a whole dark stain of political history, about a mother and daughter, about power and brutality, about being young and furious, and above all, seductively to me, about the bloody strenuous painful work of writing a life from mixed testimonies, putting a life together, under the worst possible conditions I thought Felix Moore in all his humanness, messiness and determination, was a masterpiece. Hermione Lee A raucous meditation on dissent . . . an ambitious novel . . . Careys capacity to define a character in a few cutting yet somehow empathetic words that gives the story its energy and depth . . . When Carey scratches the surface of his characters, he draws blood; he exposes raw emotions that are sometimes incoherent, sometimes self-serving, sometimes deeply compromising. . . . Carey is a writer who seems to want to celebrate, as much as to castigate, human flaws. He is sardonic and withering, but somehow optimistic. In Amnesia, the world is insidious and magnificent. Patrick Allington, Australian Book A dystopian political thriller . . . exquisite . . . [with a] debt to everyone from Faulkner to Kerouac to Bob Dylan . . . [and] borrows from Graham Greene and John le Carr. . . . [Carey] rushes in, tests boundaries, takes risks, relying all the while on cantankerous charm and his innate dexterity as a prose writer. . . . It is the ferocious forward motion that impresses most. Geordie Williamson, The Australian The story of WikiLeaks as if transmogrified by Dickens and turned into a thrilling fable for our post-Edward Snowden era. Written with forensic precision . . . Australian fauna and flora are done in glorious technicolour: kookaburras, butcherbirds, killer magpies. Luke Harding, The Guardian About the Author PETER CAREY is the author of twelve previous novels and has twice received the Booker Prize. His other honors include the Commonwealth Writers' Prize and the Miles Franklin Literary Award. Born in Australia, he has lived in New York City for more than twenty

years.Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. It was a spring evening in Washington DC; a chilly autumn morning in Melbourne; it was exactly 22:00 Greenwich Mean Time when a worm entered the computerised control systems of countless Australian prisons and released the locks in many other places of incarceration, some of which the hacker could not have known existed. Because Australian prison security was, in the year 2010, mostly designed and sold by American corporations the worm immediately infected 117 US federal correctional facilities, 1700 prisons, and over 3000 county jails. Wherever it went, it travelled underground, in darkness, like a bushfire burning in the roots of trees. Reaching its destinations it announced itself: THE CORPORATION IS UNDER OUR CONTROL. THE ANGEL DECLARES YOU FREE. This message and others more elaborate were read, in English, by warders in Texas, contractors in Afghanistan, Kurdistan, in immigrant detention camps in Australia, in Woomera, black sites in the Kimberley, secret centres of rendition at the American signals facility near Alice Springs. Sometimes prisoners escaped. Sometimes they were shot and killed. Bewildered Afghans and Filipinos, an Indonesian teenager wounded by gunfire, a British Muslim dying of dehydration, all these previously unknown individuals were seen on public television, wandering on outback roads. The security monitors in Sydneys Villawood facility read: THE ANGEL OF THE LORD BY NIGHT OPENED THE PRISON DOORS, AND BROUGHT THEM FORTH. My former colleagues asked, what does this language tell us about the perpetrator? I didnt give a toss. I was grateful for a story big enough to push me off the front pages where I had already suffered PANTS ON FIRE. I was spending my days in the Supreme Court of New South Wales paying Nigel Willis QC \$500 an hour so I could be sued for defamation. Nigels billable hours continued to accrue well past the stage when it became clear that he was a fuckwit and I didnt have a chance in hell, but cheer up mate: he was betting 3:2 on a successful appeal. That my barrister also owned a racehorse was not the point. Meanwhile there was not much for me to do but read the papers. FEDS NOW SAY ANGEL IS AN AUSSIE WORM. Would the defendant like to tell the court why he is reading a newspaper. I am a journalist, mlud. It is my trade. Attention was then brought to the state of my tweed jacket. Ha-ha, mlud. When the court had had its joke, we adjourned for lunch and I, being unaccompanied on that particular day, took my famously shambolic self across to the botanic gardens where I read the Daily Telegraph. Down by the rose gardens amongst the horseshit fertiliser, I learned that the terrorist who had been obviously a male Christian fundamentalist had now become the daughter of a Melbourne actress. The traitor appeared very pale and much younger than her thirty years. Dick Connolly got the photo credit but his editor had photoshopped her for in real life she would turn out to be a solid little thing whose legs were strong and sturdy, not at all like the waif in the Telegraph. She was from Coburg, in the north of Melbourne, a flat, forgotten industrial suburb coincidentally once the site of Pentridge Prison. She came to her own arraignment in a black hoodie, slouching, presumably to hide the fact that our first homegrown terrorist had a beautiful face. Angel was her handle. Gaby was her name in what I have learned is meat world. She was charged as Gabrielle Baillieux and I had known her parents long ago her mother was the actress Celine Baillieux, her father Sando Quinn, a Labor member of parliament. I returned to my own court depressed, not by the outcome of my case, which was preordained, but by the realisation that my life in journalism was being destroyed at the time I might have expected my moment in the sun. I had published several books, fifty features, a thousand columns, mainly concerned with the traumatic injury done to my country by our American allies in 1975. While my colleagues leapt to the conclusion that the hacker was concerned simply with freeing boat people from Australian custody, I took the same view as our American allies, that this was an attack on the United States. It was clear to me, straight away, that the events of 1975 had been a first act in this tragedy and that the Angel Worm was a retaliation. If Washington was right, this was the story I had spent my life preparing for. If the events of 1975 seem confusing or enigmatic to you, then that is exactly my point. They are all part of The Great Amnesia. More TC. In court, I listened as my publisher got a belting from the judge and I saw his face when he finally understood he could not even sell my book as remaindered. Pulp? he said. Including that copy in your hand. Damages were awarded against me for \$120,000. Was I insured or not insured? I did not know. The crowd outside the court was as happy as a hanging day. Feels, Feels, the News International guy shouted. Look this way. Felix. That was Kev Dawson, a cautious little prick who made his living rewriting press releases. Look this way Feels. What do you think about the verdict, Feels? What I thought was: our sole remaining left-wing journalist had been pissed on from a mighty height. And what was my crime? Repeating press releases? No, I had reported a rumour. In the world of grown-ups a rumour is as much a fact as smoke. To omit the smoke is to fail to communicate the threat in the landscape. In the Supreme Court of New South Wales this was defamation. What next, Felix? Rob a bank? Shoot myself? Certainly, no-one would give me the Angel story although I was better equipped (Wired magazine take note) to write it than any of the clever children who would be hired to do the job. But I was, as the judge had been pleased to point out, no longer employable in your former trade. I had been a leader writer, a columnist, a so-called investigative reporter. I had inhabited the Canberra Press Gallery where my rumours had a little power. I think Alan Ramsey may have even liked me. For a short period in the mid-seventies, I was host of Drivetime Radio on the ABC. I was an aging breadwinner with a ridiculous mortgage. I had therefore been a screenwriter and a weekend novelist. I had written both history and political satire, thrillers, investigative crime. The screen adaptation of my novel Barbie and the Deadheads was workshopped at Robert Redfords Sundance Institute. But through this, even while bowing and scraping to get seed money from the Australian Film Commission, I remained a socialist and a

servant of the truth. I had been sued ninety-eight times before they brought me down with this one, and along the way I had exposed the deeds of Kerry Packer and Rupert Murdoch (both Old Geelong Grammarians, btw) always a very dangerous occupation for a family man, and apparently terrifying for those who rely on him for succour. As the doors of the mainstream media closed to anyone unworldly enough to write the truth, I still published Lo-tech Blog, a newsletter printed on acid paper which was read by the entire Canberra Press Gallery and all of parliament besides. Dont ask how we paid our electricity bill. I worked as a journalist in a country where the flow of information was controlled by three corporations. Their ability to manipulate the truth made the right to vote largely meaningless, but I was a journalist. I did my best. In Lo-tech Blog, I revealed the Australian presss cowardly reporting of the government lies about the refugees aboard the ill-fated Oolong. I cant comprehend how genuine refugees would throw their children overboard, said our Prime Minister. Once again, like 1975, here was a lie of Goebbelsesque immensity. The fourth estate made a whole country believe the refugees were animals and swine. Many think so still. Yet the refugees belonged here. They would have been at home with the best of us. We have a history of courage and endurance, of inventiveness in the face of isolation and mortal threat. At the same time, alas, we have displayed this awful level of cowardice, brown-nosing, criminality, mediocrity and nest-feathering. I was overweight and out of breath but I was proud to be sued, reviled, scorned, to be called a loser by the rewriters of press releases. I took comfort from it, which was just as well because there was comfort nowhere else. As would be confirmed in the weeks ahead, none of my old mates were going to rescue me from the slow soul-destroying grind of unemployment. A five-star hotel might seem an unwise venue for a bedraggled outcast to lick his wounds but the Wentworth was favoured by my old mate Woody Wodonga Townes. My dearest friends all exhibit a passionate love of talk and drink, but of this often distinguished crowd it was Woody Townes who had the grit and guts. He had attended court every day although he had had to fly seven hundred kilometres from Melbourne. Any fight I had, he was always by my side. And when I had endured the whacking from the press I found him where I knew he would be, where he had waited on almost every gruesome afternoon, with his meaty body jammed into a small velvet chair in the so-called Garden Court. The moment he spotted me he began pouring champagne with his left hand. It was a distinctive pose: the heavy animal leg crossed against his shiny thigh, the right elbow held high to ward off the attentions of an eager waiter. I considered my loyal friends exposed white calves, his remarkable belt, his thick neck, the high colour in his cheeks and I thought, not for the first time, that it is Melbournes talent to produce these extraordinary eighteenth-century figures. In a more contested space, life would compress them, but down south, at the Paris end of Collins Street, there was nothing to stop him expanding to occupy the frame. He was a Gillray engraving indulgence, opinion, power. By profession my mate was a property developer and I presumed he must be sometimes involved in the questionable dealings of his caste. My wife thought him a repulsive creature, but she never gave herself a chance to know him. He was both a rich man and a courageous soldier of the left. He was a reliable patron of unpopular causes and (although he was possibly tone deaf) Chairman of the South Bank Opera Company. He financially supported at least two atonal composers who would otherwise have had to teach high school. He had also bankrolled my own ill-fated play. Woodys language could be abusive. He did occasionally spoil his philanthropy by demanding repayment via small services, but he could be relied upon to physically and legally confront injustice. In a time when the Australian Labor Party was becoming filled with white-collar careerists straight from university, Woody was old-school he did not fear the consequences of belief. Fuck them all, he said, and ground the champagne bottle down into the ice. That would be pretty much the content of our conversation, and three bottles later, after several rounds of fancy nibbles, he called for the bill, paid from a roll of fifties, got me into a taxi and gave me a Cabcharge voucher to sign at the other end. No surrender, he said, or words to that effect. It was only a short drive across the Anzac Bridge to our house at Rozelle. Here the best part of my life awaited me, my wife, two daughters, but in the narrow passageway of our slightly damp terrace house, there stood, by poisonous chance, five cardboard cartons of my book, maliciously delivered that very afternoon. Were these for me to pulp myself? Was this not hilarious, that my puce-faced publisher, with his big house in Pymble, had gone to the trouble and expense of having boxes sent to my humble door? I was laughing so much I barely managed to carry this burden through the house. Apparently my daughters saw me and cared so little for my distress that they went straight up to watch the Kardashians. Claire must have been there somewhere, but I didnt see her yet. I was much more occupied with enacting the court order. I could never light a barbecue. I had no manual skills at all. It was my athletic Claire who handled the electric drill, not me. Naturally I overcompensated with the firefighters. Did I really enclose a free firelighter in every book? Was that a joke? How would I know? It was not necessarily self-pitying and pathetic that I set my own books on fire, but it was certainly stupid or at least ill-informed to add a litre of petrol to those feeble flames. I was unprepared for the violent force, the great whoosh that lifted off my eyebrows and caught the lower limbs of our beloved jacaranda. As the flames crawled from the branches to the second-floor extension, I should people never cease insisting have picked up the garden hose and put it out. Fine, but these dear friends did not see what I saw. I made my judgement. I chose human life before real estate. I rushed up the stairs and snatched the audience from the Kardashians. Yes, my babies were teenagers. Yes, they resisted, but here was no time for explanation and I had no choice but treat them roughly. Apparently I smelled like a cross between a pub and a lawnmower. I rushed them out into the street and left them screaming. I dont know what happened then, but somehow the next-door copywriter stole

my girls and the Balmain fire brigade were soon pushing me aside, dragging their filthy hoses down our hall and Claire, my wife, my comfort, my lover, my friend was waiting for me. The next bit should remain private from our kids. But I will never forget exactly what was said. Claire was clever, kind and funny. She slept with her nose just above the sheets like a little possum. She woke up smiling. She stripped a century of paint from the balustrades and waxed and oiled them until they glowed. She climbed on the roof during lightning storms to remove the leaves from the overflowing gutters. She canvassed door to door for the Leichhardt by-election. She was a Japanese-trained potter whose work was collected by museums but there was never a night when I came home from Canberra or Melbourne or a union pub in Sussex Street that she was not waiting to hear what had happened. She was commonly regarded as a perfect mother while I was known to have been unfaithful or at least to have attempted it. I was said to be continually drunk and impatient with decent people whose politics I did not like. I was allegedly unemployable. It was thought I was a communist who did not have the intelligence to see that he had become historically irrelevant. All day Claire ripped her strong square hands with gritty clay, from which human sacrifice she extracted long necks and tiny kissing lips. She cooked like the farmers daughter that she was, leg of lamb, baked vegetables, proper gravy. But each night she devoured the life that I brought home. My darling was what is commonly called a political junkie awful term but I delivered what she wanted most. We had fun, for years and years. Yes, I developed a Canberra belly and was ashamed to jog. She, as everyone remarked, stayed neat and trim. She wore jeans and windcheaters and sneakers and cut her hair herself, eschewing sexy legs and teetering fuck-me heels. After the fire I learned that certain mates had wondered if she might be gay. Idiots. None of them had the slightest clue about our love life. We were tender maniacs in ways known only to ourselves. If not for debt we would be in bed today. Some people are good at debt. We were bad at it, and only discovered it in the way people who get seasick learn of their weakness when the ship has left the shore. We were a journalist and a potter thinking they could send their kids to an expensive private school. You get the joke. Earlier I described how I abandoned these children on the footpath. Abandoned? For Gods sake, they were almost at the end of their investment curve. To listen to their conversation you would never dream that their parents were both third-generation socialists. Did they even remember their father toasting crumpets in the smoky fire? Can they hear their mothers lovely voice sing Moreton Bay? Ive been a prisoner at Port Macquarie At Norfolk Island and Emu Plains At Castle Hill and cursed Toongabbie At all those settlements Ive worked in chains But of all places of condemnation And penal stations of New South Wales Of Moreton Bay I have found no equal Excessive tyranny each day prevails She sang that to our little girls? You bet she did. We had made the awful mistake of sending the girls to school with the children of our enemies. We thought we were saving Fiona from dyslexia. In fact we were wrecking her family by putting it under a financial strain it could not withstand. I would never once, not for a second, have thought to call Claire timid. How could I know that debt would make her so afraid? We got a line of credit for \$50,000 and every time I acted like myself she hated it. She had loved me for those qualities before: I mean, my almost genetic need to take risk, to stand on principle, to poke the bully in the eye. I could not compromise, even when I was so often physically afraid. A sword hung over the marriage bed and I did not see it. I refused compromises she privately thought a father was morally obliged to make. And of course the girls had not the least idea of what was at stake. If they paid attention to a newspaper it was only the Life and Style section. I doubt they had read a single one of my words, and had no notion of my work and life. They had never seen the evidence that might have justified my absences. If I allowed Claires bond to be the strongest it was because I saw how much she wanted them to be my daughters. Only once I bought them clothing (T-shirts, thats all). Then I learned that this was not my job and I should never try again. Before this final defamation suit, Claire had been the pillion passenger who closed her eyes and hung on tight but the Supreme Courts finding was the final straw. When she heard the size of the damages, she quite collapsed. As a child she had seen the family farm taken by the bank. Was it that? Was it something else? In any case, she did not believe my assurance that everything will be OK because Woody had flown up from Melbourne for the court case. He had promised nothing. She was correct to say this, but she could not grasp that this was exactly the sort of situation when you could rely on Woody. Claire could not grasp his influence. She did not care that he had saved me from my burning car. All she could see was that his father had been a slumlord and a thug. Nor did she trust Nigel QC because she believed, correctly, that he was the prosecutors friend. I told her that did not matter. I was right. If only she had trusted me, I would have got back on the bike and taken her hurtling through the bends at a hundred and fifty kilometres an hour. I would have won the appeal. I would have sorted out the legal costs, and we would have celebrated as we had celebrated many times before. Everything will be OK, I said, and it was dreadful to see the fury in her eyes. Excerpted from *Amnesia* by Peter Carey. Copyright 2015 by Peter Carey. Excerpted by permission of Knopf, a division of Random House LLC. All rights reserved. No part of this excerpt may be reproduced or reprinted without permission in writing from the publisher.