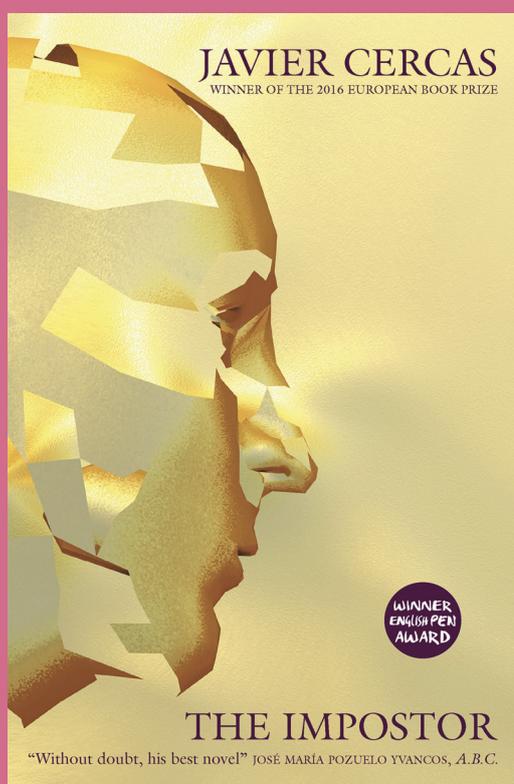




Reader's Guide



Other novels by Javier Cercas
Soldiers of Salamis (2003)
The Tenant and The Motive (2005)
The Speed of Light (2006)
The Anatomy of a Moment (2011)
Outlaws (2014)

The Impostor Javier Cercas

Translated by Frank Wynne

MacLehose Press

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About the author

Javier Cercas was born in Ibañeta, Spain, in April 1962. He is a novelist, short-story writer and columnist whose books include *Soldiers of Salamis* (which sold more than a million copies worldwide, won six literary awards in Spain and was filmed by David Trueba), *The Tenant and the Motive*, *The Speed of Light* and *The Anatomy of a Moment*. His books have been translated into more than 20 languages. He lives in Barcelona.

About the translator

Frank Wynne was born in County Sligo, Ireland, in April 1962. He is an award-winning translator from French and Spanish. His previous translations include works by Pierre Lemaitre, Patrick Modiano and Michel Houellebecq. He lives in London.

About the book

The Impostor is a true story that is packed with fiction – fiction created by its main character, Enric Marco. But who is Enric Marco? A veteran of the Spanish civil war, a fighter against fascism, an impassioned campaigner for justice, and a survivor of the Nazi death camps? Or, is he simply an old man with delusions of grandeur, a charlatan who fabricated his heroic war record, who was never a prisoner in the Third Reich and never opposed Franco, but simply a charming, beguiling and compulsive liar who refashioned himself as a defender of liberty and who was unmasked in 2005 at the height of his influence and renown?

In this novel – part narrative, part history, part essay, part biography, part autobiography – Javier Cercas unravels the man and delves with passion and honesty into the most ambiguous aspects of what makes us human – our infinite capacity for self-deception, our need for conformity, our thirst for affection and our conflicting needs for fiction and for the truth.

Discussion points

The Impostor examines the life of Enric Marco – at one point, one of the most famous men in Spain – who was revealed as a fantasist and liar in 2005. Were you familiar with Marco before reading the book?

Cercas deftly explores the differences between lies, stories and fantasy, without ever making a judgment. With memory being so unreliable, can a person's story ever be completely true?

Marco spoke out passionately against fascism before his unmasking. But is the positive impact he has made completely undone by his deception?

Do you feel any sympathy for Marco? Do you believe his lies came from a desire to be a better man, or was he just an opportunist?

Themed reading

George Orwell *Homage to Catalonia*
Patricia Highsmith *The Talented Mr Ripley*
CJ Sansom *Winter in Madrid*
Andrew O'Hagan *The Secret Life: Three True Stories*

Useful links

<https://www.spectator.co.uk/2017/11/the-art-of-deception-2/>

<https://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/culture/books/book-review-the-imposter-by-javier-cercas-1-4620007>

http://www.heraldscotland.com/arts_ents/books_and_poetry/15777545.Review__The_Impostor_by_Javier_Cercas/

<https://www.economist.com/news/books-and-arts/21730853-unmasking-eric-marco-catalan-impostor-javier-cercas-probes-spains-convoluted>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/javier-cercas-interview-picking-over-the-wounds-of-spain-s-recent-past-9500996.html>