

## Brighton Rock ABOUT THE BOOK

Pinkie Brown is the newly appointed leader of the rival to the Colleoni race gang in Brighton. The gang's previous leader, Battling Kite, for whom Pinkie was right-hand man, was murdered by the Colleoni gang, because of information supplied by Fred Hale, a reporter turned informer. In revenge Pinkie murders Hale. The murder is rash and Pinkie spends the remainder of the novel trying to cover up the small mistakes that tie him to the murder. Every cover-up effort Pinkie makes fails to solve the problem entirely, leading him to make further murders which result in further cover ups.

Ida Arnold, an easy-going demimondaine who Hale befriends on the last day of his life in an attempt to stave off his potential killers, turns detective when she discovers discrepancies in the events surrounding his death and doggedly pursues Pinkie in her search for justice.

Rose is a young waitress who stumbles upon a major flaw in Pinkie's alibi. In order to ensure her silence Pinkie marries her and then coerces her into a suicide pact. When Ida realises that she will not gain her evidence against Pinkie she sets her heart to saving Rose instead.

'The most ingenious, inventive and exciting of our novelists...  
A master of storytelling'  
The Times

'I read Brighton Rock when I was about thirteen.  
One of the first lessons I took from it was  
that a serious novel could be an exciting novel -  
that the novel of adventure could also be the novel of ideas'  
Ian McEwan

'Graham Greene had wit and grace and character  
and story and a transcendent universal compassion  
that places him for all time in the ranks of world literature'  
John le Carre

'A superb storyteller with a gift for provoking controversy'  
New York Times

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Henry Graham Greene was born on October 2, 1904 in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. He was the fourth of six children and his father was headmaster of his high school for which he was tormented by fellow pupils. After a number of unsuccessful suicide attempts he was sent to a therapist who encouraged him to write as a means of healing.

Greene went on to Balliol College where he studied Modern History. It was here that Greene gained experience as an editor at The Oxford Outlook; developed an interest in politics after joining the Communist Party; and honed his skills at writing, with one novel Anthony Sant complete before he graduated.

After graduating with a BA in 1925, Greene was employed as a subeditor at the Nottingham Journal after two abortive positions at other companies. His dislike of Nottingham's seediness manifested in his later novel Brighton Rock.

Greene moved on to a job as a subeditor at The Times in London. There he married Vivien Dayrell-Browning in October 1927 and with her had a daughter, Lucy Caroline, and a son Francis. After a number of years he gave up his much-loved job to become a full time writer.

Greene began his world-renowned travelling in part to satisfy his lust for adventure, and in part to seek out material for his writing. A trip to Sweden resulted in England Made Me. An exhausting 400-mile trek through the jungles of Liberia not only gave Greene a near brush with death, but provided fodder for Journey Without Maps. During World War II, he worked for the Secret Intelligence Service in Sierra Leone, which became the setting for The Heart of the Matter. His journey to Mexico to witness the religious purges in 1938 was described in The Lawless Roads. Greene's horror of the Catholic persecution in Mexico led him to write The Power and the Glory, arguably the best novel of his career. It was both acclaimed (being the Hawthornden Prize winner in 1941) and condemned (by the Vatican). The frenetic globetrotting to troubled areas of the world continued until Greene was physically unable to do so in his later years.

Greene's financial success as an author enabled him to associate with many famous figures of his time: T.S. Eliot, Herbert Read, Evelyn Waugh, Alexander Korda, Ian Fleming, Noel Coward, among others. He had many extra-marital affairs, and confessed he was "a bad husband and a fickle lover", although he never revealed his affairs in his two autobiographies. He separated from his wife in 1948 but they never divorced. Towards the end of his life, Greene lived in Vevey, Switzerland with his companion Yvonne Cloetta. He died there peacefully on April 3, 1991.

## STARTING POINTS FOR YOUR DISCUSSION

Does Pinkie have a morbid and deluded imagination, or is he right in his view of the world?

Do you believe that Pinkie would be satisfied/happy and consider himself successful if he had managed to: silence Rose, move out of the room he rents at Frank's, gain control of the race track and somehow manage to run Colleoni out of Brighton?

Do you feel that it is unrealistic how easily Ida seems to come across evidence and clues that will lead her to her goal of justice (even gaining help from the 'spirit world' via the Ouija Board) while Pinkie seems to be thwarted at every turn (relying on greater risks to secure his innocence in the Hale murder)?

Pinkie constantly reminds Rose that he isn't afraid of anything, he fears nothing, yet his actions betray his words; he is willing to do almost anything to avoid going to jail. Does Pinkie fear damnation in the afterlife? Or is he more afraid of physical pain, embarrassment and jail?

When and how does Pinkie change from being the hunter "before the kill" to being the hunted?

Do you feel that Rose does what Pinkie wants out of Love or out of her Duty as a wife? Is she not too young to know and understand true love and therefore confuses the two?

The Title of Brighton Rock is chosen by Greene as analogy for human nature; the idea that human's never change. With this pessimistic view in mind do you think that people can only be born good or that they have the free will to change? Can we blame experiences in his youth and the poverty into which Pinkie was born on the development of evil within him when Rose herself is from a similar background and is clearly not evil?

How far would you agree that the novel is not so much about Brighton, as about heaven and hell?

To what extent do you think this book is about guilt?

#### OTHER BOOKS BY GRAHAM GREENE

##### NOVELS

Babbling April (1925)  
The Man Within (1929)  
The Name of Action (1930)  
Rumour at Nightfall (1932)  
Stamboul Train ( Orient Express ) (1932)  
It's a Battlefield (1934)  
England made Me (1935)  
The Bear Fell Free (1935)  
A Gun for Sale ( This Gun for Hire ) (1936)  
Brighton Rock (1938)  
The Confidential Agent (1939)  
The Power and The Glory ( The Labyrinthine Ways ) (1940)  
The Ministry of Fear (1943)  
The Heart of the Matter (1948)  
The Third Man (1950)  
The End of the Affair (1951)  
The Quiet American (1955)  
Our Man in Havana (1958)  
A Burnt-Out Case (1961)  
A Sense of Reality (1963)  
The Comedians (1966)  
Travels with My Aunt (1969)  
The Honorary Consul (1973)  
The Human Factor (1978)  
Dr. Fischer of Geneva, or The Bomb Party (1980)  
Monsignor Quixote (1982)  
Getting to Know the General (1985)  
The Tenth Man (1985)

The Captain and the Enemy (1988)

## SHORT STORIES

A Little Place Off the Edgware Road (1941)

All But Empty (1947)

Awful When You Think of It

Beauty

Chagrin in Three Parts

Cheap in August

The Destructors

Doctor Crombie

The End of the Party

The Invisible Japanese Gentlemen

May We Borrow Your Husband?

Mortmain

The Over-Night Bag

The Root of All Evil

A Shocking Accident

Two Gentle People

The Last Word and Other Stories

Collected Short Stories (1987)

## TRAVEL

Journey without Maps (1936)

The Lawless Roads ( Another Mexico ) (1939)

In Search of a Character

Getting to Know the General

## ESSAYS

Yours etc.

Reflections

Mornings in the Dark

Collected Essays

## PLAYS

The Potting Shed (1957)

The Return Of A.J. Raffles (1975)

## AUTOBIOGRAPHY

A Sort of Life (1971)

Ways of Escape (1980)

Fragments of an Autobiography

A World of my Own

## CHILDREN'S BOOKS

The Little Train

The Little Horse-Bus

The Little Steamroller  
The Little Fire Engine

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

Heart of Darkness ~ Joseph Conrad  
The Thirty-Nine Steps ~ John Buchan  
The Unconsoled ~ Kazuo Ishiguro  
John Le Carré