



The Big Why: A Novel

Michael Winter

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Michael Winter's powerful new novel, *The Big Why*, brilliantly fictionalizes a pivotal year in the life of celebrated American artist Rockwell Kent. In 1914, at the age of thirty, Kent decides to escape the superficial world of New York City and move to Brigus, Newfoundland, with his wife and three children to follow a few months later. A socialist and a philanderer, certain in the greatness of his work, he is drawn north by a fascination for the rocky Atlantic coast and by the example of Brigus's other well-known resident, fabled Arctic explorer Robert Bartlett. But once in Newfoundland, Kent discovers that notoriety is even easier to achieve in a small town than in New York. As events come to a head both internationally and domestically and the war begins, Kent becomes a polarizing figure in this intimate, impoverished community, where everyone knows everyone and any outsider is suspect, possibly even a German spy. Writing in Kent's voice, Michael Winter delivers a passionate, witty, and cerebral exploration of what makes exceptional individuals who they are?and why.

Shortlisted for the Trillium Award

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