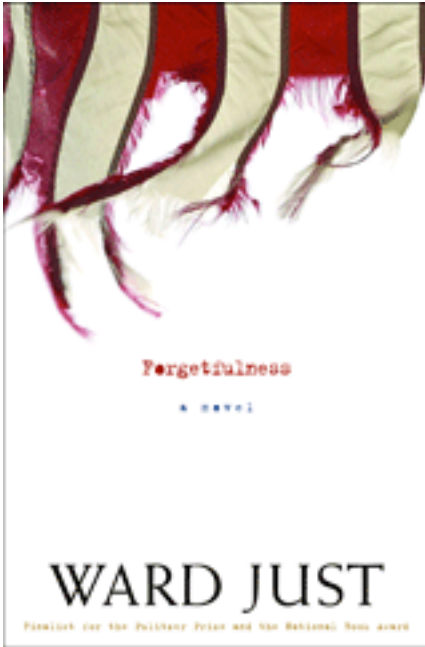


Press Release



Forgetfulness

by Ward Just

- [About the Book](#)
- [About the Author](#)

"Set to the indelible blues of Billie Holiday, in sync with the razor-edged knowingness of Didion and Le Carré, and mythic in its evocations of fire and water, fog and stone, art and remembrance, Just's *Forgetfulness* is haunting, clarifying, and imperative." — *Booklist*, starred review

"Superb — as suspense, as theater, as psychological warfare . . . [Just] is as seductive a raconteur as ever: companionable and worldly in an unaffected way . . . Vintage Just." — *Kirkus Reviews*

"[Just] sets his journalist's eye on the ethically fraught war on terror . . . The ethical questions of Just's tale add moral heft to an emotionally charged narrative." — *Publishers Weekly*

About the Book

Is revenge justified? Is it vainglorious? Is it . . . meaningless?

From one of our most critically acclaimed authors comes a book of moral suspense, at its center an American expatriate and occasional spy brought face to face with the terrorists who killed his wife. *Forgetfulness* is about one man's attempt to extricate himself from his past, his desire for revenge, and his capacity to forgive. The *New York Times Book Review* called Ward Just "one of the most astute writers of American fiction," and his power as a novelist has never been more apparent than in this timely, emotionally charged book.

Forgetfulness is the story of Thomas Railles, a respected American painter living in the south of France with his beloved wife, Florette. Thomas's career has included odd jobs for the CIA — a series of messy episodes he would prefer to forget. One day Florette goes for a walk in the hills near their house and is killed by unknown assailants. Her death devastates Thomas, and he struggles to find a way forward in a world that seems defined by grief and violence.

Each night Thomas finds himself tracking the daily news that he has ignored for so long. When French officials detain four Moroccan terrorists and charge them with Florette's murder, Thomas is invited to witness their interrogation, at first through a two-way mirror and then face to face with the leader. In the aftermath of that experience he finds himself confronted by America's tenuous place in the post-9/11 world. Thomas tries to continue his life in France but is compelled to return to the United States, the country he once thought he would never see again.

In the tradition of Graham Greene and John le Carré, *Forgetfulness* demonstrates Ward Just's signature talent for braiding the personal and the political to stunning effect. Gripping and insightful, Just's most timely novel explores themes of vengeance, grief, and forgiveness, and illuminates the unexpected consequences of today's conflicts for the individual conscience.

About the Author

Ward Just is the author of fourteen previous novels, including the National Book Award finalist *Echo House* and *An Unfinished Season*, winner of the *Chicago Tribune's* Heartland Award. In his career, beginning as a war correspondent for *Newsweek* and the *Washington Post*, Just has lived and written in half a dozen countries, including Britain, France, and Vietnam. His characters often lead public lives as politicians, civil servants, soldiers, artists, and writers. It is the tension between public duty and private conscience that animates much of his fiction, including his most recent book, *Forgetfulness*. Just and his wife, Sarah Catchpole, divide their time between Martha's Vineyard and Paris.