

It's December 23, 1971, and heavy weather is forecast for Chicago. Russ Hildebrandt, the associate pastor of a liberal suburban church, is on the brink of breaking free of a marriage he finds joyless—unless his wife, Marion, who has her own secret life, beats him to it. Their eldest child, Clem, is coming home from college on fire with moral absolutism, having taken an action that will shatter his father. Clem's sister, Becky, long the social queen of her high-school class, has sharply veered into the counterculture, while their brilliant younger brother Perry, who's been selling drugs to seventh graders, has resolved to be a better person. Each of the Hildebrandts seeks a freedom that each of the others threatens to complicate.

Jonathan Franzen's novels are celebrated for their unforgettably vivid characters and for their keen-eyed take on contemporary America. Now, in *Crossroads*, Franzen ventures back into the past and explores the history of two generations. With characteristic humor and complexity, and with even greater warmth, he conjures a world that resonates powerfully with our own.

A tour de force of interwoven perspectives and sustained suspense, its action largely unfolding on a single winter day, *Crossroads* is the story of a Midwestern family at a pivotal moment of moral crisis. Jonathan Franzen's gift for melding the small picture and the big picture has never been more dazzlingly evident.

JONATHAN FRANZEN is the author of five novels, including *The Corrections*, *Freedom*, and *Purity*, and five works of nonfiction, most recently *Farther Away* and *The End of the End of the Earth*, all published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. He lives in Santa Cruz, California.

READ BY DAVID PITTU



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