



# The Time of Indifference: A Novel

*Alberto Moravia*

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# The Time of Indifference: A Novel

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## **The Time of Indifference: A Novel** Alberto Moravia

IN 1929, THE FIFTH YEAR of the Fascist era and the twenty-first year of Alberto Moravia's life, the Italian literary world was stunned by the appearance of his first novel, *The Time of Indifference*. It was a deceptively simple story - five characters, the events of a few days, the intrigues of families and lovers. The place is Rome. The central figure is Michele, a young man in confused but furious rebellion against the emptiness of bourgeois life. His father is dead; his mother, Mariagrazia, desperately clings to her bored lover, Leo; his sister has no hope of marriage or career and bleakly prepares to give herself to Leo as well. A frequent visitor is Leo's former lover, Lisa, ostensibly Mariagrazia's friend, a woman who feels she is in the final late bloom before age destroys beauty. She longs to make Michele her lover, but he is bored and disgusted by her pretenses, her vanity, her desperation. All five are cast loose on the sea of modern life - obsessed with what they want, what they feel they are owed, the wrongs that have been done them, their loneliness. What Moravia destroys forever in this pitiless novel is the illusion that a world of ever-growing material comfort can ever feed the human soul.

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