



The Pen Friend: A Novel

Ciaran Carson

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'I write to try to see you as you were, or what you have become. You left no forwarding address: that was part of your intention. For when we wrote those letters to each other all those years ago, we wrote as much for ourselves as for each other.'

More than twenty years after the end of their love affair, Gabriel receives a cryptic postcard from old flame Nina. It is the first of thirteen cards from her, each one provoking a series of reveries about their life together in 1980s Belfast.

The Pen Friend is, however, much more than a love story. As Gabriel teases out the significance of the cards, his reveries develop into richly textured meditations on writing, memory, spiritualism and surveillance. The result is an intricate web of fact and fiction – moving easily between such varied subjects as the Troubles, Esperanto and John Lavery – a strange and wonderful novel by one of our finest Irish writers.

If you enjoyed *The Pen Friend*, you might also enjoy Ciaran Carson's *Exchange Place*, a brilliant thriller set in Paris and Belfast.



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