

Caleb Williams (Oxford World's Classics)

William Godwin



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In William Godwin's dark psychological novel of paranoia and persecution, the eponymous hero is a guileless young servant who enters the employment of Ferdinando Falkland, a cosmopolitan and benevolent country gentleman. Falkland is subject to fits of unexplained melancholy, and Caleb becomes convinced that he harbors a dark secret. His discovery of the truth leads to false accusations against him, and a vengeful pursuit as suspenseful as any thriller. The novel is also a powerful political allegory, inspired by the events of the decade following the French Revolution. This is the first paperback edition to reproduce the first edition (1794), restoring the original, highly topical novel written during the political crisis of 1793-4 when the British government clamped down on the burgeoning reform movement. The edition is further enhanced by Pamela Clemit's comprehensive introduction outlining the novel's contemporary reception, its historical and literary contexts, and its alternate endings; three appendices highlighting selected variants between the second and third editions; Godwin's prefatory materials; and new up-to-date bibliography and explanatory notes.

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