

Chapter 1 : The Secret History by Donna Tartt | calendrierdelascience.com

The Secret History is the first novel by Donna Tartt, published by Alfred A. Knopf in A 75, print order was made for the first edition (as opposed to the usual 10, order for a debut novel), and the book became a bestseller.

Synopsis[edit] Richard leaves the fictitious small town of Plano, California, where he is generally unhappy, for the fictitious Hampden College in Vermont. His disdain for his background establishes a contrastâ€”aestheticism and literary beauty, as opposed to harsh realityâ€”that continues throughout the novel. He misleads others about his background, replacing his mediocre working-class childhood with a fabricated, glamorous one of boarding schools, wealth, failed actors, and parents who own an oil well. In Vermont, Richard tries to continue his study of Ancient Greek , only to be denied admittance to the course, as Classics professor Julian Morrow limits his enrollment to a tiny hand-picked coterie. Richard becomes obsessed with the group, observing them around campus and noting what he considers a cold attitude toward the world around them and an obsession with studies that he admires. Eventually, he manages to ingratiate himself with the group by helping to solve a Greek grammar problem. Soon after, armed with advice from the group on how to impress Morrow, Richard meets with him and is finally admitted to the Classics tutorial. The group includes fraternal twins Charles and Camilla Macaulay, who are charming but secretive, as well as Francis Abernathy, whose secluded country home becomes a sanctuary for the group. Two students become the central focus: In fact, Henry is footing the bill for the trip. To avoid revealing his fabricated past, Richard takes a low-paying job on campus and spends winter break, the coldest in a generation, in an unheated warehouse. He nearly dies from hypothermia and pneumonia , but is rescued and taken to the hospital by Henry, who has returned early from Italy. After winter break, Richard sees the relationship between the others and Bunny becoming even more strained. Ultimately, he learns the truth from Henry and Francis: Henry forms several plots, one of which is finally put into motion after a drunken Bunny tells Richard of the killing. The group confronts Bunny while he is hiking, and Henry pushes him into a ravine to his death. The other students include loquacious drug user Judy Poovey, a reader of "those paranoia books by Philip K. They attempt to act natural, joining the search parties combing over the campus looking for Bunny. Charles develops a drinking problem and becomes increasingly abusive towards his sister Camilla. Francis confirms to Richard that the twins are having sexual relations, at the same time admitting he has also slept with Charles on a number of occasions that Charles is in the mood. Francis himself begins to suffer panic attacks. Morrow discovers a pleading letter sent to him by Bunny, imploring him to help: This action creates consequences for the main characters though mainly just Richard, the only one without an inheritance at his disposal. Left without a teacher, they have few options for the coming academic year and will be unable to complete their majors, forced to change up their plans, though this is hardly the most troublesome thing on their minds. As the group splinters, the members must deal with things in isolation. Henry begins living and likely sleeping with Camilla, which drives Charles further into alcoholism. In the struggle, Henry gets hold of the gun; the others pile on him, and Charles ends up shooting Richard in the abdomen. The innkeeper, hearing the commotion and gunshot, forces his way into the room. Before anything else can happen, Henry calmly kisses Camilla farewell and shoots himself fatally. Apparently, Henry, wishing to uphold the principles he feels Morrow, whom he "loved more than anyone," has betrayed, covers for Charles, his suicide leading the police to conclude that Henry shot Richard. Francis attempts suicide and, though homosexual, is forced by his rich grandfather to marry a woman he despises; Camilla, taking care of her grandmother, becomes increasingly isolated; Charles runs away from rehab with a married woman and no longer speaks to Camilla; and Richard, after recovering from his wounds, becomes a lonely academic with an unrequited love for Camilla. The book ends with Richard recounting a strange dream where he meets Henry in a tall atrium, unable to say all he feels about what has happened. Finally, he settles on asking, "Are you happy here?"

Chapter 2 : The Secret History - Wikipedia

*Donna Tartt is an American writer who received critical acclaim for her first two novels, *The Secret History* and *The Little Friend*, which have been translated into thirty languages. Tartt was the winner of the WH Smith Literary Award for *The Little Friend*.*

The mystery element remains strong, however, with hints that this killing may not be all that is at stake for the protagonists. Tartt explores love, sex, guilt, and romanticism in depicting a generation of young Americans addicted to sloth and chaos. Richard Papen, the narrator, transfers from a small college in his hometown of Plano in Northern California to Hampden College, a second-rate school in Vermont. Richard longs to get as far away as possible from his angry, uncaring, middle-class parents. Hoping to continue his study of classical Greek, he finds himself enthralled by Julian Morrow, an eccentric professor of languages who limits himself to a small group of students who must take all or most of their courses with him. Although he dresses in expensive English suits and carries an umbrella, Henry is no dandy. Well over six feet tall, he beats up a member of a motorcycle gang when provoked. Francis Abernathy, a homosexual, dresses and acts like a self-conscious fop. Less of a serious student than the others, the frivolous Bunny kids his friends about their shortcomings and sponges off them, always refusing to pay for anything. To fit in with this crowd, Richard lies about his background, claiming to have well-to-do parents in show business. They do not leave the country because they cannot raise enough money to live abroad. During the ensuing events, which include a sexual act never explained, Henry accidentally kills a farmer who happens upon them, slitting his abdomen. He leaves the body where it lies, but Bunny discovers Henry soaked in blood. They wait anxiously, knowing that the impulsive Bunny will eventually tell someone what they have done. The rest of *The Secret History* examines the psychological toll of their act on the Greek scholars. Then a series of lies, suspicions, jealousies, and betrayals divides them, leading to drunkenness, anxiety attacks, revelations of incest between Camilla and Charles, and, finally, attempts at murder and suicide. The students at Hampden spend their time smoking, drinking, taking drugs, listening to music, dancing, engaging in casual sex, and eating junk food. Even the Greek scholars take frequent time out from their studies for these pursuits. Specializing in problem students, the college does little to change them, providing little encouragement for discipline and dedication. Isolated and remote, Hampden is the perfect environment to foster the type of decadence that leads to murder. Richard is drawn to the students of ancient Greek because they stand out as eccentric anachronisms. They dress like beings from an earlier era, listen to Josephine Baker records, argue about how far apart the soldiers in a Roman legion stood, and seem out of touch with the modern world. He is realistic enough, however, to perceive certain moral deficiencies, such as how well they lie as a group, and to recognize how they are all too lazy or erratic to achieve academic distinction. Because he is the most enigmatic, Henry is also the most dangerous. The others admire him because, as a youthful pedant, he seems so mature, so understanding. Yet he is also ruthless and violent, almost pagan. He practices for the bacchanal by killing a piglet. When he hopes to kill Bunny with poisoned mushrooms, he tests them on dogs. That sudden sense of the richness of the world. In a sense, the real villain in *The Secret History* is Julian. A wealthy man who donates his salary to the college, he has been a friend of the famous, everyone from Ezra Pound and T. Eliot to Vivien Leigh and Marilyn Monroe. Tartt uses him to condemn intellectuals comfortable with the abstract but unable to deal with the complexities of the real world. Later, he attempts to convince himself that he is not an evil person. Yet they have not been prepared to understand the moral consequences of love, having intellectualized their emotions: The direct influences on Tartt seem more recent. Despite all the classical references in the novel, it is also in the clearly American tradition of depicting the forest as a magical, mystical place capable of great evil, as in works by James Fennimore Cooper and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Perhaps because it is a first novel, *The Secret History* is weakened by numerous flaws. Too often, characters are defined by the brand names of their clothing. The horror of one character being shot is undercut by his worrying about the blood ruining his Paul Smith shirt. Sources for Further Study Chicago Tribune. September 6, , XIV, p. Los Angeles Times Book Review. September 13, , p. New Statesman and Society. V, October 30, , p. CXL, August 31, , p. The Times

Literary Supplement. October 23, , p. The Wall Street Journal. September 9, , p. The Washington Post Book World. XXII, October 19, , p.

Chapter 3 : Ten reasons why we love Donna Tartt's The Secret History | Books | The Guardian

The Secret History is a wonderfully beguiling book, a journey backward to the fierce and heady friendships of our school days, when all of us believed in our power to.

It starts with a murder. It is in love with Ancient Greece. Donna Tartt proves the truth of what literary parents piously tell their children: It has all the best elements of the campus novel. The college where the novel is set is just the picture: Everyone who has ever been to university loves this peculiar subgenre, in which we can relive our earliest years of pretend adulthood. But it appeals to non-graduate readers too. It has a classic lonely narrator. A clever boy from nowheresville, he sets out to "fabricate a new and far more satisfying history". So he narrates with the force of passion. It is full of quotations. Within a couple of sentences Richard is quoting from Rimbaud unattributed and untranslated. It has a charismatic master of ceremonies. It is obsessed with beauty. The novel notices how important beauty is to us, yet how rarely anyone speaks of it. This is "about the first sentence that I ever learned in Greek" and becomes a dictum for Richard. It believes in fate. The narrative is shaped by this ancient conviction. It is possessed by Dionysos. Friedrich Nietzsche knew that Greek tragedy was made out of the clash between the powers of reason-giving Apollo and enrapturing Dionysos. Richard learns from his companions and his teacher that the roots of wisdom are not just in Greek rationality but also pagan ecstasy. Richard and his clever, foolish fellow students are would-be bacchantes who learn all about the dangers of this allegiance. It lets you in on secrets. We, like Richard, are being given membership of a select group. Every one of the millions who have read The Secret History has the delicious illusion of being admitted to the most dangerous of confidences. It is as if her every reader is the first and only one to read it.

Chapter 4 : The Secret History : Donna Tartt :

The Secret History is the first novel by American author, Donna Tartt. At the age of nineteen, Richard Papen goes to Hampden College in Vermont, primarily to get away from his parents and his depressingly boring hometown of Plano, CA.

Chapter 5 : The Secret History Summary - calendrierdelascience.com

Tartt's much bruiated first novel is a huge (pages) rambling story that is sometimes ponderous, sometimes highly entertaining. Part psychological thriller, part chronicle of debauched, wasted youth.

Chapter 6 : Cosy " The Secret History by Donna Tartt | Little Blog of Books

It was Donna Tartt's The Secret History, and I hated it. What We're Reading This Week Get recommendations for the greatest books around straight to your inbox every week.

Chapter 7 : Donna Tartt (Author of The Goldfinch)

Donna Tartt discusses The Secret History with John Mullan at the Guardian Book Club on 19 November, 7pm, The Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7. Tickets £

Chapter 8 : The Secret History by Donna Tartt

The first book by Donna Tartt (who would go on to write The Little Friend and The Goldfinch), The Secret History follows a group of wealthy students at a liberal-arts college in s Vermont, who study ancient Greek under the tutelage of a classics professor named Julian Morrow, an enigmatic eccentric who begins his classes with lines like.

Chapter 9 : The Secret History: Donna Tartt: calendrierdelascience.com: Books

The Secret History by Donna Tartt. Published Genres: Fiction / Literary "It is easy to see things in retrospect. But I was ignorant then of everything but my own happiness, and I don't know what else to say except that life itself seemed very magical in those days: a web of symbol, coincidence, premonition, omen.