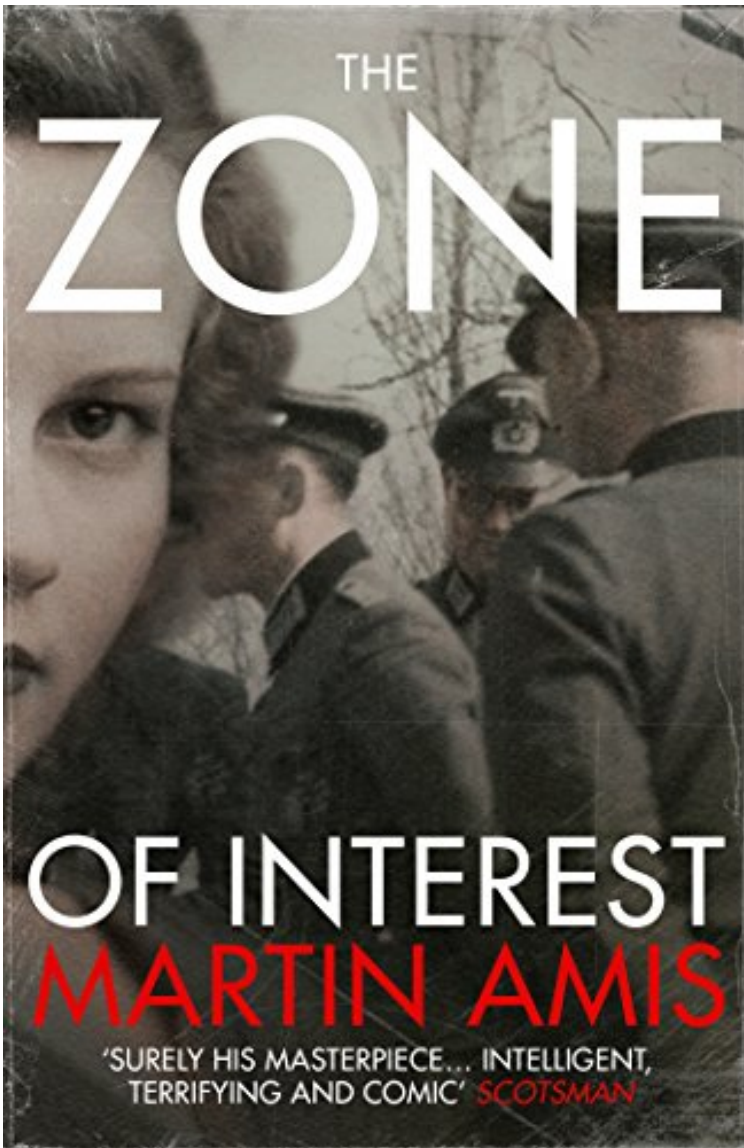


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The Zone of Interest



Par Martin Amis
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurShortlisted for the 2015 Walter Scott Prize'Surely his masterpiece Intelligent, terrifying and comic Amis has tackled the biggest questions with imagination and intelligence, and the ultimate strength of this masterly novel is that he knows, and shows, that although there is no answer to the questions Auschwitz poses, we must never stop asking them. Read it, ponder it revel in it indeed then read it again.'Allan Massie, Scotsman There was an old story about a king who asked his favourite wizard to create a magic mirror. This mirror didnt show you your reflection. Instead, it showed you your soul it showed you who you really were. But the king couldnt look into the mirror without turning away, and nor could his courtiers. No one could.What happens when we discover who we really are? And how do we come to terms

with it? Fearless and original, *The Zone of Interest* is a violently dark love story set against a backdrop of unadulterated evil, and a vivid journey into the depths and contradictions of the human soul. Extrait 3.

SZMUL: Sonder Ihr seit achzen johr, we whisper, und ihr hott a fach. Once upon a time there was a king, and the king commissioned his favourite wizard to create a magic mirror. This mirror didnt show you your reflection. It showed you your soul it showed you who you really were. The wizard couldnt look at it without turning away. The king couldnt look at it. The courtiers couldnt look at it. A chestful of treasure was offered to any citizen in this peaceful land who could look at it for sixty seconds without turning away. And no one

could. I find that the KZ is that mirror. The KZ is that mirror, but with one difference. You cant turn away. We are of the Sonderkommando, the SK, the Special Squad, and we are the saddest men in the Lager. We are in fact the saddest men in the history of the world. And of all these very sad men I am the saddest.

Which is demonstrably, even measurably true. I am by some distance the earliest number, the lowest number the oldest number. As well as being the saddest men who ever lived, we are also the most disgusting. And yet our situation is paradoxical. It is difficult to see how we can be as disgusting as we unquestionably are when we do no harm. The case could be made that on balance we do a little good. Still, we are infinitely disgusting, and also infinitely sad. Nearly all our work is done among the dead, with the heavy scissors, the pliers and mallets, the buckets of petrol refuse, the ladles, the grinders. Yet we also move among the living. So we say, *Viens donc, petit marin. Accroche ton costume. Rapelle-toi le numro. Tu es quatre-vingts trois!* And we say, *Faites un nud avec les lacets, Monsieur. Je vais essayer de trouver un cintre pour vtre manteau. Astrakhan! Cest noison dagneaux, nest-ce pas?* After a major Aktion we typically receive a fifth of vodka or schnapps, five cigarettes, and a hundred grams of sausage made from bacon, veal, and pork suet. While we are not always sober, we are never hungry and we are never cold, at least not at night. We sleep in the room above the disused crematory (hard by the Monopoly Building), where the sacks of hair are cured. When he was still with us, my philosophical friend Adam used to say, *We dont even have the comfort of innocence. I didnt and I dont agree. I would still plead not guilty. A hero, of course, would escape and tell the world. But it is my feeling that the world has known for quite some time. How could it not, given the scale?* There persist three reasons, or excuses, for going on living: first, to bear witness, and, second, to exact mortal vengeance. I am bearing witness; but the magic looking glass does not show me a killer. Or not yet. Third, and most crucially, we save a life (or prolong a life) at the rate of one per transport. Sometimes none, sometimes, two an average of one. And 0.01 per cent is not 0.00. They are invariably male youths. It has to be effected while theyre leaving the train; by the time the lines form for the selection its already too late. *Ihr seit achzen johr alt, we whisper, und ihr hott a fach. Sic achtzehn Jahre alt sind, und Sie haben einen Handel. Vous avez dix-huit ans, et vous avez un commerce. You are eighteen years old, and you have a trade.* *Revue de presse* "Auschwitz was, in the most essential sense, unspeakable. Its thus something only creative writing can speak about. If youre Amis, that is. The most daring novelist of our time." (John Sutherland *The Times*) "The Zone of Interest is a tour de force of sheer verbal virtuosity, and a brilliant, celestially upsetting novel inspired by no less than a profound moral curiosity about human beings. Its stunning." (Richard Ford) "Nasty, timely, as good as anything Amis has written since *London Fields* He has done his subject justice." (*Spectator*) "It is energetic, deeply researched, it is bracingly cruel It makes the reader squirm and resist and finally laugh A superb novel, an important one Where was the career-crowning work that might finally win this author his Booker? Seriously, look no further." (Tom Lamont *GQ*) "He likes to stamp every sentence with his authority, like the name through a stick of rock, and here he reinvents hell on earth in his distinctively gaudy, insistent, elaborate prose. It is exceptionally brave. Shakespearean. Its exciting; its alive; its more than slightly mad. As the title suggests, it is dreadfully interesting." (Theo Tait *Sunday Times*)