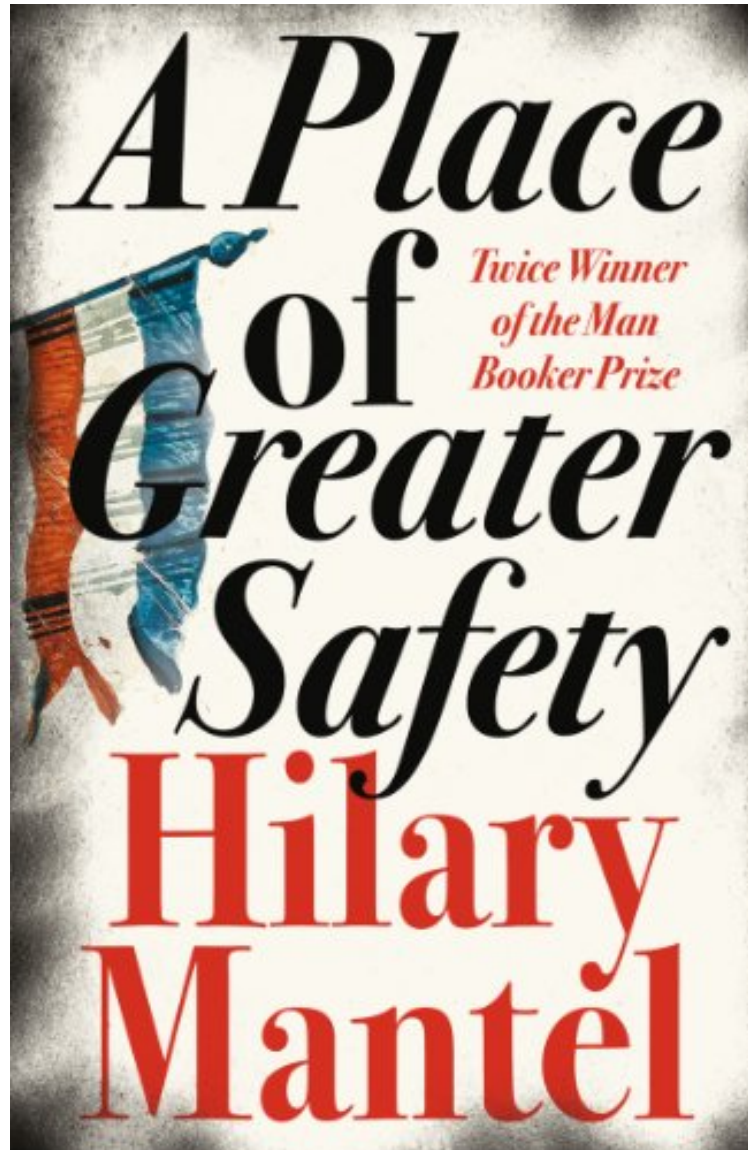


[FREE] A Place of Greater Safety

## A Place of Greater Safety

Von Hilary Mantel

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**Von Hilary Mantel : A Place of Greater Safety** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Place of Greater Safety:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen3 von 3 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. "What will become of liberty? Some say it is finished..."Von expressLike her Booker-Prize awarded books Wolf Hall and Bring up the Bodies, this is a historical novel and Mantel is interested in the relationship between history and fiction. However, Mantel frequently has the characters state real quotations from their works, on the theory that what goes

onto the record has often been checked and accepted as truth. The swirl of events that created and accompanied the French Revolution, struck even its real life protagonists often as unbelievable: the execution of Louis XVI, who was very popular right into the summer of 1790, seemed to many, even after his beheading more like fiction. The author is a novelist who obviously is excited about historical research and detail, especially the blend of violence and power that accompany every revolution. Mantel avoids panoramic descriptions of the revolutionary process as the novel form is rather unsuited to wide-angle description and analysis, except one happens to be Leon Tolstoy. Apart from a few instantaneous mobs, the Parisian masses have no place in these 872 pages. Also the provinces are largely absent, figuring basically as places where the three main characters grow up, Georges-Jacques Danton, Maximilien Robespierre and Camille Desmoulins. At this point, the reader will realize that the book also serves as biography of these men of whom not much is known before they arrived in Paris and never wish to return. The author achieves the broader political context among other details rather through the conversations of her subjects, which are the novel's most amazing features. Mantel demonstrates with insight to which degree the fear and victimhood caused by the "terreur" was shared by the three revolutionary protagonists. Not just France or the rest of Europe, the world changed entirely in the years that followed 1789: new regimes, new laws, a new system of education - all these indeed revolutionized the way of life. Great families suddenly struggled to survive, obscure persons rose dramatically to prominence, from workman to marshal of France or, in the most celebrated case, from from impoverished lieutenant to Empereur des Franais. Of course, the cast of characters is wide and varied, from the family members of the three protagonists to the Orleanists, to the Assemble Nationale where Dr. Guillotin is an expert on public health and the renegade Comte de Mirabeau is sitting for the Third Estate and politicians described as Girondins. Focussing on the psychology and motivations of leading individuals is not a novelistic exclusivity, au contraire, the historiography of the French Revolution is flooded with obsessions about such figures. One of the Revolution's early victims was Chateaubriand who concluded: "Jamais le meurtre ne sera mes yeux un objet d'admiration et un argument de libert. Je ne connais rien de plus servile, de plus mprisable, de plus lche, de plus born qu'un terroriste." (Mmoires d'outre-tombe). One of the more astonishing aspects is the way, the author intertwines the politics of government and terror with gender politics. In contrast to the title of the novel, there is no place that is safe, no private life is immune from the touch of the terreur. Of course, the narrated marital ecology of the protagonists are imaginations, but it is not far-fetched to think that the politicians of the terreur went home at night and tried to live normal lives. This situation is employed to highlight the perspective of the female figures traditionally lost from view. In particular, the author summons a whole cast of women whose existence framed the lives of the three male protagonists and it must be noted that just about all of them are portrayed plainly unflattering. All this created mountains of documents, first as decrees of the Assemble Nationale and journaux officiels, but soon the facts were presented in more accessible and more voluminous ways. In the 1820s the publication of memoirs developed into a veritable industry, and almost everyone from the Marquis de Lafayette, already hero of the American Revolution, to Napoleon himself, had written their own accounts of the events. In the next step the Revolution supplied novelists with a dramatic backdrop: Alexandre Dumas began a series of volumes, starting with "Joseph Balsamo"; but while real and famous people appear in his pages, they do so only in passing. The same was true, a little later, when Dickens wrote "A Tale of Two Cities". Obviously, a late-20th-century novelist, like Ms Mantel, working at a much greater distance, should choose another perspective and make the principal figures of the Revolution the main characters. As she writes in the author's note: "anything that seems particularly unlikely is probably true" which leaves the reader in a rather peculiar situation. Nevertheless, the author is a gifted writer and as a work of fiction, *A Place of Greater Safety* is undeniably a success. Ms. Mantel comprehends how people think and how they react. She introduces Danton as a most disobedient boy, then as a happily married young lawyer and helps her readers to understand his emotions as he progresses to the revolutionary leadership. In similar ways she develops Robespierre and Desmoulins in extremely readable characterizations.

2 von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. *A Place of Greater Safety* Von Peter Vogt Ich hatte die deutsche bersetzung (Brder) gelesen und wollte es nun mit dem Original vergleichen. Mantel ist wie immer hervorragend, aber man bentigt wirklich das Personenverzeichnis am Anfang des Buches - Mantel betrifft hier noch die Russen. "*A Place of Greater Safety*" ist vielleicht nicht so gut geschrieben und witzig/ironisch wie ihre beiden ersten Thomas Cromwell Romane, aber ist ein grosses Buch und sicher auch zum zweiten Mal lesenswert.

10 von 12 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Historical fiction at its finest. Von Ein Kunde I first found this gem when I was a graduate student in London on a random trip through a local bookstore chain. I had never heard of the author, and purchased the book during a spell of summer boredom and because I have degrees in both French and History. It turned out to be an amazingly lucky find. The book's most interesting facet is the view of the interior life of its characters. It does more than fill in the background of events, constructing private conversations between historical figures -- it offers insight and motive (or the lack thereof) for some of the most fascinating people in modern history. I've reread the book several times and been pleased to give it as a gift to more than one friend.

Kurzbeschreibung From the double Man Booker prize-winner comes an extraordinary work of historical imagination this is Hilary Mantel's epic novel of the French Revolution. Georges-Jacques Danton: zealous, energetic and debt-ridden. Maximilien Robespierre: small, diligent and terrified of violence. And Camille Desmoulins: a genius of rhetoric, charming and handsome, yet also erratic and untrustworthy. As these young men, key figures of the French Revolution, taste the addictive delights of power, the darker side of the period's political ideals is unleashed and all must face the horror that follows. As 19th-century novelists Alexandre Dumas and Charles Dickens both discovered, the French Revolution makes for great drama. This lesson has not been lost on Hilary Mantel, whose *A Place of Greater Safety* brings a 20th-century sensibility to the stirring events of 1789. Mantel's approach is nothing if not ambitious: her three main characters, Georges-Jacques Danton, Maximilien Robespierre, and Camille Desmoulins, happen to have been major players in the early days of the revolution--men whose mix of ambition, idealism, and ego helped unleash the Terror and brought them eventually to their own tragic ends. As Mantel points out in her forward, none of these men was famous before the revolution; thus not a great deal is known about their early lives. What would constrain the biographer, however, is an open invitation to the fiction writer to let the imagination run wild; thus Mantel freely extrapolates from what is known of her protagonists' personalities and relationships with each other to construct their pasts. This is a huge, complex novel, but the author has done her homework. Though Danton, Robespierre, and Desmoulins are at the center of her story, they are by no means the only major characters who populate the novel. Mantel uses historical figures as well as fictional ones to provide different points of view on the story. As she moves from one to the next, her narrative voice changes back and forth from first to third person as she sometimes grants us access to her characters' deepest thoughts and feelings, and other times keeps us guessing. *A Place of Greater Safety* is a happy marriage of literary and historical fiction, and a bona fide page-turner, as well. --Margaret Prior.com As 19th-century novelists Alexandre Dumas and Charles Dickens both discovered, the French Revolution makes for great drama. This lesson has not been lost on Hilary Mantel, whose *A Place of Greater Safety* brings a 20th-century sensibility to the stirring events of 1789. Mantel's approach is nothing if not ambitious: her three main characters, Georges-Jacques Danton, Maximilien Robespierre, and Camille Desmoulins, happen to have been major players in the early days of the revolution--men whose mix of ambition, idealism, and ego helped unleash the Terror and brought them eventually to their own tragic ends. As Mantel points out in her forward, none of these men was famous before the revolution; thus not a great deal is known about their early lives. What would constrain the biographer, however, is an open invitation to the fiction writer to let the imagination run wild; thus Mantel freely extrapolates from what is known of her protagonists' personalities and relationships with each other to construct their pasts. This is a huge, complex novel, but the author has done her homework. Though Danton, Robespierre, and Desmoulins are at the center of her story, they are by no means the only major characters who populate the novel. Mantel uses historical figures as well as fictional ones to provide different points of view on the story. As she moves from one to the next, her narrative voice changes back and forth from first to third person as she sometimes grants us access to her characters' deepest thoughts and feelings, and other times keeps us guessing. *A Place of Greater Safety* is a happy marriage of literary and historical fiction, and a bona fide page-turner, as well. --Margaret Prior