

'A wise, sad, wonderfully written memoir that's ripe for rediscovery'  
DAVID NICHOLLS, author of ONE DAY and US

# *The Perfect Stranger*

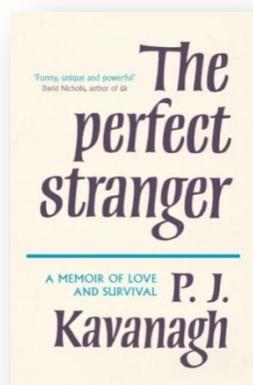
A MEMOIR OF LOVE AND SURVIVAL

P.J. KAVANAGH

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'A fine memorial to youth and love - perhaps to the youth and love of all our generation'  
MICHAEL FRAYN

First published in 1966, *The Perfect Stranger* is a uniquely male examination of deep, all-consuming love. It is also the story of a young man's passage into adulthood, and with it, the search for a sense of 'arrival' that goes hand in hand with youth.



We follow the adventures and incarnations of a young man as he journeys from the austere conditions of 1940s boarding school to the tomfoolery of the Redcoats at Butlins; from colourful sojourns across Europe to life as a serving soldier in Korea; then finally and joyfully to a settled life in academia and poetry. But most powerful of all is his emotional life as a lover and husband, and his intense, tragic relationship with a girl called Sally Lehmann.

Acutely observed and unsentimental, Kavanagh captures the intoxicating, obsessive and almost otherworldly nature of love with a brutal, unnerving honesty. It's an extraordinarily raw and masculine depiction of how a man is capable of giving himself utterly a woman.

Admirers of the *The Perfect Stranger* include Michael Frayn, Richard Ingrams and David Nicholls. It was hailed by critics on publication as an instant classic which utterly re-invented the memoir genre.

'I've re-read *The Perfect Stranger* many times and still think it, though unique, a model "of its kind" '  
DEREK MAHON



#### About the Author

P.J. Kavanagh is a poet and writer. He has served as a Redcoat at Butlins, in the Army in Korea, in Indonesia for the British Council, as an actor on Father Ted and a columnist for *The Spectator*. He now lives in Gloucestershire. In 2014 his *New Selected Poems* were published by Carcanet.

P.J. KAVANAGH is available for interview

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