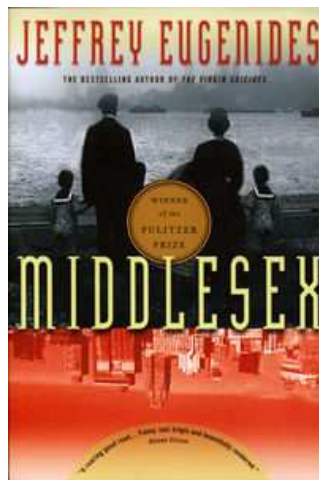


Middlesex (novel)

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Middlesex



Author	Jeffrey Eugenides
Cover artist	William Webb (Bloomsbury paperback)
Country	United States
Language	English
Genre(s)	Novel
Publisher	Bloomsbury Publishing Plc (UK) Farrar, Straus and Giroux (USA)
Publication date	7 October 2002
Media type	Print (Paperback and Hardback) and audio-CD
Pages	529 pp (Bloomsbury paperback)
ISBN	ISBN 0-374-19969-8 (Farrar, Straus and Giroux hardcover) ISBN 0-7475-6162-1 (Bloomsbury paperback)

Middlesex is a novel by Jeffrey Eugenides. It was published in 2002 and won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2003. On June 5, 2007, Oprah Winfrey announced the novel as the Oprah's Book Club 2007 Summer Selection.

The narrator and protagonist, Calliope Stephanides (later called Cal), an intersexed person of Greek descent, has 5-alpha-reductase deficiency. The bulk of the novel is devoted to telling his coming-of-age story growing up in Detroit, Michigan in the late 20th century. This story, however, is intertwined with elements of a family saga, meditations on the era's zeitgeist and bits of contemporary history.

Plot summary

The novel begins in the small Greek village of his grandparents, where brother Lefty and sister Desdemona fall in love. The two are forced to emigrate to America during the 1922 war between Greece and Turkey. Leaving behind their village, they are free to marry without risking the social stigma. They meet their cousin Sourmelina and her husband in Detroit, Michigan.

Lefty and Desdemona have a son, Milton, who marries Lina's daughter, Tessie. Milton and Tessie, who are second cousins, have two children. "Chapter Eleven" (possibly a reference to the fact that he eventually bankrupts the family business) is a normal boy, but Calliope is intersexed, although the family doesn't know about it for many years, and is raised as a girl.

At fourteen, Calliope falls in love with her female best friend (referred to in the novel as "The Obscure Object") and has her first sexual experiences with both sexes. After an accident, a doctor discovers that Calliope is intersexed, and she is taken to a clinic in New York where she undergoes a series of tests and examinations. Faced with the prospect of sex reassignment surgery, Calliope runs away and takes the male identity of Cal. Cal hitchhikes cross-country, finally arriving in San Francisco, where he becomes an attraction in a burlesque show.

Her father Milton, back in Detroit, repeatedly receives phonecalls from an anonymous man saying he knows where Calliope is, and will

release her to him if he gives him \$25,000. Milton, to make sure, asks the man what village Calliope's grandparents are from, and the man replies, Bithynios, near Smyrna, which is the correct answer. Milton goes to the agreed upon location (the train station where Desdemona and Lefty met Sourmelina when they first came to Detroit), and drops the money. He changes his mind though, figuring that something isn't right, and finds that it's his priest brother-in-law and his wife's former fiancé, Father Mike. This leads to a car chase to the Canadian border, where Milton is killed in a pile-up, and Father Mike is arrested.

The club where Cal worked is raided by police (since Cal is underage), and Cal is returned into Chapter Eleven's custody, and the two fly back to Grosse Pointe for the funeral. The book ends with Desdemona confessing to Cal that Lefty was her brother; Cal promises to keep it a secret until Desdemona dies.

Awards and nominations

Middlesex won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2003.

External links

- The New York Review of Books review of *Middlesex* (<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/15794>)
- Excerpt of *Middlesex* (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/collective/A843176>)
- First chapter of *Middlesex* (<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/15/books/chapters/0915-1st-eugenides.html?ex=1141621200&en=c0efdb7e59ddf500&ei=5070>)
Free registration required.
- *Middlesex* at Fantastic Fiction (<http://www.fantasticfiction.co.uk/e/jeffrey-eugenides/middlesex.htm>)
- Photos of the first edition of *Middlesex* (<http://www.pprize.com/BookDetail.php?bk=85>)
- *Middlesex* selected by Oprah's book club (June 2007) (<http://blogcritics.org/archives/2007/06/09/173152.php>)

Preceded by <i>Empire Falls</i> by Richard Russo	Pulitzer Prize for Fiction 2003	Succeeded by <i>The Known World</i> by Edward P. Jones
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