



Earth (Oxford World's Classics)

Émile Zola

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'Only the earth is immortal...the earth we love enough to commit murder for her.'

Zola's novel of peasant life, the fifteenth in the Rougon-Macquart series, is generally regarded as one of his finest achievements, comparable to *Germinal* and *L'Assommoir*. Set in a village in the Beauce, in northern France, it depicts the harshness of the peasants' world and their visceral attachment to the land. Jean Macquart, a veteran of the battle of Solferino and now an itinerant farm labourer, is drawn into the affairs of the Fouan family when he starts courting young Françoise. He becomes involved in a bitter dispute over the property of Papa Fouan when the old man divides his land between his three children. Resentment turns to greed and violence in a Darwinian battle for supremacy.

Zola's unflinching depiction of the savagery of peasant life shocked his readers, and led to attacks on Naturalism's literary agenda. This new translation captures the novel's blend of brutality and lyricism in its evocation of the inexorable cycle of the natural world.

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