



# Oxygen

By Andrew Miller

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It is the summer of 1997. In England, Alec Valentine is returning home to care for his ailing mother, Alice, a task that only reinforces his deep sense of inadequacy. In San Francisco, his older brother Larry prepares to come home as well, knowing it will be hard to conceal that his acting career is sliding toward sleaze and his marriage is faltering. In Paris, on the other hand, the Hungarian exile László Lázár, whose play Alec is translating, seems to have it all--a comfortable home, critical acclaim, a loving boyfriend, and a close circle of friends. Yet he cannot shake off the memories of the 1956 uprising and the cry for help he left unanswered. As these unforgettable characters soon learn, the moment has come to assess the turns taken and the opportunities missed. For each of them will soon take part in acts of liberation, even if they are not necessarily what they might have expected.

Evoking an extraordinary range of emotions and insights, *Oxygen* lives and breathes beyond the final page.

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## Oxygen By Andrew Miller Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

In Andrew Miller's third novel, *Oxygen*, the award-winning author of *Ingenious Pain* offers an intense, claustrophobic tale of parallel lives, of regret and redemption.

A family reunion of sorts is underway in the summer of 1997 for Alice, a newly retired, long-widowed schoolteacher, dying of cancer at her home in the English countryside. Gathered at her side are her two sons: Alec, a myopic, indecisive translator, and the more gregarious Larry, an unemployed TV soap star whose glittering U.S. career is about to take a nosedive into the shabby territory of porn films, so he can stave off bankruptcy and hold on to his disintegrating marriage. The counterpoint to this scenario is Laszlo Lazar, Hungarian exile and fêted playwright, whose latest work, *Oxygen*, Alec is translating. Lazar, who has a comfortable existence in one of the more fashionable Paris *quartiers*, seems to possess everything that Alec does not: critical success, a loving partner, a longstanding circle of artistic friends. Yet Lazar is tormented by memories of the 1956 uprising and a comrade he feels he betrayed. When a political splinter group asks him to undertake a mysterious mission, he seizes his chance to atone for the past.

Shifting between a quintessentially English idyll, the carousing bars of Paris, the physical and emotional aridity of California, and a Budapest of the past and present, Miller skillfully evokes his characters' stories and their common theme--the liberation of self--even if the end result is self-destruction. He writes compassionately of the terminally ill Alice, clinging to the last vestiges of life, the last agonizing breath: "Was that the last to go? Certain gestures, reflexes, a way of cocking the head or moving the hands in speech?" He reminds us that human beings have choices, even in despair, and he provides a suitably ambiguous ending to round off a wise and engrossing novel. --Catherine Taylor, *Amazon.co.uk*

### From Publishers Weekly

Three characters on the cusp of crisis and one on the brink of death inhabit Miller's moving new novel, in which each grapples with despair and discovers that love can confer purifying strength. Widowed school administrator Alice Valentine is dying at her home in England's West Country. She's dependent on an oxygen tank and on her younger son, Alec, who has left his London apartment to care for her. Depressed and feeling unable to cope, the unstable Alec has coincidentally received an assignment that could make his career: to translate a play called *Oxygen*, written in French by Hungarian exile Laszlo Lazar. Alice's older son, Larry, had always been the successful brother, early on as a tennis star and later as a TV actor. But Larry's been out of a job for some time, and drink and drugs have eroded his moral judgment, alienated his wife and possibly affected his six-year-old daughter. When the family convenes at Alice's bedside for what will be her last birthday, each member is submerged in private struggles. Meanwhile, in Paris, Lazar is surrounded by friends and grateful for the devotion of his lover, Kurt, but he remains guilt-ridden because of his failure to avert a tragedy during the Hungarian uprising in 1956. Contacted by Albanian exiles conspiring to fight the Serbs in Kosovo, Lazar has a chance to redeem himself on a dangerous mission. With brilliant dexterity, Miller intertwines the strands of his plot and leads each character to epiphanies, capped by a breathtaking denouement. Miller's first novel, *Ingenious Pain*, won several important literary prizes, including the IMPAC. It's no wonder that *Oxygen* was a Booker Prize finalist. Written in elegant, resonant prose, this book breathes with compassion and honesty, and with the rare quality called hope. (Apr.) Forecast: Apt comparisons to Michael Cunningham's *The Hours* may add impetus to sales bound to be initiated by good reviews and a seven-city author tour.

From Library Journal

This Booker Prize nominee from Miller (*Casanova in Love*) presents a group of characters trying to get a hit of the title element. A family gathers in England at the deathbed of matriarch Alice Valentine, now literally dependent on her oxygen tank. As Alice tries to come to terms with bodily failure, her older son, Larry, former tennis and Hollywood TV star, tries to cope with drugs, alcohol, a failing marriage, a klepto daughter, and a questionable career move toward pornography. Her younger son, Alec, tries to break free of depression and failure and pegs his hopes on a commission he has received to translate a play called *Oxygene*. Meanwhile, the play's Paris-based Hungarian author undertakes a semidangerous mission back to his homeland to atone for his failure during the 1956 uprising; once home, he undertakes an even more dangerous personal mission. The result of all this complicated plotting is insightful, sometimes painful, and always elegantly symmetrical. Highly recommended. Robert E. Brown, Onondaga Cty. P.L., Syracuse, NY  
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## **Users Review**

**From reader reviews:**

**Jeremiah Burroughs:**

Hey guys, do you would like to finds a new book you just read? May be the book with the headline Oxygen suitable to you? The particular book was written by renowned writer in this era. The actual book untitled *Oxygenis* one of several books that everyone read now. This particular book was inspired many men and women in the world. When you read this publication you will enter the new dimension that you ever know prior to. The author explained their plan in the simple way, thus all of people can easily to be aware of the core of this publication. This book will give you a lots of information about this world now. In order to see the represented of the world within this book.

**Nancy Sena:**

Playing with family within a park, coming to see the water world or hanging out with good friends is thing that usually you might have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try point that really opposite from that. One activity that make you not feeling tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition info. Even you love Oxygen, it is possible to enjoy both. It is very good combination right, you still desire to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh can happen its mind hangout fellas. What? Still don't buy it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

**Rosalyn Kendall:**

That e-book can make you to feel relax. This kind of book Oxygen was multi-colored and of course has pictures on the website. As we know that book Oxygen has many kinds or type. Start from kids until teens. For example Naruto or Investigation company Conan you can read and feel that you are the character on there. Therefore , not at all of book tend to be make you bored, any it makes you feel happy, fun and chill out. Try to choose the best book to suit your needs and try to like reading that.

**Paulette Preston:**

What is your hobby? Have you heard this question when you got college students? We believe that that query was given by teacher on their students. Many kinds of hobby, Every individual has different hobby. And also you know that little person including reading or as looking at become their hobby. You have to know that reading is very important and book as to be the matter. Book is important thing to add you knowledge, except your current teacher or lecturer. You discover good news or update with regards to something by book. Numerous books that can you choose to adopt be your object. One of them is actually Oxygen.

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