

## **How Soon Is Never?: A Novel**

Marc Spitz

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There is a light and it never goes out . . . or is there?

Welcome to the big Reagan '80s, where ketchup is a vegetable and the Cold War looms large and chilly. If like Joe Green you were coming of age during this boom era, your main concerns include one or more of the following: a rainbow assortment of Polo shirts worn with the collar flipped up, K-Swiss tennis shoes, a new cable channel called MTV, and Top 40 radio. Stuck in the suburban haze of Long Island, New York, Joe Green knows there has got to be more to life.

However, salvation is on the way, in the form of a quiffed-up quartet from Manchester, England, who take over the airways of a local radio station. Hearing the Smiths for the first time jerks Joe awake: Morrissey's wry and witty lyrics speak to him, and Johnny Marr's driven guitar chords get under his skin. He destroys his Phil Collins cassettes, pomades his hair into New Wave submission, studies up on his Oscar Wilde, and falls in love. He even shows up for dinner on time. That is, until his favorite band breaks up and then breaks his heart.

Fast-forward some fifteen years. Joe Green is making a living as a rock journalist, still recovering from a wicked post-college smack addiction and slumming with youngsters who ironically "appreciate" the seminal '80s music that once gave his life meaning. It's too late to go home, or is it?

What if Joe Green can get the Smiths back together? What if reuniting the long-broken-up band can reverse the passage of time and bring back the magic of youth? What if it helps him win the heart of the woman he loves?

**How Soon Is Never?** is an acerbic, ingenious look at Reagan-era adolescence, the power of hearing a record that changes your life, and the dangers of nostalgia.

Be prepared to see a bit of yourself in Joe Green.

From the Trade Paperback edition.



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