



# Thus Bad Begins: A novel

*Javier Marias*

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**Thus Bad Begins: A novel** Javier Marias

**From the internationally acclaimed author of *The Infatuations* comes the mesmerizing story of a couple living in the shadow of a mysterious, unhappy history--a novel about the cruel, tender punishments we exact on those we love.**

Madrid, 1980. Juan de Vere, nearly finished with his university degree, takes a job as personal assistant to Eduardo Muriel, an eccentric, once-successful film director. Urbane, discreet, irreproachable, Muriel is an irresistible idol to the young man. But Muriel's voluptuous wife, Beatriz, inhabits their home like an unwanted ghost; and on the periphery of their lives is Dr. Jorge Van Vechten, a family friend implicated in unsavory rumors that Muriel now asks Juan to investigate. As Juan draws closer to the truth, he uncovers only more questions. What is at the root of Muriel's hostility toward his wife? How did Beatriz meet Van Vechten? What happened during the war? Marias leads us deep into the intrigues of these characters, through a daring exploration of rancor, suspicion, loyalty, trust, and the infinitely permeable boundaries between the deceptions perpetrated on us by others and those we inflict upon ourselves.

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