



The New City: A Novel

Stephen Amidon

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An immensely powerful social novel about community and race in America--large in its scale and ambition, shattering in its impact--that transforms suburbia into the setting for great fiction.

Newton, Maryland, 1973. The Vietnam War is winding down, the Senate Watergate hearings are heating up. And in this pristine and meticulously planned community, an innocent misunderstanding is about to set the two men who control its quiet streets on a fateful collision course.

Austin Swope is the white lawyer who made the dream of this new city a reality through years of cunning lawyering and smooth real-estate deals. Earl Wooten is the up-by-his-bootstraps black master builder who with his bulldozers and backhoes raised Newton from its foundations--and in the process, he believes, escaped a lifetime of racism and privation. They are best friends, as are their two teenaged sons, Teddy and Joel, each the repository of their respective fathers' deepest hopes. The shining future beckons.

But cracks are appearing. A fight at the Teen Center over music escalates into a near race riot. Bad publicity ensues, which Austin knows is detrimental to business. Earl has problems as well: construction delays, exploding gaslights, and a son in love with a beautiful blond, Susan Truax, daughter of a Vietnam veteran who is finding peace a greater challenge than war. In a city born of a vision of racial harmony, the seeds have been sown for a series of mixed signals, miscalculations, and entirely human failings to culminate in an inexorable slide toward destruction.

Perfect in every period detail, **The New City** is an important novel that combines compassion for its flawed characters with a brilliant, gripping plot that gathers momentum on every page. An American tragedy on a grand scale, a cathartic occasion of pity and terror, and a vision of the country, in its best and worst aspects, at a pivotal point in its social history, **The New City** announces Stephen Amidon's arrival as a major novelist.

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