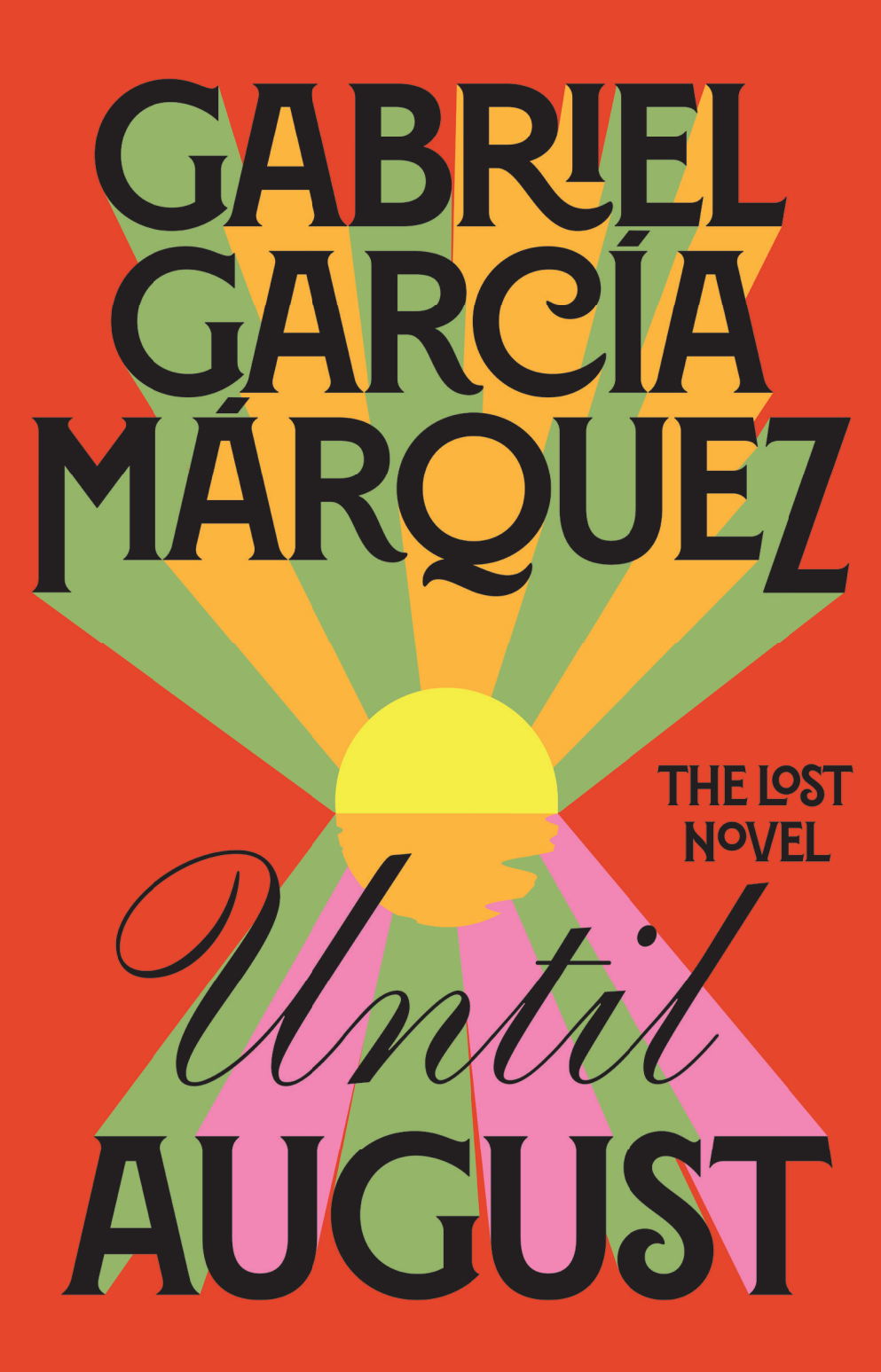

GABRIEL
GARCÍA
MÁRQUEZ
THE LOST
NOVEL
Until
AUGUST

ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR

Anne McLean studied history in London, Ontario, and literary translation in London, England, and now lives in Toronto, where she translates Latin American and Spanish novels, short stories, memoirs and other writings by authors including Julio Cortázar, Javier Cercas, Juan Gabriel Vásquez and Héctor Abad. Her translation of *The Scandal of the Century* by Gabriel García Márquez was published by Knopf in 2019.

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First published in the United States of America by Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, New York, and in Canada by Alfred A. Knopf Canada, a division of Penguin Random House Canada Limited, Toronto 2024
First published in Great Britain by Viking 2024
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Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

The authorized representative in the EEA is Penguin Random House Ireland, Morrison Chambers, 32 Nassau Street, Dublin D02 YH68

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978–0–241–68635–5

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PREFACE

The memory loss our father suffered in his final years, as most people will find easy to imagine, was extremely tough on all of us. But in particular, the way that loss diminished his ability to continue to write with his customary rigor was a source of desperate frustration for him. He told us once with the clarity and eloquence of the great writer he was: "Memory is at once my source material and my tool. Without it, there's nothing."

Until August was the fruit of one last effort to carry on creating against all odds. The process

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was a race between his artistic perfectionism and his vanishing mental faculties. The lengthy back-and-forth of the many versions of the text is described in detail, much better than we could, by our friend Cristóbal Pera in his editor's note for the Spanish edition. At the time, all we knew was Gabo's final judgment: "This book doesn't work. It must be destroyed."

We did not destroy it, but we did set it aside, in the hope that time would decide what to do with it. Reading it again almost ten years after his death, we discovered that the text contained a great many wonderful achievements. It is not, of course, as polished as his greatest books. It has a few rough patches and contradictions, but nothing that impedes enjoyment of the most outstanding aspects of Gabo's work: his capacity for invention, his poetic use of language, his captivating storytelling, his understanding of humankind, and his affection for our experiences and misadventures, especially when it comes to love. Love, possibly the main subject of his entire oeuvre.

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Judging the book to be much better than we remembered it, another possibility occurred to us: that the fading faculties that kept him from finishing the book also kept him from realizing how good it was. In an act of betrayal, we decided to put his readers' pleasure ahead of all other considerations. If they are delighted, it's possible Gabo might forgive us. In that we trust.

—Rodrigo & Gonzalo García Barcha

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She returned to the island on Friday, August 16, on the three o'clock ferry. She was wearing jeans, a plaid shirt, plain flat shoes without socks, carrying a satin parasol and a handbag, and her only luggage was a beach bag. In the row of taxis at the dock she went straight to an old model corroded by the sea air. The driver welcomed her warmly and took her jolting across the destitute village, with its mud-walled shacks, palm-thatch roofs, and streets of burning sand beside a sea in flames. He had to swerve around undaunted pigs and naked chil-

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