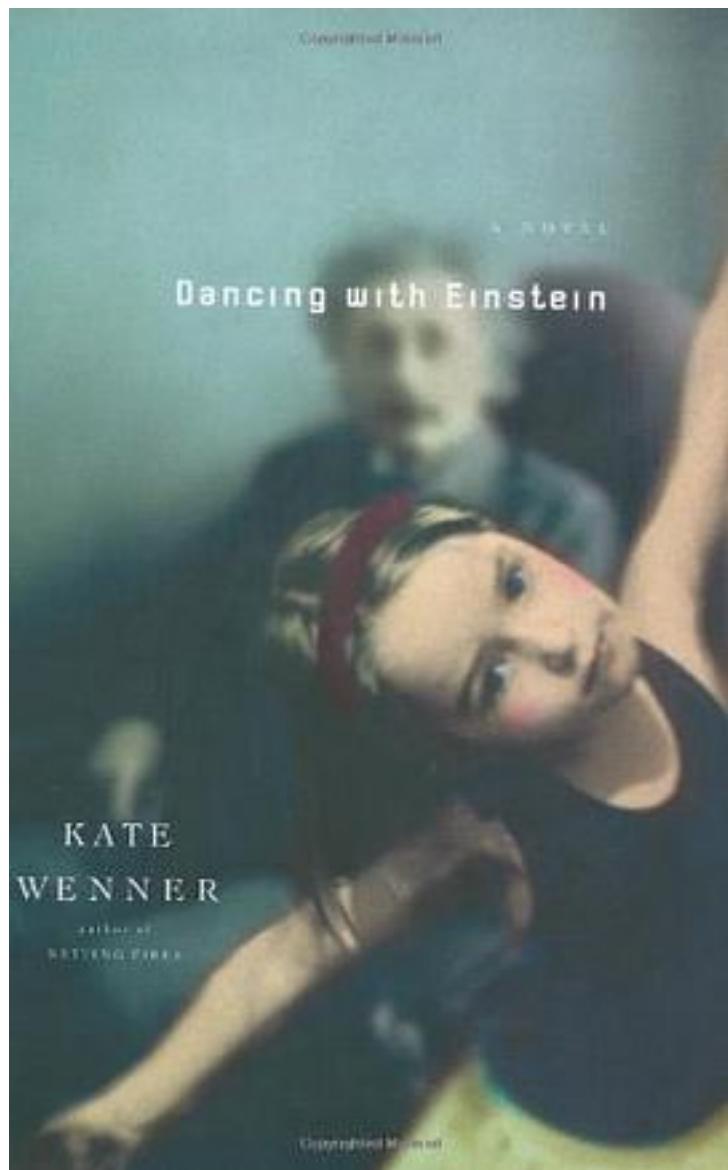


Dancing With Einstein



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出版者:Simon & Schuster

出版时间:2004-2

装帧:HRD

isbn:9780743251648

From the acclaimed author of *Setting Fires*, this highly original new novel offers a protagonist so intensely felt and so compassionately rendered that readers will not easily let her go at the novel's end. She is Marea Hoffman, who, after wandering the world for seven years, has returned to New York at age thirty with the intention of starting her real life. But Marea approaches everything in her own idiosyncratic style, and she is soon seeing four different therapists simultaneously and telling her story to each in a different way. The story she reveals is about her childhood in 1950s Princeton during the age of "duck and cover" drills and McCarthyism, when fear of communism obsessed America. Marea's father, a Holocaust survivor, worked on the Manhattan Project and later on the development of the hydrogen bomb; her mother was a confirmed pacifist. Frightened by her early exposure to the threat of nuclear annihilation, young Marea finds comfort in the company of her father's colleague and friend, the grandfatherly Albert Einstein. Einstein charms Marea even as he provokes the wrenching moral debate that will drive her parents apart. When Einstein disappears from Marea's life as suddenly as he entered it and her father is killed in a mysterious car accident, she is left alone with a mother she no longer trusts and with questions that won't go away. Nearly two decades later, during the August hiatus from her four therapists, Marea takes a reluctant trip home to Princeton. There her eyes are newly opened to the past when she uncovers her father's secret Cold War diary. Weaving back and forth between 1970s New York and 1950s Princeton, Wenner's exploration of the impact that history can have on a young life is powerful and moving -- a deeply intelligent look at the challenge of finding hope in the modern age.

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