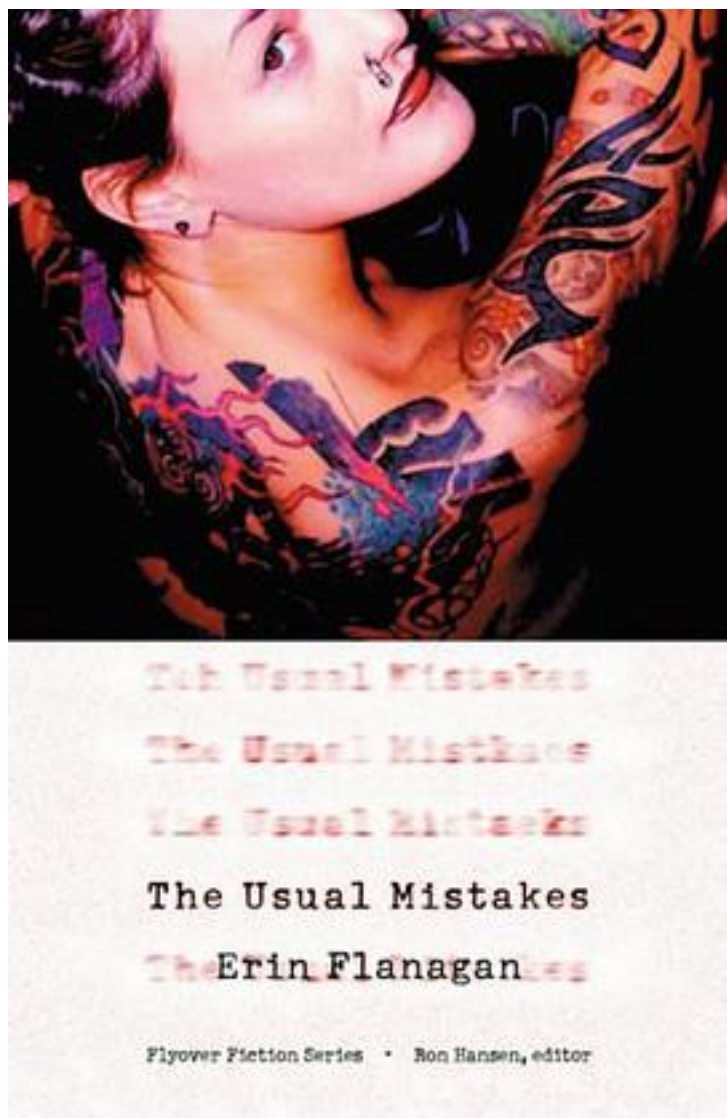


The Usual Mistakes



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著者:Flanagan, Erin

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These characters may be the usual suspects, making the usual mistakes, but their stories are not the usual fare. Populated by pretenders, ex-cons, and wannabes who bend the rules, break the law, and risk everything to salvage their own hearts, the twelve stories in "The Usual Mistakes" conduct readers into a world where betrayal is just a beginning. Deception, infidelity, even death - where a person goes from there is the mainspring of Erin Flanagan's fiction, and in the turns her characters take, we find rare insights: that we are often wedded to one another because of, not in spite of, our flaws and that this paradoxical connection may be cause for hope. An impostor medical assistant and an ex-neo-Nazi, covered head-to-toe in swastika tattoos; a seemingly oafish but suddenly sympathetic husband and a boorish mother-in-law in need of comforting; a young boy who finds adulthood by learning to forgive: the characters in these stories are by turns inappropriate, outlandish, selfish, and kind, complicated in the ways only real people are. Though they ask for little and rarely get even that, they do astonishing things with whatever does come their way; and their stories, in Flanagan's sure hands, never fail to surprise. Erin Flanagan's short fiction has appeared in "Colorado Review", "Baltimore Review", "South Carolina Review", "North Dakota Quarterly", "Cimarron Review", "Connecticut Review", the anthology "Best New American Voices 2001", and elsewhere.

作者介绍:

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