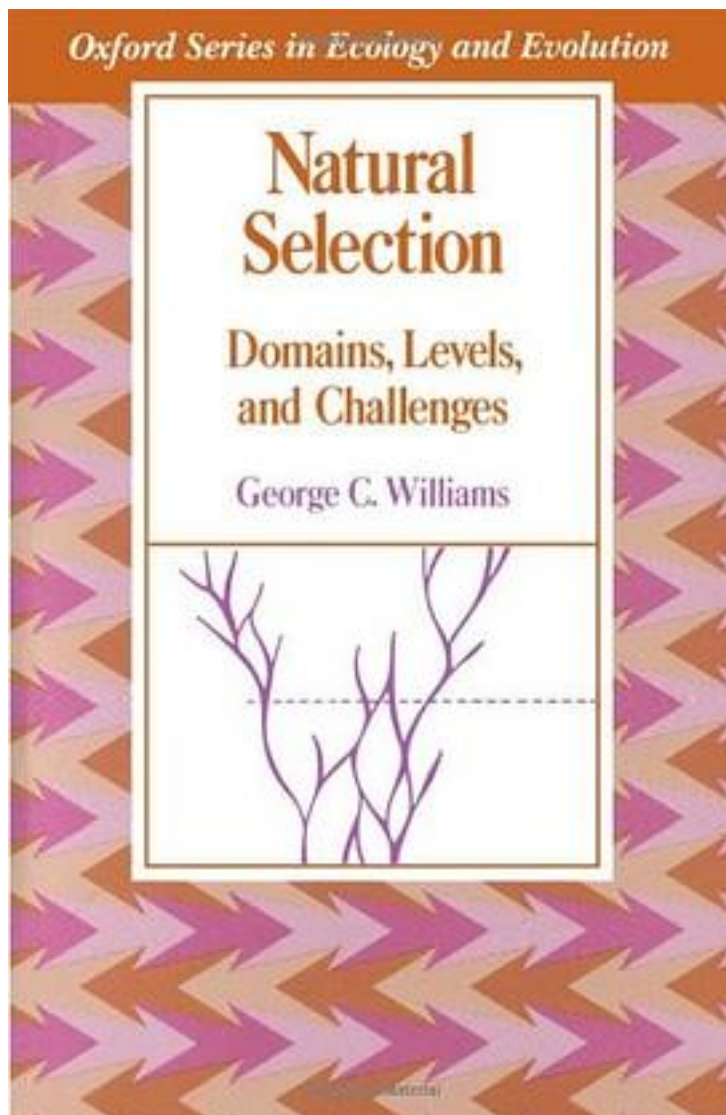


Natural Selection



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著者:

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From Publishers Weekly Barthelme's bracingly cynical novel of marital discord and midlife crisis in a Houston suburb aches with tenderness and hurt. At 40 Peter Wexler feels "stuck in the job, in the life, marking time." He tells his nine-year-old son things like "You're small and sort of dumb." Coming unhinged, Peter separates from his second wife, Lily, an arts administrator who is adept at baby-sitting his depressions. Before Peter reunites with Lily on their kitchen floor, he will do much soul-searching and make love to her strung-out ex-sister-in-law on the front fender of a Chevy. Not bad for a guy who agonizes over whether his marriage was based on "frightened-of-loss longing," a PR hack who concocts tiny wind-up ape toys for "ape concept promotions." The Darwinian overtones of the novel's title take on a dark irony in the shattering, unforeseen finale, whose senseless violence echoes the angst of all the characters. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Barthelme's fifth novel is about "the mess we make of our lives every day." Chronically dissatisfied narrator Peter Wexler drifts through two marriages and an uninvolved job; existence becomes meaningful to him only when his estranged wife, with whom he's just been reunited, dies in a freak automobile accident. Played out against Barthelme's overly familiar backdrop of shopping malls and subdivisions, Natural Selection is itself uninvolved. We don't know--or care--much more about Peter Wexler at the end of the novel than we do at the end of the first chapter. As his collection Chroma (LJ 5/1/87) illustrates, Barthelme's forte is the short story.- Grove Koger, Boise P.L., Id.Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. See all Editorial Reviews

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