

In Her Garden



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Within the framework of the classic Gothic suspense thriller, Jon Godden has written a haunting and psychologically complex novel set in England today. It is a novel that moves from the reassuringly cozy and familiar to the nightmarish, all the more terrifying for its setting: a formal and sunlit English country garden.

Grace Maitland at 75 has arranged her life to suit herself. When her husband was alive she travelled

with him around the world; now she prefers a quiet, circumscribed existence--seeing a few old friends who live nearby, taking part in the annual flower show, giving lunch to her grandchildren when they drive up from London, painting a little. But mostly she occupies herself with her garden--her joy, her pride, her crowning achievement. In her garden she is never lonely or bored.

But her stepdaughter is beginning to suggest that it might be too much for one elderly woman alone and that possibly Grace might prefer to give up the house and move into a flat with "window-boxes, perhaps a little roof garden." Grace knows she would stifle in a flat, but the garden is getting frightfully overgrown, so it seems like a bit of serendipitous luck when a battered white van drives up to the house and a young man steps from it, introducing himself as Ben Halden and saying he has heard she might need a gardener and may he apply.

Grace is charmed, and during the long summer days that she and Ben spend working side by side among the flowers, drinking companionable cups of tea in the kitchen, speaking together of the past, the present, and the future, a strange, strong friendship begins to form and grow. As the summer continues Grace feels awakening within herself a long-dormant

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