

Expensive Habits



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Maureen Howard has created her grandest heroine yet in *Expensive Habits*, a dazzling, big American novel. "So, let the story begin with potatoes," says Margaret Flood, finding the humble beginning of her life, a life that includes her celebrated career as writer, two ill-fated marriages and the ample slice of history she has witnessed, from McCarthy's witch hunts in the Fifties to the Watergate bust. You will not forget Maggie Flood once you listen to her wickedly

funny tales. She is an enchantress, a clever scold, a feisty, formidable woman--a love.

Struck down in mid-story with a heart condition.

Margaret is defiant: she has always controlled the plot. With the clock ticking against her, she finally attempts to review her life, for herself and those she has loved--to eaptare the lost truth for Jack Flood, her first husband, an ambitious cardiovascular sur-geon with a taste for female flesh; fur Bayard Strong, her snn, a gified d innocent who lovingly protects his parents from their failures. But expensive habits are a way of life for all the men and wumen in this masterful novel, and Margaret Flood is still holding the cards.

For Pinkham Strong, her greatest passion--society boy, adventarerer--who found his role as an elegant radical in the Sixties, she finds no forgiveness. In remarkably urgent prose, Maureen Howard reveals the tragic moment when the story is taken from her and the debts called in.

In Expensive tfabits the great figures of Margaret s fashionable scene, literary and political, are rendered as witty, unholly portraits: Sol, her Hollywood lover, the producer with a glitz talent for simulating reality; the burnt-out, carefully shopworn editor. Philo Pierce; and a group of aged communists, heroic types, who live in bourgeois splendor. In high style, Maurccn Howard s virtuosity encompasses all of Mar-

garet's false moves--her trendy scripts and trendy novels--and asks some important questions. What is left to value in a world where our deepest feelings are grist for the mill, and what of political commitment in a country that so desperately wants to be entertained? For what price does Margaret Flood trade private life for the public name?

With this extraordinary novel, Mauryeen Howard stakes out, more compellingly than ever before, her position in the front ranks of contemporary writers of fiction. Her inventive and powerful voice blends tragedy with farcical incident to present Margaret Flood's redemption from spiritual waste.

作者介绍:

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