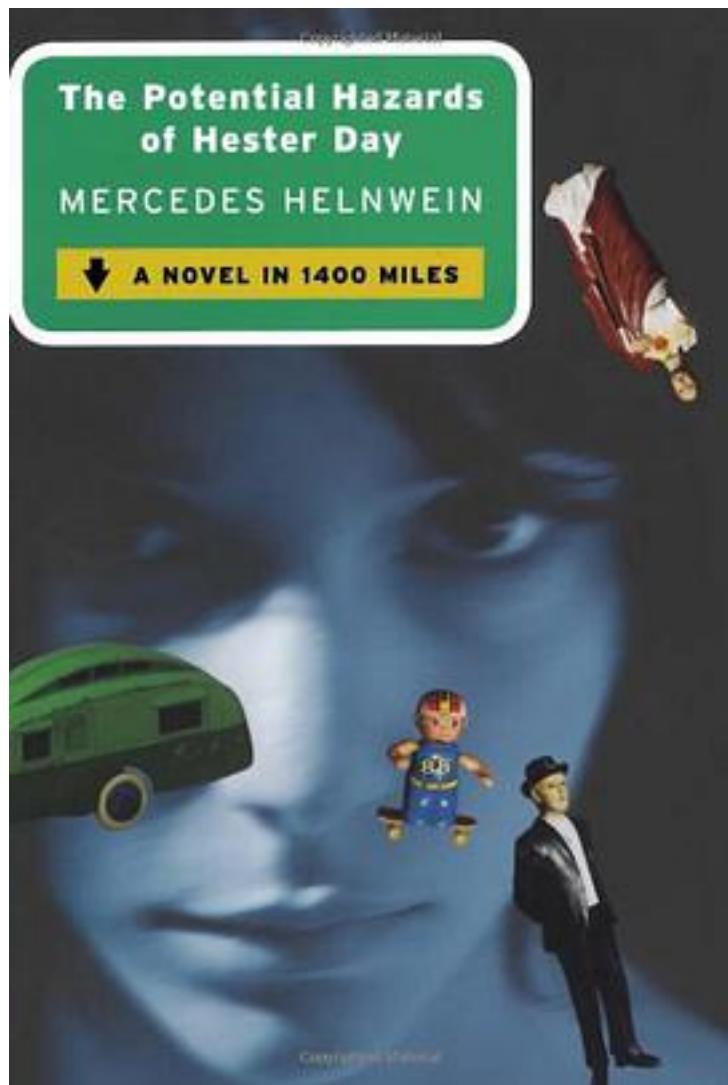


# The Potential Hazards of Hester Day



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Hester Louise Day: high school graduate, almost-wife, would-be mother, soon to be wanted for kidnapping a ten-year-old with a comb-over. Apprehensive about spending the rest of her existence in a void of nothingness in Nowheresville, Florida, where she currently lives with her painfully intrusive family, she decides to tip her life over into any kind of surrealism she can lay her hands on. Shortly after graduation and a heated fight with her mother featuring an airborne toaster, Hester's life takes a turn for the better when she notices a billboard with two wide-eyed children and the catchy phrase "All they want for Christmas is a family." What better way to drive a chainsaw through her placid existence? But when the adoption agency rejects her application to adopt a child, she realizes she must do something more drastic to derail the mediocre life threatening to spread out before her. Having found herself stuck in a camper named Arlene with Fenton Flaherty, her nemesis from the library (who, through a series of interesting events is now also Hester's husband), Jethro, Hester's ten-year-old cousin, and Duncan Clyde, a.k.a. "Jesus Freak," who is traveling along the side of the road asking passersby to sign his life-sized cross, Hester is quickly freed from anything even remotely mediocre (or normal, for that matter) about her life. Debut talent Mercedes Helnwein has crafted a sophisticated, savvy story that explores the un-likely friendship between two adolescent outcasts and a ten-year-old aspiring space-cowboy -- and what happens when you throw them in a camper without a compass. Preposterously dysfunctional, side-splittingly funny, and surprisingly touching, *The Potential Hazards of Hester Day* is an adventure that you'll want to experience again and again.

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