

In the Driver's Seat



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A dark, dazzling, surprisingly funny new collection of stories (“Masterly” —Adam Mars Jones, *The Observer* ; “A virtuoso performance” —Jane Shilling, *The Sunday Telegraph*) about single women and wives in various phases of midlife—anxious mothers, besotted mothers, beset mothers—in a (futile) search for security and consolation.

Helen Simpson’ s stories are short but by no means small. One story takes the Iraq war as its subject; another describes a smoker’ s reprieve from death by lung cancer; in another, a simple tale of home maintenance—a woman in a conversation with the carpenter replacing her door after a break-in—becomes a deftly sketched study of grief. In still another, Simpson manages the seemingly impossible—producing laughter at terminal illness and untimely death (this might be the first story in which the amputation of a limb provides a happy ending). And finally, the story entitled “Constitutional” —a pun on one of the word’ s meanings: a walk taken for the

benefit of one’ s health—deals with memory, family, Alzheimer’ s, oak trees, pregnancy for the over-forties, stolen photographs, and crossword puzzles.

Helen Simpson’ s stories move and disturb us as they light up the human gift for making the best of it— whatever it is.

作者介绍:

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