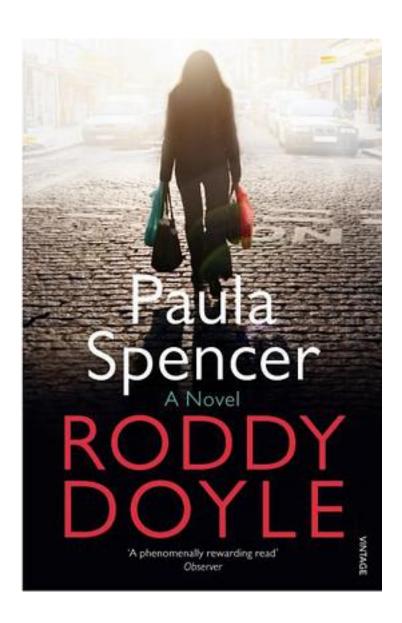
Paula Spencer -- 2007 publication.



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著者:Roddy Doyle

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When we first met Paula Spencer - in "The Woman Who Walked into Doors" - she was thirty-nine, recently widowed, an alcoholic struggling to hold her family together. Paula Spencer begins on the eve of Paula's forty-eighth birthday. She hasn't had a drink for four months and five days. Her youngest children, Jack and Leanne, are still living with her. They're grand kids, but she worries about Leanne. Paula still works as a cleaner, but all the others doing the job now seem to come from Eastern Europe, and the checkout girls in the supermarket are Nigerian. You can get a cappuccino in the cafe, and her sister Carmel is thinking of buying a holiday home in Bulgaria. Paula's got four grandchildren now; two of them are called Marcus and Sapphire. Reviewing "The Woman Who Walked into Doors", Mary Gordon wrote: 'It is the triumph of this novel that Mr Doyle - entirely without condescension - shows the inner life of this battered house-cleaner to be the same stuff as that of the heroes of the great novels of Europe.' Her words hold true for this new novel. Paula Spencer is brave, tenacious and very funny. The novel that hears her name is another triumph for Roddy Doyle.

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