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Happening



Synopsis

In 1963, Annie Ernaux, 23 and unattached, realizes she is pregnant. Shame arises in her like a plague: Understanding that her pregnancy will mark her and her family as social failures, she knows she cannot keep that child. This is the story, written forty years later, of a trauma Ernaux never overcame. In a France where abortion was illegal, she attempted, in vain, to self-administer the abortion with a knitting needle. Fearful and desperate, she finally located an abortionist, and ends up in a hospital emergency ward where she nearly dies. In *Happening*, Ernaux sifts through her memories and her journal entries dating from those days. Clearly, clearly, she gleans the meanings of her experience.

Book Information

File Size: 2380 KB

Print Length: 108 pages

Publisher: Seven Stories Press; 1 edition (January 4, 2011)

Publication Date: January 4, 2011

Sold by:Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00541ZWVC

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #344,133 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #95

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