



The Dog of the Marriage: Stories

Amy Hempel

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Amy Hempel's compassion, intensity, and illuminating observations have made her one of the most distinctive and admired modern writers. In three stunning books of stories, she has established a voice as unique and recognizable as the photographs of Cindy Sherman or the brushstrokes of Robert Motherwell. *The Dog of the Marriage*, Hempel's fourth collection, is about sexual obsession, relationships gone awry, and the unsatisfied longings of everyday life.

In "Offertory," a modern-day Scheherazade entertains and manipulates her lover with stories of her sexual encounters with a married couple as a very young woman. In "Reference # 388475848-5," a letter contesting a parking ticket becomes a beautiful and unnerving statement of faith. In "Jesus Is Waiting," a woman driving to New York sends a series of cryptically honest postcards to an old lover. And the title story is a heartbreaking tale about the objects and animals and unmet desires that are left behind after death or divorce.

These nine stories teem with wisdom, emotion, and surprising wit. Hempel explores the intricate psychology of people falling in and out of love, trying to locate something or someone elusive or lost. Her sentences are as lean, original, and startling as any in contemporary fiction.

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