



The Education of Harriet Hatfield: A Novel

May Sarton

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After her lover of thirty years dies, a Boston woman opens a bookstore for her neighborhood, an endeavor that forces her to confront her past while she rebuilds her future

Over the course of their thirty-year relationship, Vicky and Harriet fell into a predictable cadence: Vicky took the lead while Harriet was content to follow. When Vicky dies, Harriet is lost and in search of an identity that was subsumed by that of her partner for three decades. Lying awake in bed one evening, Harriet has an idea—a women’s bookstore for the residents of her blue-collar Boston neighborhood, where people can gather, talk, and buy great books. Using her inheritance from Vicky, Harriet begins her next great adventure, opening not only the store but also herself to whatever may come. But while some in the community thrill at the idea of her bookstore, others attack—using graffiti and hate mail to express their prejudice against what they perceive to be an invasion of their neighborhood by “filthy gay men and lesbians.” Against this newfound scrutiny and intolerance, Harriet must come to terms not only with the world her privilege had insulated her from, but with what it means to go without fear of labels or discrimination in pursuit of a fuller life.

This ebook features an extended biography of May Sarton.

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