



And Yet They Were Happy (LeapLit)

Helen Phillips

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"Brilliant miniatures. . . . Like the fables of Calvino, Millhauser, or W.S. Merwin. . . . Beautifully blends short story and prose poem. . . . Mermaids, subways, floods, cucumbers, magicians. . . . The book is a gallery of marvels. Phillips guides us through the 'Hall of Nostalgia For Things We Have Never Seen,' 'the factory where the virgins are made,' and 'the Anne Frank School for Expectant Mothers.' A depressed Noah admits he 'didn't get them all,' a wife guesses which of two identical men is her husband, a regime orders citizens to grow raspberries on windowsills. [Helen Phillips'] quietly elegant sentences are as clear as spring water, haunting as our own childhood memories."—Michael Dirda

"A deeply interesting mind is at work in these wry, lyrical stories. Phillips exploits the duality of our nature to create a timeless and most engaging collection."—Amy Hempel

"Haunted and lyrical and edible all at once."—Rivka Galchen

A young couple sets out to build a life together in an unstable world haunted by monsters, plagued by disasters, full of longing—but also one of transformation, wonder, and delight, peopled by the likes of Noah, Bob Dylan, the Virgin Mary, and Anne Frank. Hovering between reality and fantasy, whimsy and darkness, these linked fables describe a universe both surreal and familiar.

Helen Phillips received a 2009 Rona Jaffe Writer's Award, 2009 Meridian Editors' Prize, and 2008 Italo Calvino Fabulist Fiction Prize. Her work has appeared in many literary journals and two anthologies. She holds degrees from Yale University and Brooklyn College, and teaches creative writing at Brooklyn College.



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