



The Handyman: A Novel (Ballantine Reader's Circle)

Carolyn See

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With this brilliant novel about the surprises of destiny and the origins of fame, the critically acclaimed author of *Golden Days* ("Extraordinary . . . a very, very important book"-Los Angeles Times Book Review) and *Making History* ("Radiant . . . exciting and imaginative"-Cleveland Plain Dealer) firmly establishes her place as one of the preeminent chroniclers of our times.

The Handyman is the story of Bob Hampton, an aspiring young painter who has had to face the humbling fact that he doesn't know what to paint. And how are you supposed to be an artist in this world if you don't have a vision? Bob trades in his artist's palette for a minivan full of house paints, hammers, and nails, and sets about earning a little cash as a handyman.

Although he turns out to be very bad at fixing the things he's hired to fix, Bob demonstrates quite a knack for fixing the lives of the people around him. In the midst of his jerry-built repairs and inspired home improvements, Bob meets an extraordinary cast of characters--rendered in all their delightful eccentricity and human frailty as only Carolyn See can--each of whom shows Bob the true scope of his own remarkable talent. There's Angela Landry, a housewife with far too much time on her hands, a sexpot of a stepdaughter, and a son in need of attention; Jamie Walker, whose allergy-prone and ADD-afflicted children keep a menagerie of scaly pets that far exceed Jamie's managerial skills; Valerie LeClerc, older, sadder, and certainly wiser than Bob; and Hank and Ben, who leave a narrow-minded Midwest only to find unremitting illness and isolation in the California of their dreams.

Replete with stunning images and all of Carolyn See's trademark humor and wisdom, **The Handyman** depicts the countless ways in which our lives are intertwined and the profound effects we can have on one another. It is the kind of surprising and miraculously uplifting novel we have come to expect from the woman Diane Johnson has called "one of our most important writers."

From the Hardcover edition.

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Jamie Treat:

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