



Grief Is the Thing with Feathers: A Novel

Max Porter

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Here he is, husband and father, scruffy romantic, a shambolic scholar--a man adrift in the wake of his wife's sudden, accidental death. And there are his two sons who like him struggle in their London apartment to face the unbearable sadness that has engulfed them. The father imagines a future of well-meaning visitors and emptiness, while the boys wander, savage and unsupervised.

In this moment of violent despair they are visited by Crow--antagonist, trickster, goad, protector, therapist, and babysitter. This self-described "sentimental bird," at once wild and tender, who "finds humans dull except in grief," threatens to stay with the wounded family until they no longer need him. As weeks turn to months and the pain of loss lessens with the balm of memories, Crow's efforts are rewarded and the little unit of three begins to recover: Dad resumes his book about the poet Ted Hughes; the boys get on with it, grow up.

Part novella, part polyphonic fable, part essay on grief, Max Porter's extraordinary debut combines compassion and bravura style to dazzling effect. Full of angular wit and profound truths, *Grief Is the Thing with Feathers* is a startlingly original and haunting debut by a significant new talent.

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