



This House of Grief: The Story of a Murder Trial

Helen Garner

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'Two books in one: an expertly reported, brilliantly written story and, woven into that, Garner's meditation on the meaning of that story.'—Head Butler

"The Joan Didion of Australia" writes a masterful book about a real-life family tragedy....Her voice — intimate yet sharp, wry yet urgent — inspires trust as she pursues a twice-told tale that reveals an unsettling truth as relevant outside the courtroom as inside it: we tell ourselves stories in order to live but also in order to take revenge, to share guilt, to prolong pain, to blur memory and motive.'—*The Atlantic*

'A gripping account of a murder trial in which few of the participants act and react in ways we might predict. It's an examination not just of what happened, but also of what we prefer to believe and what we cannot face believing.'—Julian Barnes

'As involving, heart-rending and unsettling a read as you could possibly find, a true-life account of three deaths and a trial that leaves you with a profound sense of unease as its drama unfolds, and disturbing questions about how we judge guilt and innocence...Tailor-made for those who have gorged recently on the popular true-crime podcast Serial.'—*The Times UK*

'Helen Garner's account of the trial is a non-literary variation of Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* (1966). It is all the more shocking for her direct, no-nonsense, often horrified, approach.' Eileen Battersby, *Irish Times*

This House of Grief has all the trademark Helen Garner touches: harrowing scenes recorded without restraint or censorship; touching observations of characters' weaknesses; wry moments of humor.'—*Guardian*

'The twists and turns of this true-crime story are, in Garner's hands, more engrossing and dramatic than any thriller. Really, this is the kind of book you'll devour in one go.'—*The Age*

'Clear-eyed and deeply moving...Garner's skills as a novelist combine with her journalist incisiveness to give a vivid, compassionate and complex assessment of the crime and the societal issues surrounding it...*This House of Grief* is a book that preys on the mind—its themes are enormous, classical and highly contemporary.'—*NZ Herald*

'Garner sat through [all the trials]: sifting the evidence, observing the duelling lawyers, digging deep into the relationships which contributed to the catastrophe. She has turned a courtroom drama into something deeply human.'—*Australian Women's Weekly*

On the evening of 4 September 2005, Robert Farquharson, a separated husband, was driving his three sons home to their mother when his car plunged into a dam. The boys, aged ten, seven, and two, drowned. Was this an act of deliberate revenge or a tragic accident? The court case became Helen Garner's obsession. She was in the courtroom every day of Farquharson's trial and subsequent retrial, along with countless journalists and the families of both the accused and his former wife.

In this utterly compelling book, Helen Garner tells the story of a man and his broken life. At its core is a

search for truth that takes author and reader through complex psychological terrain. Garner exposes, with great compassion, that truth and justice are as complex as human frailty and morality.

Part of a nonfiction tradition that began with Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* and continues in the works of Janet Malcolm, Erroll Morris, and others.

Praise for Helen Garner's *The Spare Room*:

"Helen Garner is a great writer."—Peter Carey

"Swift, beautiful, and relentless."—Alice Sebold

"The Joan Didion of Australia"—*Los Angeles Times*

Helen Garner, born in 1942, is the author of numerous books of fiction and nonfiction. Her most recent novel *The Spare Room* was published to critical acclaim in 2010.

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