



The Siege: A Novel

Helen Dunmore

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Called "elegantly, starkly beautiful" by The New York Times Book Review, *The Siege* is Helen Dunmore's masterpiece. Her canvas is monumental -- the Nazis' 1941 winter siege on Leningrad that killed six hundred thousand -- but her focus is heartrendingly intimate. One family, the Levins, fights to stay alive in their small apartment, held together by the unlikely courage and resourcefulness of twenty-two-year-old Anna. Though she dreams of an artist's life, she must instead forage for food in the ever more desperate city and watch her little brother grow cruelly thin. Their father, a blacklisted writer who once advocated a robust life of the mind, withers in spirit and body. At such brutal times everything is tested. And yet Dunmore's inspiring story shows that even then, the triumph of the human heart is that love need not fall away. "The novel's imaginative richness," writes The Washington Post, "lies in this implicit question: In dire physical circumstances, is it possible to have an inner life? The answer seems to be that no survival is possible without one." Amid the turmoil of the siege, the unimaginable happens -- two people enter the Levins' frozen home and bring a kind of romance where before there was only bare survival. A sensitive young doctor becomes Anna's devoted partner, and her father is allowed a transcendent final episode with a mysterious woman from his past. *The Siege* marks an exciting new phase in a brilliant career, observed Publishers Weekly in a starred review: "Dunmore has built a sizable audience ... but this book should lift her to another level of literary prominence." "Dunmore's ... novel ... is an intimate record of an extraordinary human disaster ... a moving story of personal triumph and public tragedy." -- Laura Ciolkowski, San Francisco Chronicle "In Helen Dunmore's hands, this epic subject assumes a lyrical honesty that sometimes wrenches but more often lifts the spirit." -- Frances Taliaferro, The Washington Post "Dunmore unravels the tangle of suffering, war, and base emotions to produce a story woven with love ... Extraordinary." -- Barbara Conaty, Library Journal (starred review)

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