



The Half Brother: A Novel

Lars Saabye Christensen

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At the end of World War II, twenty-year-old Vera is brutally raped by an unknown assailant. From that rape is born a boy named Fred, a misfit who later becomes a talented boxer. Vera's young son, Barnum, forms a special but bizarre relationship with his half brother, fraught with rivalry and dependence as well as love. "I should have been your father," Fred tells Barnum, "instead of the fool who says he is."

It is Barnum, who is now a screenwriter with a fondness for lies and alcohol, who narrates his family's saga. As he shares his family's history, he chronicles generations of independent women and absent and flawed men whom he calls the Night Men. Among them is his father, Arnold, who bequeaths to Barnum his circus name, his excessively small stature, and a con man's belief in the power of illusion.

Filled with a galaxy of finely etched characters, this prize-winning novel is a tour de force and a literary masterpiece richly deserving of the accolades it has received.

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