



The Sunken Cathedral: A Novel

Kate Walbert

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From the National Book Award nominee and author of the acclaimed, *New York Times* bestselling *A Short History of Women*, a deeply moving, “lyrical, ominous, and unexpectedly funny” (Tom Perrotta, author of *The Leftovers*) novel that follows a cast of characters as they negotiate one of Manhattan’s swiftly changing neighborhoods, extreme weather, and the unease of twenty-first-century life.

Marie and Simone, friends for decades, were once immigrants to the city, survivors of World War II in Europe. Now widows living alone in Chelsea, they remain robust, engaged, and adventurous, even as the vistas from their past interrupt their present. Helen is an art historian who takes a painting class with Marie and Simone. Sid Morris, their instructor, presides over a dusty studio in a tenement slated for condo conversion; he awakes the interest of both Simone and Marie. Elizabeth is Marie’s upstairs tenant, a woman convinced that others have a secret way of being, a confidence and certainty she lacks. She is increasingly unmoored—baffled by her teenage son, her husband, and the roles she is meant to play.

In a chorus of voices, Kate Walbert, a “wickedly smart, gorgeous writer” (*The New York Times Book Review*), explores the growing disconnect between the world of action her characters inhabit and the longings, desires, and doubts they experience. Interweaving long narrative footnotes, Walbert paints portraits of marriage, of friendship, and of love in its many facets, always limning the inner life, the place of deepest yearning and anxiety. *The Sunken Cathedral* is a stunningly beautiful, profoundly wise novel about the way we live now.

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