



Lightning Rods

Helen DeWitt

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The long-awaited second novel by the author of “arguably the most exciting debut novel of the decade: *The Last Samurai*.” (Sam Anderson, *New York*).

“All I want is to be a success. That’s all I ask.” Joe fails to sell a single set of the Encyclopedia Britannica in six months. Then fails to sell a single Electrolux and must eat 126 pieces of homemade pie, served up by his would-be customers who feel sorry for him. Holed up in his trailer, Joe finds an outlet for his frustrations in a series of ingenious sexual fantasies, and at last strikes gold. His brainstorm, Lightning Rods, Inc., will take Joe to the very top — and to the very heart of corporate insanity — with an outrageous solution to the spectre of sexual harassment in the modern office.

An uproarious, hard-boiled modern fable of corporate life, sex, and race in America, Helen DeWitt’s *Lightning Rods* brims with the satiric energy of Nathanael West and the philosophic import of an Aristophanic comedy of ideas. Her wild yarn is second cousin to the spirit of Mel Brooks and the hilarious reality-blurring of *Being John Malkovich*. Dewitt continues to take the novel into new realms of storytelling — as the timeliness of *Lightning Rods* crosses over into timelessness.

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