



Florida: A Novel

Christine Schutt

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Finalist for the National Book Award: Christine Schutt's masterful novel—hailed by John Ashbery as “an amazing achievement”—about a remarkable little girl who comes of age, adrift, in the care of a rotating cast of indifferent relatives

Alice Fivey is seven years old when her father dies, and ten when her mentally fragile mother is institutionalized. So begins the “sleepover life” for Alice. Shuttled among the homes of wealthy relatives, retainers, babysitters, and reluctant caretakers, Alice must learn their habits and adapt if she is to survive. But how is she to remain intact after the loss of her parents, whose troubled pasts are invoked to punish and manipulate her? Books help, as do kindly teachers.

Set largely in the chilly Midwest, the vision of a life in Florida, first offered up by Alice's father as a promise of good health and balmy weather, grows in significance for Alice. She is an orphan, and as such she must forge a home and an identity beyond that of her namesake: her unstable mother.

Alice Fivey, consoled with reading, becomes a storyteller herself, building a home word by word in elegiac, luminous scenes that serve as evidence of the life-giving power of language.

A finalist for the National Book Award, *Florida* is an elegant, lyrical, and dreamlike first-person portrait of a young artist in early bloom, and a hauntingly beautiful tale of survival and growth told in a unique and unforgettable voice.

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