



Subtle Bodies (Vintage International)

Norman Rush

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In his long-awaited new novel, Norman Rush, author of three immensely praised books set in Africa, including the best-selling classic and National Book Award-winner *Mating*, returns home, giving us a sophisticated, often comical, romp through the particular joys and tribulations of marriage, and the dilemmas of friendship, as a group of college friends reunites in upstate New York twenty-some years after graduation.

When Douglas, the ringleader of a clique of self-styled wits of “superior sensibility” dies suddenly, his four remaining friends are summoned to his luxe estate high in the Catskills to memorialize his life and mourn his passing. Responding to an obscure sense of emergency in the call, Ned, our hero, flies in from San Francisco (where he is the main organizer of a march against the impending Iraq war), pursued instantly by his furious wife, Nina: they’re at a critical point in their attempt to get Nina pregnant, and she’s ovulating! It is Nina who gives us a pointed, irreverent commentary as the friends begin to catch up with one another. She is not above poking fun at some of their past exploits and the things they held dear, and she’s particularly hard on the departed Douglas, who she thinks undervalued her Ned. Ned is trying manfully to discern what it was that made this clutch of souls his friends to begin with, before time, sex, work, and the brutal quirks of history shaped them into who they are now—and, simultaneously, to guess at what will come next.

Subtle Bodies is filled with unexpected, funny, telling aperçus, alongside a deeper, moving exploration of the meanings of life. A novel of humor, small pleasures, deep emotions. A novel to enjoy and to ponder.

This ebook edition includes a Reading Group Guide.

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