



Mouthing the Words: A Novel

Camilla Gibb

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By turns harrowing and hilarious, this adroitly narrated winner of the Toronto Book Award re-creates the world in the imagination of Thelma. It's a world in which she can escape some of her more painful childhood realities, like those games her father likes to make her play, where he's the boss and she the naughty secretary. And her mother so fiercely favors her younger brother, the cherubic Willy, that Thelma finds herself perpetually in emotional exile. No wonder Thelma asks practically every adult she meets to adopt her. Along Thelma's bumpy way from a rural English village to Canada to a law degree at Oxford, she meets many potential parents and even makes some friends, but it is with the companions of her fertile imagination—with the scaredy-baby Janawee, moody and timid Ginniger, and big, strong, stoic Heroin—that Thelma finds comfort. With them, too, she loses an already tenuous connection to reality, though ultimately Thelma's spirit and humor prove to be as indomitable as her wit. "Moving and comic at once. . . . Hallucinatory, hilarious, and haunting."—Boston Globe "Prickly, unsentimental. . . a portrait of terrible comic humanity."—New York Times Book Review "Mesmerizing. . . . Lush, visceral prose . . . rings with an authority rarely found in first novels."—Washington Post Book World "A novel of astonishing power An instantaneous classic."—Baltimore Sun "Elegant . . . sings with an almost Victorian delicacy and sophistication."—San Francisco Chronicle

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