



Friendswood: A Novel

Rene Steinke

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“Steinke's sense of this small Texas town, with its explosive and interconnected lives and deaths, is absolutely masterful.”—Elizabeth Gilbert

A big, moving novel of one tight-knit Texas community and the events that alter its residents' lives forever.

Friendswood, Texas, is a small Gulf Coast town of church suppers, oil rigs on the horizon, hurricane weather, and high school football games. When tragedy rears its head with an industrial leak that kills and sickens residents, it pulls on the common thread that runs through the community, intensifying everything. From a confused fifteen-year-old girl beset by visions, to a high school football star tormented by his actions, to a mother galvanized by the death of her teen daughter, to a morally bankrupt father trying to survive his mistakes, René Steinke explores what happens when families are trapped in the ambiguity of history's missteps—when the actions of a few change the lives and well-being of many.

Driving the narrative powerfully forward is the suspenseful question of the fates of four Friendswood families, and Steinke's striking insight and empathy. Inspired in part by the town where she herself grew up, this layered, propulsive, psychologically complex story is poignant proof that extreme public events, as catastrophic as they might seem, must almost always pale in comparison to the intimate personal experiences and motivations of grief, love, lust, ambition, anxiety, and regret.

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