



# The Water Door: A Novel

*Rosetta Loy*

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**The Water Door: A Novel** Rosetta Loy

**A contemporary Italian classic reminiscent of *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*.**

A Garcia Lorca poem gives this book its title, "not even the smallest hand can open the water door," and this epigraph begins a story of unrequited love. A five-year-old girl, the daughter of a bourgeois Roman family in the late 1930s, finds the object of her desire in her German-speaking governess: blond, blue-eyed, milky-white Anne Marie.

The story of their relationship spans a single season, as the family moves through its obligatory social rituals. Their customs and manners are all absorbed through the wide-eyed gaze of their little girl making her first contact with the outside world. She encounters kindergarten, the nuns and their baroque Catholicism, and most importantly, a fascinating Jewish girl who lives across the street. Their friendship will change her relationship with her governess forever, especially once the Jewish girl disappears.

Loy's rhythmic, sensual prose animates a kaleidoscopic narrative, combining the intimacy of childhood emotions with nightmare glimpses of Fascist Italy during World War II.

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