



Internal Combustion: The Story of a Marriage and a Murder in the Motor City

Joyce Maynard

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On Mother's Day night, 2004, award winning fourth grade teacher Nancy Seaman left the Tudor home she shared with her husband of thirty two years in the gated community of Farmington Hills, near Detroit, Michigan, and drove in a driving rain storm to Home Depot, to purchase a hatchet. Three days later, police discovered the mutilated body of Bob Seaman a successful auto industry engineer, softball coach and passionate collector of vintage Mustangs in the back of the family's Ford Explorer. As the shackles were placed on her wrists, Nancy Seaman asserted that her husband had been beating her, and she'd killed him in self defense. At her trial, two radically different stories emerged. One of the couple's sons, Greg, testified that his father had been abusing his mother for years. The other, Jeff, testified for the prosecution, charging his mother as a cold blooded killer. Joyce Maynard's chilling work delves beyond the events of the crime itself, to explore the lives of an American family who seemed to have everything. Her exploration of the story led to a year's research in suburban Detroit but the story she found there will take the reader to the Depression era farm country of Illinois, the working class neighborhoods of the auto industry in its heyday and even, surprisingly, to a Baptist church in burned out downtown Detroit. Along the way we meet a Transylvanian forensic pathologist, a beautiful young prosecutor, an old school police chief, a television news crew hungry for ratings, the softball scorekeeper mom accused of carrying on an affair with the murdered man, and her two shell shocked teenagers, still reeling from the death of their beloved coach, and a mother who has to tell her daughter why her favorite teacher won't be in school any more. As in Joyce Maynard's previous books including "To Die For", based on a true crime, and her best selling memoir, "At Home in the World" Joyce Maynard's themes here involve family secrets, the deep fissures that lie below the surface of the glittering exteriors, and the deep, potentially fatal, fissures in the American Dream.

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