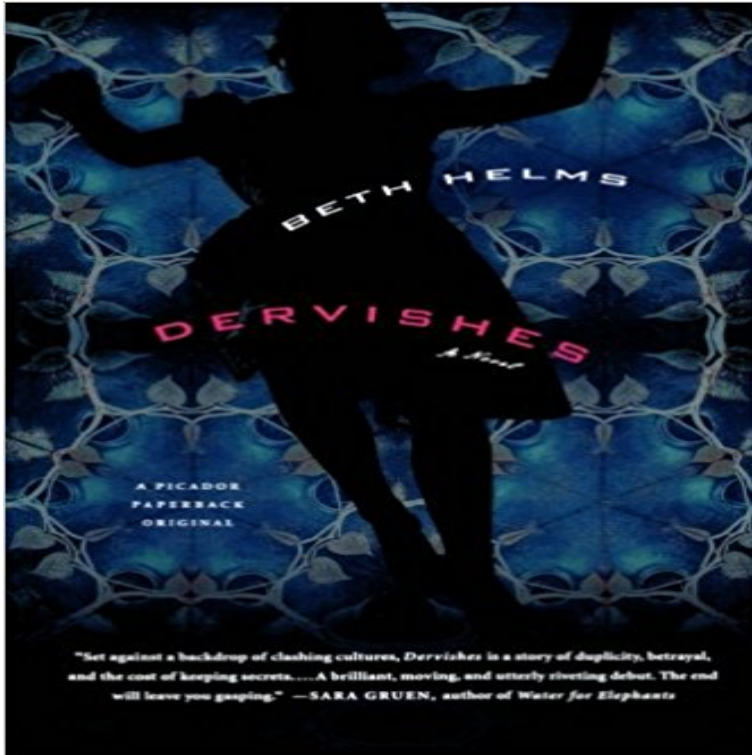


Dervishes: A Novel



The richly textured, panoramic story of an American mother and daughter stuck in the expatriate community of Ankara, Turkey, in 1975--each of them trying to discover a life in the larger world, each in way over her head. When she is twelve years old, Canada moves with her mother and father to Ankara, Turkey, where her father has been stationed by the government. It is 1975--the Cold War is in full swing and tensions in the Middle East are escalating. But in Ankara's diplomatic community, the days are lazy and indulgent--one long cocktail party. While her father routinely disappears on official business, Canada and her mother, Grace, find themselves in the company of gossipy embassy wives and wealthy Turkish women, immersed in a routine of card games and afternoons at the baths. By the time summer comes, and the city's electricity shuts down from dawn to dusk, mother and daughter can no longer tolerate the insular society--or each other. Alternating between their perspectives, *Dervishes* follows Canada and Grace as they set out into the larger city: Grace is drawn to the lover of her wealthy, manipulative Turkish friend; Canada competes with another girl for the attentions of an arrogant Turkish houseboy, one who knows all their mothers' secrets. Before long, both are in over their heads, and their transgressions threaten to strand them between the safe island of westerners and a strange city that guards its secrets fiercely. Written with sensuousness and empathy, Beth Helms' debut is the story of a mother and daughter cut loose from their foundations, hungry for independence but dangerously naive.

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