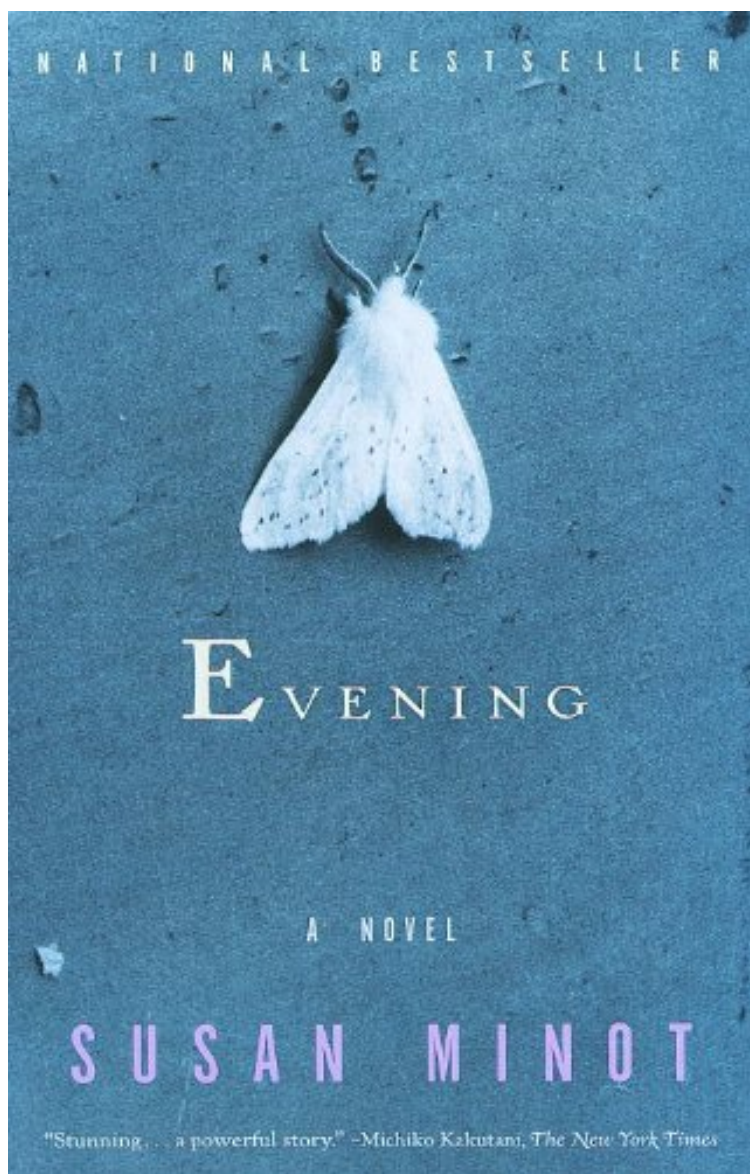


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Evening



Par Susan Minot
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le: 2010-09-22Sorti le: 2010-09-22Format: Ebook Kindle

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurWith two novels and one short story collection published to overwhelming critical acclaim ("Monkeys takes your breath away," said Anne Tyler; "heartbreaking, exhilarating," raved the New York Times Book), Susan Minot has emerged as one of the most gifted writers in America, praised for her ability to strike at powerful emotional truths in language that is sensual and commanding, mesmerizing in its vitality and intelligence. Now, with Evening, she gives us her most ambitious novel, a work of surpassing beauty. During a summer weekend on the coast of Maine, at the wedding of her best friend, Ann Grant fell in love. She was twenty-five. Forty years later--after three marriages and five children--Ann Lord finds herself in the dim claustrophobia of illness, careening between lucidity and delirium and only vaguely

conscious of the friends and family parading by her bedside, when the memory of that weekend returns to her with the clarity and intensity of a fever-dream. Evening unfolds in the rushlight of that memory, as Ann relives those three vivid days on the New England coast, with motorboats buzzing and bands playing in the night, and the devastating tragedy that followed a spectacular wedding. Here, in the surge of hope and possibility that coursed through her at twenty-five--in a singular time of complete surrender--Ann discovers the highest point of her life. Superbly written and miraculously uplifting, Evening is a stirring exploration of time and memory, of love's transcendence and of its failure to transcend--a rich testament to the depths of grief and passion, and a stunning achievement..com

As Ann Lord lies on her deathbed, her daughter delivers a balsam pillow from the attic. At first the ailing woman is confused, but suddenly the scent reminds her of the "wild tumult" she experienced 40 years earlier: Something stole into her as she walked in the dark, a dream she'd had long ago. The air was so black she was unable to see her arms, it was a warm summer night. Above her she could make out the dark line of the tops of spruce trees and a sky lit with stars. She felt the warm tar through the soles of her shoes. The boy beside her took her hand. In the porous world between conscious and unconscious the protagonist of Evening revisits the great passions of her life, along with its considerable disappointments. The boy in the dark remains the fixed point--not so much because he is the most important man in her life, but because of the untapped possibilities he represents. Meanwhile, friends and relations come to sit by Ann Lord's side as she veers between clarity and feverish recollection. In her third novel, Susan Minot takes some new risks--her narrative spanning seven decades of memory and her style ranging from Stegneresque particularity to the exquisite abstraction Virginia Woolf perfected in *To the Lighthouse*. Equal parts memory and desire, fiction and poetry, Evening is a seductive story made more so by the measured pace of details emerging, one by one, like stars. --Cristina Del Sesto

Extrait A new lens passed over everything she saw, the shadows moved on the wall like skeletons handing things to each other. Her body was flung back over a thousand beds in a thousand other rooms. She was undergoing a revolution, she felt split open. In her mattress there beat the feather of a wild bird. Where were you all this time? she said. Where have you been? I guess far away. Yes you were. Too far away. They sat in silence. You know you frightened me a little, she said. At the beginning. No. You did. He smiled at that. You looked as if you didn't need anyone, she said. But those are the ones who need the most, he said. Don't you know that? I do now, she said. Too late. Never too late to know something, he said. Maybe not, she said. But too late to do any good. She lifted the yellow suitcase and banged it against her leg. She dragged it over the polished floor. The ceiling of Grand Central towered above her with arches and glass panes and squares of sunlight. She was not late and did not have to hurry. The clerk in the window bowed his forehead like a priest in confession and pushed her ticket through. Across the great domed room she spotted a redcap with a cart and though she usually would have carried her bag to save money decided this was a special occasion. She was on her way to a wedding. She signaled to him. The redcap flung her suitcase onto his cart. Whoever you're going to meet, he said, he's a lucky guy. The heat in New York had been terrible and the air underground at the gate was heavy and close. When the train came out of the tunnel she saw thunderheads turning the sky yellow and grey. The rain started, ticking the window with scratches then pouring over it in streams. Crowds of cat-o'-nine-tails surged in a wave as the train blew past. By the time they reached Providence the rain had stopped and it was hot again with a hot wind blowing in the open doors. The engine shut off and they waited in the station. No new passengers got on. It was as if the world had paused on this late morning in July. She held her book loosely and watched out the window. The station in Boston was shadowed in scaffolding dark as a cave with bands of light on the paneled benches and few travelers. The redcap who took her bag was young and did not say a word. He pushed a contraption with a bad wheel and had trouble steering through the door. She came out of the damp entranceway into the brightness of the turn-around beyond where she saw among the parked cars the dark green MG. The doors were open and she saw in front Buddy Wittenborn and in the driver's seat Ralph Eastman and a third person with his back to her. The person was standing with one foot up on the running board. When she got close Ralph caught sight of her and jumped out of the car and Buddy looked over with a lazy smile. Only when she was near did the back turn around and the long leg come off the running board and she saw the man's face. He was wearing squarish dark glasses so she couldn't see his eyes. She noticed his mouth was full though set in a particular firm way, the combination of which affected her curiously. She felt as if she'd been struck on the forehead with a brick. The person's face seemed lit from within. Ralph Eastman gave her a kiss on the cheek asking how was the career girl from New York and Buddy Wittenborn slid off the front seat and hugged her and ducked back turning his head and pushing his glasses back on his nose. He was wearing a disheveled shirt buttoned up wrong and a belt

outside the belt loops and even with the beanie on his head looked as always handsome. Ralph tipped the redcap, taking charge of the bags. She was trying to look at any other place other than at the person in the sunglasses. Oh, Buddy said. This is Arden. She was far enough away from the person that not to shake his hand was not rude. She didn't dare shake his hand. Hi, she said and smiled brightly. Her handbag fell to the ground. That's Ann, Buddy said. Hello Ann. The person had a deep voice which came from somewhere deep in his chest. We've been waiting for you, Ann. It was also kind of rough. She caught a lipstick rolling and looked up. The person was not smiling. She blushed and looked back down. Am I that late? We stopped for a while in Providence . . . She felt the black glasses facing her. Ralph slammed the back hatch. A late train has been figured into the calculations. He's sure we'll miss the ferry, Buddy said. On the contrary, just what I plan to avoid. So let's go. The person was walking away from the car. He bent to pick something off the ground. Harris, Ralph called, starting the car. The person came back on long slow legs and got into the backseat beside Ann. It was an MG station wagon and the windows tilted in. He held up some keys attached to a Saint Christopher medal. These yours? he said. God, Ann said, taking her keys. Thank you. That was idiotic. She looked straight at him. Which is your name? They both are. In what order? Which is better? The face was placid and she could not read the eyes behind the glasses. I don't know. They're both good. No, the person said and he smiled for the first time. One is always better. It was 1954 and Ann Grant was twenty-five years old. They drove north. She liked being the girl in a car with three boys. They drove through Revere where the water was purple at the shore and the highway was raised above the tract houses, past gas stations with enormous signs shaped like horses, and miniature golf courses with waterfalls and orange dinosaurs. They passed motels with teepee cabins and restaurants shaped like pagodas and restaurants shaped like barns with plastic cows outside. They exited to Danvers winding past steeples and fudge stores with pink script writing back onto the highway where green countryside flickered out the window behind the person's profile. His name was Harris, Ralph was the one to say, Harris Arden. She sat beside Harris Arden in the backseat and they talked and now and then he turned toward her. He'd grown up in Virginia, was born in Turkey, had lived in Switzerland. His father was a diplomat, raised in St. Louis, his mother was Turkish which explained his coloring. Harris Arden lived in Chicago now, he said, and worked in a hospital. Then Ann Grant realized who he was. He was Doctor R, Carl's friend, whom he'd served with in Korea. But it wasn't Doctor R as she had thought but Doctor Ar for Arden. She had pictured someone older. You're the musician, she said. Not so much anymore. Isn't your band playing at the wedding? What's left of it. And you're a doctor too? Buddy said, prying open a beer with a Swiss Army knife. Who wants a cold one? No one took him up on it. The person didn't seem to hear and stared out the window. Ann sings, Ralph said, facing forward driving. Does she? The person looked interested. Just for fun, Ann said. Just in little places. In New York little places are pretty big. These really are little, she said. It's not even my job. Ann's a pretty good singer, Buddy said. I'd like to hear her sing, said the person in the sunglasses looking ahead. Have you moved her? She was sitting up this morning. Mrs. Lord. The smell of rose water. I'm sorry I'm late, said Ann Lord. We stopped for a long time in Providence. Mrs. Lord, you have a visitor. Ann Lord opened her eyes. No he's not, she said. It wasn't a visitor, it was Dr. Baker. Afternoon Ann. Mercifully Dick Baker did not shout at her. His sleeves were rolled above the elbows, a stethoscope hung around his neck. Afternoon, she said. I look a fright. Nonsense, he said. You've never looked a fright. He came in every other day. Dick Baker was a friend of the Lords' and used to come often to dinner parties when Oscar was still alive--they had entertained more than--and as he held Ann Lord's wrist he remembered once watching her leave the dining room and disappear down the dark hallway toward the kitchen. She'd been wearing a dress with a pink sheen to it and the sheen had retained the light after her legs and arms and head had disappeared in the gloom. He checked her pulse against his watch, remembering the sheen. After a while she said, Where am I? You're in Cambridge in the house on Emerson Street. His dry fingers pressed near her ears. He wasn't looking at her, feeling around the way doctors do, as if they're blind. I don't mean that, she said, fixing him in her gaze. That's not what I mean. You're doing fine. Dick. He had bent over the beds of many patients, but it was always different when you knew the person. It had an extra dimension to it. Dr. Baker was not a spiritual man. He considered himself a practical man. His job was simply to figure out what the heck the problem was and do his damndest to fix it and if he couldn't then move on and hope with the next one he could. He had been as straightforward with her as he was able. The treatment might give her some time but as far as curing this type of cancer . . . no that wasn't likely. There was no doubt about it when you knew the person the job changed. He felt less effectual when he knew more of the person's life. Not that he knew a

great deal about Ann Lord. She was one of those mysterious women, not that he kne...