



San Miguel: A Novel

T.C. Boyle

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From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Women*, a historical novel about three women's lives on a California island

On a tiny, desolate, windswept island off the coast of Southern California, two families, one in the 1880s and one in the 1930s, come to start new lives and pursue dreams of self-reliance and freedom. Their extraordinary stories, full of struggle and hope, are the subject of T. C. Boyle's haunting new novel.

Thirty-eight-year-old Marantha Waters arrives on San Miguel on New Year's Day 1888 to restore her failing health. Joined by her husband, a stubborn, driven Civil War veteran who will take over the operation of the sheep ranch on the island, Marantha strives to persevere in the face of the hardships, some anticipated and some not, of living in such brutal isolation. Two years later their adopted teenage daughter, Edith, an aspiring actress, will exploit every opportunity to escape the captivity her father has imposed on her. Time closes in on them all and as the new century approaches, the ranch stands untenanted. And then in March 1930, Elise Lester, a librarian from New York City, settles on San Miguel with her husband, Herbie, a World War I veteran full of manic energy. As the years go on they find a measure of fulfillment and serenity; Elise gives birth to two daughters, and the family even achieves a celebrity of sorts. But will the peace and beauty of the island see them through the impending war as it had seen them through the Depression?

Rendered in Boyle's accomplished, assured voice, with great period detail and utterly memorable characters, this is a moving and dramatic work from one of America's most talented and inventive storytellers.

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Danielle Burdette:

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