



Drugs: A Novel

J.R. Helton

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Drugs is a story about Jake Stewart, a middle-class American from Texas who uses drugs and likes them. More importantly, he lives with them.

In author J. R. Helton's hilarious prose, Jake inimitably narrates the ups and downs of being a functional user of marijuana, cocaine, MDMA, alcohol, nicotine, brand name hydrocodone, and countless other drugs readily available and commonly partaken of in modern America. We follow Jake on car rides with his coke dealer to menace connections in supermarket parking lots, buying prescription opiates from a megacorporate health and beauty clinic, falling in love with his wife while on a series of mushroom trips through San Antonio and Austin, binging on nitrous oxide canisters to spectral visions of Julianne Moore whispering his name. Along the way, Jake explains the effects of the drugs he's done--not only on his body but on his soul--and at the same time lampoons an America that pretends, against all reason, that drug use is the province of the weak and the socially outcast, while simultaneously getting high and profiting off of it: an America in which drug use is not just a part of the American mainstream, but may be one of the only sane responses to the American mainstream.

The contemporary heir of William S. Burroughs's classic *Junky*, J. R. Helton's novel *Drugs* shows us--through sly wit, deceptively powerful prose, and the unmistakable ring of truth--a side of America that most of us allow to remain hidden in plain sight.

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