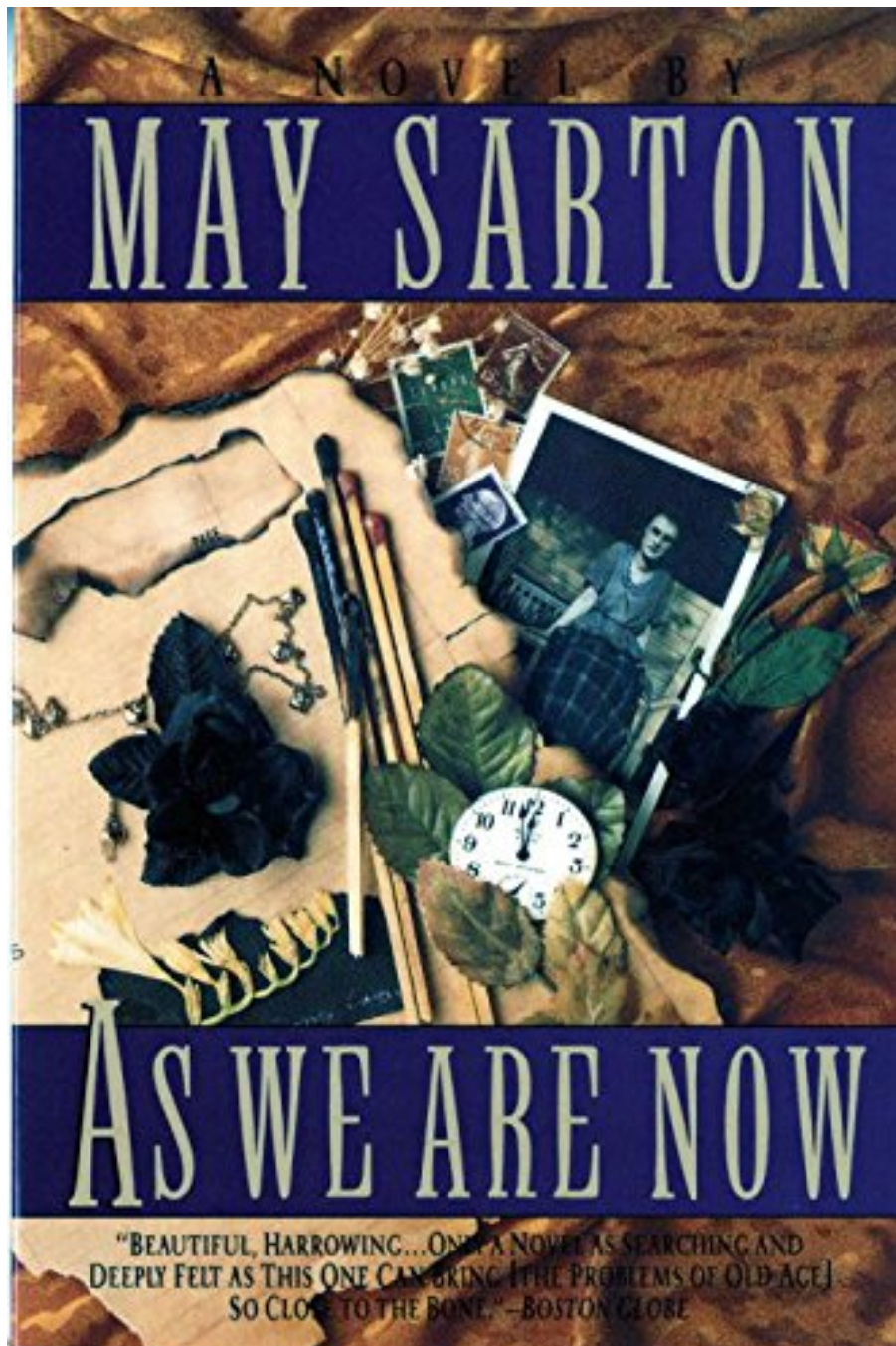


AS WE ARE NOW: A NOVEL BY MAY SARTON



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Review

“May Sarton has never been better than she is in this beautiful, harrowing novel about being old, unwanted, yet refusing to give up. . . . The problems of old age have been detailed by sociologists but only a novel as searching and deeply felt as this one can bring them so close to the bone.” (Margaret Manning - Boston Globe)

“A brief, strong statement. . . . A convincing record of evil done and good intentions gone astray. . . . A powerful indictment.” (Ellen Douglas - New York Times Book Review)

About the Author

May Sarton (1912-1995) was an acclaimed poet, novelist, and memoirist.

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AS WE ARE NOW: A NOVEL BY MAY SARTON PDF

"I am not mad, only old. . . . I am in a concentration camp for the old."

So begins May Sarton's short, swift blow of a novel, about the powerlessness of the old and the rage it can bring. *As We Are Now* tells the story of Caroline Spencer, a 76-year-old retired schoolteacher, mentally strong but physically frail, who has been moved by relatives into a "home." Subjected to subtle humiliations and petty cruelties, sustained for too short a time by the love of another person, she fights back with all she has, and in a powerful climax wins a terrible victory.

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- Published on: 1992-10-17
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.20" h x .50" w x 5.60" l, .30 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 134 pages

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0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Presented at our book club and it provided a lively ...

By ladybeth3

Presented at our book club and it provided a lively and sometimes divided discussion. Although written at an earlier time the issues are still current today.

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Old age horror.

By Diane Lynch

Heaven help any of us that have to go to such a place!

28 of 28 people found the following review helpful.

Dignity Within

By Jena Ball

I have long admired May Sarton's willingness to tackle tough subjects that deal with the inner reality of her characters as they face issues or things about themselves that are not always pleasant. One of my favorite works for example is *A Reckoning*, in which a woman comes to terms with her own premature dying. Here in *As We Are Now*, however, Sarton pushes past even her own limits to probe an issue that festers behind the scenes of our youth-obsessed culture - the relegation of the elderly to rest homes, nursing facilities and sanitariums; any place in short where the rest of society doesn't have to see or think about them. What makes Sarton's book such an achievement is how she is able to depict the sordidness and relentless oppression experienced by her main character Caro, while infusing her at the same time with a dignity and strength of character that transcends the worst the situation can dish out. The triumph of the novel is that in the end, we come to see Caro not as an elderly woman, but as a woman infused with a light of her own making.

The story begins with Caro being placed in a rest home by her older brother. Caro has had a heart attack and can no longer live in her own home, and the older brother's younger wife can't handle having Caro live with them. Unfortunately, or perhaps predictably, the rest home is little more than a holding tank where the residents are treated like mentally deficient children, and any attempt to buck the system results in punishment. The most disturbing aspect of the whole thing, however, is that Caro is perceptive, bright and very much alive. A former teacher with students who still write her, she reads and studies poetry, observes and comments astutely on her fellow residents, and replays her favorite music in her mind to keep herself busy. As a reader you want someone to do something, for some long lost relative to appear, a former student to offer a haven, or the visiting minister to report the abominable conditions. Only slowly do you, like Caro, become resigned to the fact that this is what happens to the elderly in our society, and come to realize that the only escape will be forged within and by herself.

That Sarton has managed to give her character dignity, that the novel stands as a testament to the strength and beauty of the human spirit rather than a condemnation of society, is remarkable. This book should be read by anyone who has or will be faced with the issue of aging - in other words by everyone.

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