



The Why of Things: A Novel

Elizabeth Hartley Winthrop

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“A fast-paced, entertaining summer read” (*People*), *The Why of Things* is a “keenly observed” and “richly drawn” (*The New York Times*) novel about a family fighting towards hope in the wake of a terrible tragedy.

Since the loss of her seventeen-year-old daughter less than a year ago, Joan Jacobs has struggled to keep her tight-knit family from coming apart. But Joan and Anders, her husband, are unable to snap back into the familiarity and warmth they so desperately need, both for themselves and for their surviving daughters, Eve and Eloise. The family flees to their summer home in search of peace and renewal, only to encounter an eerily similar tragedy when a pickup truck drives into the quarry in their backyard killing a young local named James Favazza.

As the Jacobs family learns more about the inexplicable events that preceded that fateful evening, each of them becomes increasingly tangled in the emotional threads of James’s story: fifteen-year-old Eve is determined to solve, on her own, the mystery of his death; Anders finds himself facing his own deepest fears; and seven-year-old Eloise unwittingly adopts James’s orphaned dog. For her part, Joan becomes increasingly fixated on James’s mother, a stranger whose sudden loss so closely mirrors her own.

With an urgent, beautiful intimacy that her fans have come to expect from this “bitingly intelligent writer” (*The New York Times*), Elizabeth Hartley Winthrop delivers here a powerful, buoyant novel that explores the complexities of family relationships and the small triumphs that can bring unexpected healing. *The Why of Things* is a wise, empathetic, and exquisitely heartfelt story about the strength of family bonds. It is an unforgettable and searing tour de force.

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