



# During the Reign of the Queen of Persia (New York Review Books Classics)

*Joan Chase*

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Joan Chase


## **During the Reign of the Queen of Persia (New York Review Books Classics) Joan Chase**

Joan Chase's subtle story of three generations of women negotiating lifetimes of "joy and ruin" deserves its place alongside such achievements as Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping* and Alice Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women*.

The Queen of Persia is not an exotic figure but a fierce Ohio farmwife who presides over a household of daughters and granddaughters. The novel tells their stories through the eyes of the youngest members of the family, four cousins who spend summers on the farm, for them both a life-giving Eden and the source of terrible discoveries about desire and loss. The girls bicker and scrap, they whisper secrets at bedtime, and above all, they observe the kinds of women their mothers are and wonder what kind of women they will become. But always present is the family's great trauma, the decline and eventual death from cancer of Gram's daughter Grace.

A powerful story about family ties and tensions, *During the Reign of the Queen of Persia* is also a book about place, charting the transformation of the old hardscrabble Midwest into the commercial wilderness of modern America.

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