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# Peter Handke

## The Left-Handed Woman



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*The Left-Handed Woman*

Peter Handke was born in Griffen, Austria, in 1942. A novelist, playwright and translator, he is the author of such acclaimed works as *The Moravian Night*, *A Sorrow Beyond Dreams*, *The Goalkeeper's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick* and *Repetition*. The recipient of multiple literary awards, including the Franz Kafka Prize and the International Ibsen Award, Handke is also a filmmaker. He wrote and directed adaptations of his novels *The Left-Handed Woman* and *Absence*, and co-wrote the screenplays for Wim Wenders' *Wrong Move* and *Wings of Desire*. He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2019.



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*Translated by Ralph Manheim*



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*The Left-Handed Woman*



She was thirty and lived in a terraced bungalow colony on the south slope of a low mountain range in western Germany, just above the fumes of a big city. She had brown hair and gray eyes, which sometimes lit up even when she wasn't looking at anyone, without her face changing in any other way. Late one winter afternoon she was sitting at an electric sewing machine, in the yellow light that shone into the large living room from outside. One entire side of the room consisted of a single pane of glass, looking out on the windowless wall of a neighboring house and on a grass-overgrown terrace with a discarded Christmas tree in the middle of it. Beside the woman sat her eight-year-old son, bent over his copybook, writing a school essay at a walnut table. His fountain pen scratched as he wrote, and his tongue protruded from between his lips. Now and then he stopped, looked out of the window, and went on writing more busily than ever. Or he would glance at his mother, who, though her face was averted, noticed his glance and returned it. The woman was married to the sales manager of the local branch of a porcelain concern well known throughout Europe; a business trip had taken him to Scandinavia for several weeks, and he was expected back that evening. Though not rich, the family was comfortably well off, with no need to think of money. Their bungalow was rented, since the husband could be transferred at any moment.