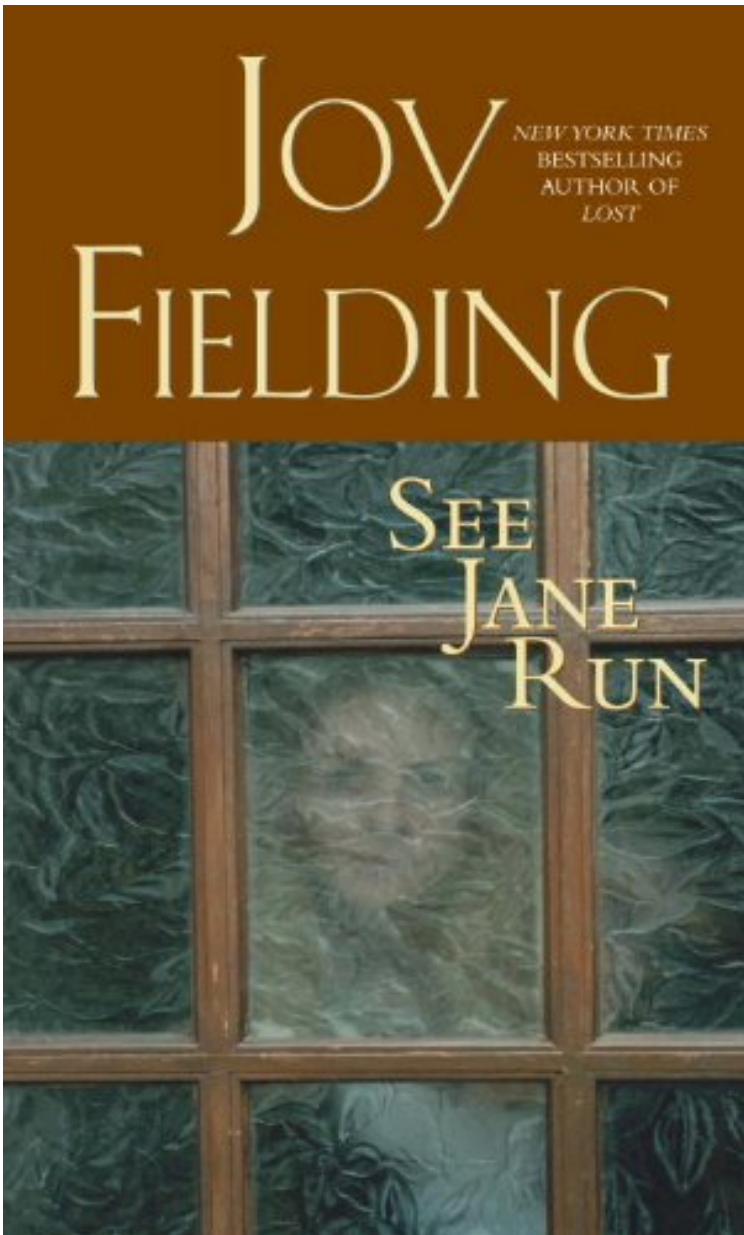


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See Jane Run



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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurJane Whittaker finds herself on a downtown street, her pockets stuffed with a large number of crisp \$100 bills, the front of her dress soaked with blood. She has no idea of her identity.After a terrifying night of hiding, Jane ends up in hospital. There, while undergoing a battery of medical tests, she is recognized by one of the nurses. Soon her husband comes to claim her. He is every womans dream: popular, respected, wealthy, a tall blond doctor. He takes Jane home and vows to cure her with loving care and modern medicine.But Jane doesnt get any better. The medication seems to be turning her into a zombie, and

she begins to feel that her private nurse is holding her a virtual prisoner in her own home, isolating her from friends who might help her recover. Can Jane remember her past in time in time to stop whatever it is that is happening to her, whatever made her lose her memory in the first place, whatever is trying to destroy her and her family?...From the Paperback edition.

ExtraitOneOne afternoon in late spring, Jane Whittaker went to the store for some milk and some eggs and forgot who she was. It came to her suddenly, without prior hint or warning, as she stood at the corner of Cambridge and Bowdoin in what she recognized immediately was downtown Boston, that while she knew exactly where she was, she had absolutely no idea who she was. She was on her way to the grocery store to buy some milk and some eggs, of that she was sure. She needed them for the chocolate cake she had been planning to bake, although why she had been planning to bake it and for whom, she couldn't say. She knew exactly how many ounces of instant chocolate pudding the recipe required, yet she couldn't recall her own name. Furthermore, she couldn't remember whether she was married or single, widowed or divorced, childless or the mother of twins. She didn't know her height, weight, or the color of her eyes. She knew neither her birthday nor her age. She could identify the colors of the leaves on the trees but couldn't remember whether she was a blonde or a brunet. She knew the general direction in which she was headed, but she had no notion of where she'd been. What in God's name was happening? The traffic on Bowdoin slowed, then stopped, and she felt people being pulled from her sides, drawn as if by a magnet to the other side of the street. She alone stood rooted to the spot, unable to proceed, scarcely able to breathe. Cautiously, with deliberate slowness, her head lowered against the collar of her trench coat, she glanced furtively over each shoulder. Pedestrians breezed past her as if barely aware of her existence, men and women whose faces betrayed no outward signs of self-doubt, whose steps carried no noticeable hesitation. Only she stood absolutely still, unwilling unable to move. She was aware of sounds motors humming, horns honking, people laughing, their shoes alternately shuffling or clicking past her, then halting abruptly as the traffic resumed. A woman's angry whisper caught her attention the little slut, the woman hissed and for an instant she thought the woman was speaking about her. But the woman was clearly in conversation with her companion, and neither seemed even vaguely aware that she was beside them. Was she invisible? For one insane second, she thought she might be dead, like on one of those old Twilight Zone segments in which a woman stranded on a deserted road makes a frantic phone call to her parents, only to be told that their daughter has been killed in a car accident, and who is she anyway to be calling them at this hour of the night? But then the woman whose mouth had only seconds ago been twisted around the word slut acknowledged her presence with an almost beatific smile, then turned back to her confidante and moved on. Clearly, she was not dead. Just as clearly, she was not invisible. And why could she remember something as idiotic as an old Twilight Zone episode and not her own name? Several more bodies appeared beside her, tapping their toes and swiveling on their heels, impatiently waiting to cross. Whoever she was, she was unaccompanied. There was no one ready to take her arm, no one watching anxiously from the other side of the street wondering why she had fallen behind. She was all alone, and she didn't know who she was supposed to be. Stay calm, she whispered, searching for clues in the sound of her voice, but even it was unfamiliar to her. It said nothing of age or marital status, its accent nondescript and noteworthy only for its undertone of anxiety. She raised a hand to her lips and spoke inside it so as not to attract undue attention. Don't panic. It'll all come clear in a few minutes. Was she normally in the habit of talking to herself? First things first, she continued, then wondered what that meant. How could she put anything first when she didn't know what anything was? No, that's not true, she corrected herself immediately. You know things. You know lots of things. Take stock, she admonished herself more loudly, glancing around quickly to ascertain whether or not she had been overheard. A group of perhaps ten people was moving toward her. They've come to take me back to wherever it is I escaped from, was her first and only thought. And then the leader of the group, a young woman of perhaps twenty-one, began speaking in the familiar broad Boston tones that her own voice strangely lacked, and she realized she was as inconsequential to these people as she had been to the two women she had overheard earlier. Was she of consequence to anyone? As you can see, the young woman was saying, Beacon Hill is one of the areas that makes it easy for Bostonians to walk to work. Long regarded as Boston's premier neighborhood, Beacon Hill has steep cobblestone streets lined with private brick houses and small apartment buildings the construction of which began in the 1820s and continued through the latter part of the nineteenth century. Everyone took due notice of the private brick houses and small apartment buildings as the young woman continued her well-rehearsed speech. A number of the larger and more elegant homes have been turned into condominiums in recent years because of the housing shortage and Boston's soaring real estate prices. Beacon Hill used to be a Yankee stronghold, but while many

of Boston's old families still live here, people of all backgrounds are now welcome . . . as long as they can pay the mortgage or the rent. There was some benign twittering and much nodding of heads before the group prepared to move on. Excuse me, ma'am, the tour leader said, her eyes opening wide as her lips popped into an exaggerated smile, so that she resembled a happy-face button brought to life. I don't believe you're with this tour? The statement emerged as a question, the last few words curling upward along with the speaker's mouth. If you're interested in a walking tour of the city, you have to go to the tourist office in the Boston Common, and they'll sign you up for the next available tour. Ma'am? The happy-face button looked in distinct danger of losing its happy thoughts. The Common? she asked the young woman, whose easy use of the word ma'am suggested she must be at least thirty. Just keep heading south on Bowdoin until you hit Beacon. You'll pass the State House, the one with the gold dome? It's right there. You can't miss it. Don't be too sure, she thought, watching the tour group cross the road and disappear down the next street. If I can misplace myself,

I can lose anything. Inching one foot in front of the other as if she were stepping into unfamiliar and potentially treacherous waters, she moved along Bowdoin, paying little attention to the nineteenth-century architecture and concentrating on the road ahead. She crossed Derne, then Ashburton Place, without incident, although neither these streets nor the State House that suddenly loomed before her evoked any sense of who she might be. She turned the corner onto Beacon Street. Just as the Happy Face had suggested, the Boston Common stretched before her. Ignoring the Granary Burying Ground, which she had no trouble recalling contained the tombs of such diverse notables as Paul Revere and Mother Goose, she hurried past the Visitors Center toward the large Public Garden, knowing instinctively she had done this many times in the past. She was no stranger to the city of Boston, no matter how much of a stranger she might be to herself. She felt her knees go weak and forced her legs toward a waiting bench, letting her body fold into it.

Don't panic, she repeated several times out loud, using the words like a mantra, knowing that no one was close enough to hear her. She immediately began a silent recitation of known, if largely unimportant, facts. It was Monday, June 18th, 1990. The temperature was an unseasonably cool sixty-eight degrees Fahrenheit.

Thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit was the temperature at which water would freeze. One hundred degrees centigrade was hot enough to boil an egg. Two times two equaled four; four times four was sixteen; twelve times twelve was 144. The square of the hypotenuse was equal to the sum of the square of the other two sides. $E = mc^2$. The square root of 365 was . . . she didn't know, but then something told her that was all right she never had. Don't panic, she heard herself say yet again as she began smoothing out the wrinkles of her tan coat, feeling slim thighs beneath her fingers. The fact that she was a veritable font of useless information was reassuring because how could a person retain such knowledge and not, at some point, remember her own name? She would remember. It was just a question of time. A little girl came racing toward her across the wide expanse of park, arms extended, her portly black nanny running to catch up. She wondered for an instant whether this might be her little girl and instinctively reached her arms toward her, but the nanny quickly pulled the child out of reach, steering her toward a nearby set of swings, eyeing the bench suspiciously. Do I have children of my own? she mused, wondering how a mother could forget her child. She glanced at her hands. At least a ring on her finger would tell her whether she was married. But her fingers were devoid of jewelry, although there was a thin line on the third finger of her left hand where a ring might once have been. She studied it closely, unable to say for sure, noticing that her muted coral nail polish was chipping, and the nails themselves were bitten to the quick. Her gaze dropped to her feet. She was wearing low-heeled, bone-colored patent-leather shoes, the right one of which pressed rather too tightly against her big toe. She pulled it off, recognizing the name Charles Jourdan printed across its instep, and noting she was a size nine, which meant that her height was probably at least five feet six inches. Even with her coat buttoned tightly around her, she knew from the way her hands grazed her sides that she was slim. What else had she been able to figure out? What else did she know about herself beyond the fact that she was white, female, and if the Happy Face and the backs of her own hands were any indication, well over twenty-one? Two women walked by, their arms entwined, their large purses slapping at their sides. Her purse! she thought with great relief, feeling for a strap at her shoulder. Her purse would tell her everything who she was, where she lived, what color lipstick she wore. Inside would be her wallet with her identification, her driver's license, her charge cards. She would once again know her name and address, the year of her birth, the kind of car she drove, if, in fact, she drove at all. Her purse contained all the mysteries of life. All she had to do was open it. All she had to do was find it! Stuffing her foot roughly back inside her shoe, she leaned against the dull-green slats of the park bench and acknowledged what she had known all along but had been too frightened to admit that she had no purse. Whatever identification she might have

been carrying when she began this strange odyssey, she wasn't in possession of it now. Just to make sure, to satisfy herself that she hadn't dropped her bag carelessly to the ground when she sat down, she took a concentrated look around, checking, then rechecking, the grass at her feet. She even circled the bench several times, once again catching the suspicious eye of the black nanny, who was pushing her young charge on the nearby swing. She smiled at the dark-skinned woman, then wondered what exactly she had to smile about, and turned away. When she looked back several seconds later, the nanny was hurriedly ushering the loudly protesting youngster out of the area. There, now you've scared her, she said out loud, automatically feeling her face for any signs of disfigurement. There didn't seem to be any, so she allowed her fingers to continue their Braille-like reading of her features. Her face was a narrow oval, her cheekbones high, perhaps a touch too prominent, and her eyebrows were full and untended. Her nose was small and her eyelashes were caked with mascara, although it seemed to have been applied unevenly and with a heavy hand. Perhaps she had been rubbing her eyes, she thought, causing the mascara to cling to certain lashes while abandoning others. Perhaps she had been crying. She pushed back her shoulders, stood up, and abruptly marched out of the park, ignoring a stoplight and running against the traffic toward a bank at one corner of Beacon Street. She knocked loudly on the glass door, catching the attention of the manager, a prematurely bald young man whose head seemed several sizes too small for the rest of his body. She deduced he was the manager because he wore a suit and tie and was the only male in a room full of women. I'm sorry, he told her gently, opening the door just wide enough for part of his large nose to protrude, but it's after four o'clock. We close at three. Do you know who I am? she asked desperately, surprised at the question she had not meant to ask. The man's frown indicated that he interpreted her remark as a demand for special treatment. I'm really sorry, he said, an unmistakable edge creeping into his voice. I'm sure that if you come back tomorrow, we can take care of you. Then he smiled, a stubborn pursing of his lips that brooked no further discussion, and walked back to his desk. She remained on the other side of the glass door, staring in at the tellers until they began whispering among themselves. Did they know who she was? If they did, they soon tired of her presence and, prompted by their manager, who was gesticulating wildly, returned their attention to their computers and balance sheets, ignoring her as if she no longer existed. Did she? Taking a few deep breaths, she proceeded along Beacon to River Street, back toward the steep cobblestone streets lined with private brick houses and small apartment buildings from whence she had sprung fully grown and totally lost. Did she live in one of these nineteenth-century homes? Did she have enough money to cover the mortgage or the rent? Was she concerned at all about money? Was she a wealthy woman? Did she work for a living or did she hire others to work for her? Maybe instead of living in one of these fine old homes, she cleaned them. No, she was too well dressed to be a cleaning lady, and her hands, while undeniably a mess, were too soft and uncallused for someone accustomed to physical labor. Perhaps instead of cleaning these houses, she sold them. Maybe that was what had brought her to this part of town. Maybe she had come to meet a client, to show off a recently renovated home and had . . . what? Been hit over the head with a falling brick? Despite herself, she quickly felt her head for bumps, finding none and ascertaining only that her hair had come loose of its tight clasp and was hanging in stray wisps at the base of her neck. She turned right on Mt. Vernon, then left on Cedar Street, hoping that something would transmit the necessary signals to her brain. Something please look familiar, she coaxed the tree-lined streets as she turned again at Revere, walking toward Embankment Road. The sun had disappeared behind a great gray cloud, and she felt cold, though the temperature remained steady. She recalled that the winter had been a relatively mild one and that the experts were predicting another hot summer. The Greenhouse Effect, they called it. Greenhouse. Greenpeace. Acid Rain. Save the Rain Forests. Save the Whales. Save Water Shower with a Friend. She felt suddenly overwhelmed with exhaustion. Her feet were sore, the big toe on her right foot now completely numb. Her stomach was starting to rumble. How long had it been since she'd eaten? For that matter, what sort of foods did she like? Did she know how to cook? Maybe she was on some sort of kooky diet that had affected her brain. Or maybe she was high on drugs. Or alcohol. Was she drunk? Had she ever been drunk? How would she know whether she was drunk or not? She covered her eyes with her hands, wishing for the telltale pounding in her head that would signal an approaching hangover. Ray Milland's Lost Weekend, she thought, wondering how old she would have to be to remember Ray Milland. Help me, she whispered into her closed palms. Somebody, please, help me. She checked her wrist for the time, an automatic reflex, and saw that it was almost five o'clock. She had been walking around for almost an hour and had seen nothing in that time to give her any clue as to who she might be. Nothing looked familiar. Nobody had recognized her. She found herself on Charles Street, an easy and attractive mix of shops, from the local grocery mart to a variety of jewelry and antique stores, everything

from hardware to fine art. Had she been heading here to buy her milk and eggs? A man brushed past her and smiled, but it was the smile of one weary soul to another at the end of a trying day, and spoke nothing of acquaintance. Even still, she was tempted to seize this man by the shoulders, to plead with him for some indication that he knew who she was, if necessary to shake an identity from him. But she let the man pass unmolested and the moment was gone. Besides, she couldn't just accost total strangers on the street. They might call the police, have her locked away. Another crazy lady trying to find herself! Was she crazy? Had she just escaped from an asylum? From jail? Was she on the run? She laughed at her own histrionics. If she hadn't been crazy before all this started, she certainly would be by the time it was over. Would it ever be over? She pushed open the door of a small convenience store and went inside. If she lived in this neighborhood, there was a good chance she frequented this little shop. At the very least, she hoped she had shopped here enough times to be familiar to the man behind the counter. Slowly, she made her way between the rows of canned goods toward him. The proprietor, a ponytailed young man with uneven features and a straight line for a mouth, was busy with several customers who had converged on him simultaneously, each one claiming to be the first in line. She took her place behind them, hoping to catch the young man's eye, praying to hear a crisp, Hello there, Ms. Smith. Be right with you. But all she heard was someone asking for a large pack of cigarettes, and all she saw was the proprietor's skinny back as he swiveled around to reach for it. She glanced over her left shoulder to a row of impossibly beautiful young women, who stared back at her from the covers of several dozen magazines. Allowing her body to drift toward the magazine rack, she found her eyes riveted to the sultry face of one model in particular. Cindy Crawford, the name beside the face proclaimed in bright pink letters, supermodel. No doubt who she was. She lifted the magazine from its slot and studied the model's face: brown eyes, brown hair, a mole to the left of her slightly parted lips that distinguished her from the hundreds of other equally pretty faces that were everywhere. So beautiful, she thought. So young. So confident. It occurred to her again that she had no idea what she looked like, no conception of how old she was. Her fingers gripped the sides of the magazine, bending its edges, curling them inward. Hey, lady, a male voice called out, and she turned to see the proprietor waving an admonishing finger, you don't handle the magazines unless you're gonna buy them. Feeling as guilty as a child caught shoplifting a piece of candy, she nodded understanding of the rules, and clutched the magazine against her chest as if it were a lifeline. But she didn't move. Well, you gonna buy it or not? the young man asked. The other customers had departed, leaving the two of them alone. Now was her best, perhaps her only, chance to confront him. She threw herself toward the counter, watching him take a quick step back. Do you know me? she asked, straining to keep the panic out of her voice. He stared at her without moving, his eyes narrowing in concentration. Then he tilted his head, his ponytail grazing his right shoulder, a smile creeping across the straight line of his mouth, twisting it into a flattened U. You somebody famous? he asked. Was she? she wondered, but said nothing, waiting, holding her breath. He mistook her silence for affirmation. Well, I know there are a few movies shooting in the city right now, he said, taking several steps to his right so that he could study her profile, but I don't go to a lot of movies, and I don't recognize you from anything I watch on TV. You on one of those soap operas? I know that them actresses are always coming to shopping malls and stuff like that. My sister made me take her once. She had to see Ashley Abbott from The Young and the Restless. The Young and the Useless, I call it. You on that one? She shook her head. What was the point in continuing this charade? Clearly, he didn't know her any better than she did. She watched his body tense, then stiffen. Well, you gotta pay for the magazine, whoever you are. Celebrity or not, it's still two dollars and ninety-five cents. . . . I forgot my purse, she whispered, starting to feel queasy. Now the man looked angry. What, you think that just because you're on some dumb TV show that you don't gotta carry money around like the rest of us? You think that because you're kinda pretty, I'm gonna make you a present of whatever you want? No, of course not. . . . Either you pay for the magazine or you get out of my store and stop wasting my time. I don't need people making fun of me. I wasn't trying to make fun of you. Honestly. Two dollars and ninety-five cents, he said again, extending his hand, palm up. She knew she should simply hand over the magazine, but something would not allow her to give it up. Cindy Crawford looked so lovely, so happy, so damned sure of herself. Was she hoping that such boundless self-assurance would rub off on her? She reached inside the pockets of her trench coat in hopes she might be carrying some loose change. Her hand moved rapidly from one pocket to the other, refusing to believe what it had found. When she finally brought her hand back out, she saw that it was filled with crisp, new hundred-dollar bills. Whoa, the man behind the counter whistled. You rob a bank or something? Then, You just print these up, or what? She said nothing, staring with wonder at the money in her hand. Anyway, I got no use for hundred-dollar bills. I give you

change of a hundred, I dont have any change left for anybody else. How many of those you got, anyway?She felt her breath pushing its way out of her chest in short, shallow bursts. What in Gods name was she doing with two pocketfuls of hundred-dollar bills? Where had all this money come from?You all right, lady? The man behind the counter looked anxiously toward the door. You arent going to be sick, are you?Do you have a bathroom I can use?Its not open to the public, he said stubbornly.Please!The desperation in her voice must have convinced him because he quickly raised an arm and pointed toward the storeroom to his right. Look, I just washed up in there. Try not to be sick on my clean floor, okay?She quickly, located the small bathroom just inside the storage area. It was a tiny, crowded closet of a room, containing an old toilet and a broken mirror above a stained sink. The walls were lined with boxes of supplies. A half-filled bucket of water, a mop balanced precariously at its side, rested by the door.She dashed toward the sink and twisted open the cold water tap, burying her magazine underneath her arm, quickly catching the icy water in her hands and splashing it against her face until she felt as if she could straighten up without fainting. What was going on? If this was a nightmareand this was a nightmarea surely it was time she woke up!Slowly, she lifted her face toward the mirror, then had to clutch the sides of the sink for support. The woman who stared back at her was a complete stranger. There was nothing even remotely familiar about her face. She scrutinized the pale skin and dark-brown eyes, the small, faintly upturned nose and full mouth painted the same shade as her nails. Her brown hair was perhaps a shade lighter than her eyes and pulled back into a ponytail by a jeweled clasp that had come loose and was threatening to fall out. She pulled it free of her hair, shaking her head and watching her hair fall in soft layers to her shoulders.It was an attractive face, she thought, objectifying it as if, like cindy crawford, it was on the cover of a magazine. Kinda pretty, the young man had said. Maybe slightly better than that. Everything was in its proper place. There were no unsightly blemishes. Nothing was too big or too small. Nothing jarred. Everything was where it was supposed to be. She estimated her age as early to midthirties, then wondered if she looked older or younger than she really was. This is so confusing, she whispered to her image, which seemed to be holding its breath. Who are you?Youre nobody I know, her reflection answered, and both women dropped their heads to stare into the stained basin of the white enamel sink.Oh, God, she whispered, feeling a bubble of heat explode inside her. Please dont faint, she cried. Whoever you are, please dont faint.But the wave of heat continued to wash across her body, sweeping past her legs and stomach into her arms and neck, getting caught in her throat. She felt as if she were melting from the inside out, as if, at any minute, she might burst into flames. She splashed more water on her face, but it did nothing to cool her off or calm her down. She began tearing at the buttons of her coat in an effort to free her body, give it more room to breathe. The magazine under her arm slipped to the floor, and she quickly bent down to scoop it up, pulling open her coat as she stood up.She took a deep breath, then stopped dead.Slowly, as if she were a marionette and some unknown force were manipulating her strings, she felt her head drop toward her chest in one seamless arc. What she sawwhat she had seen when she was down on her knees retrieving the magazine but had managed to ignorewas a simple blue dress, the front completely covered in blood.She gasped, the soft, frightened cry of a small animal caught in a trap. The sound quickly grew into a moan, then emerged as a scream. She heard footsteps, the sound of other voices, felt herself surrounded, overwhelmed.Whats going on in here? the proprietor started, then stopped, his words retreating into the open hole of his mouth.Oh, my God, a young boy groaned from somewhere at his side.Gross! his companion exclaimed.What have you done? the store owner demanded, his eyes searching the tiny cubicle, undoubtedly for signs of broken glass.She said nothing, returning her gaze to the front of her bloodied dress.Look, lady, the man began again, shooing his two young customers away from the door, I dont know whats going on here, and I dont want any part of it. Take your blood and your hundred-dollar bills and get out of my store before I call the police.She didnt move.Did you hear what I said? Im going to call the police if you dont get out of here right now.She looked toward the frightened proprietor, who suddenly grabbed the mop from the bucket and brandished it at her as if he were a matador and she the bull. Blood, she whispered, her disbelieving eyes drawn back to the front of her dress. The blood was reasonably fresh, still a little damp. Was the blood hers or someone elses? Blood, she said again, as if the repetition of the word would pull everything into place.You got ten seconds, lady, then Im calling the cops. Now, I dont want any trouble. I just want you out of my store.Her eyes returned to his, her voice so soft she noticed that he had to bend forward in spite of himself to hear it. I dont know where to go, she cried, and felt her body crumple, like a piece of paper in someones clenched fist.Oh, no, you dont, the man said quickly, catching her before she could fall. Youre not fainting in my store.Please, she began, not sure if she was pleading for understanding or unconsciousness.The young man, while not very tall or muscular, was surprisingly strong. He gripped her

tightly around the waist and marshaled her quickly to the door. Then he suddenly stopped, looking uneasily around the store. Is this one of them hidden video shows? he asked warily, a hint of embarrassment creeping into his voice, as if he might have been had. You have to help me, she said. You have to get out of my store, he told her, regaining his composure and pushing her outside. She heard the door click shut behind her, saw him angrily shooing her away. Oh, God, what do I do now? she asked the busy street. Again, the puppeteer took charge, buttoning her coat, tucking her magazine beneath her arm, directing her gaze toward the traffic. Seeing a taxi approach, the string pulling her right hand shot up, jerking her arm up and out. The taxi came to an immediate stop at the side of the road in front of her. Without further thought, she opened the cabs rear door and climbed inside. Revue de presse "Fielding handles her material with finesse; suspense is maintained at a high level, and the narrative is enriched by a cast of sharply drawn, articulate characters." Publishers

Weekly