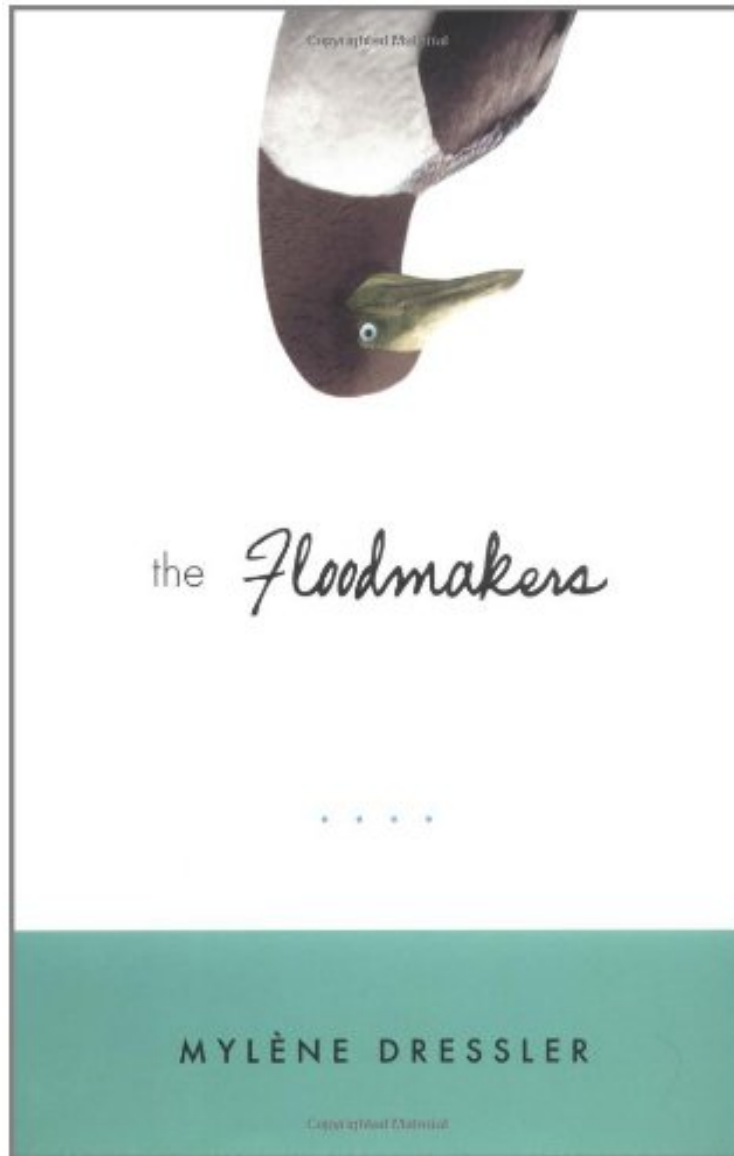


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## The Floodmakers

*Mylene Dressler*

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#3925824 in Books 2004-03-30 2004-03-30Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.68 x .82 x 5.76l, #File Name: 039915163X192 pages | File size: 63.Mb

**Mylene Dressler : The Floodmakers** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Floodmakers:

4 of 7 people found the following review helpful. IF EVERY FAMILY HAS ITS DRAMA....By A CustomerTHEN THE BUELLES ARE ENJOYING A GOOD LONG RUN.The Floodmakers is essentially a one-act play, dramatized on the stage of a cramped, damp and gritty beach house. The scene is intense and claustrophobic. Movements are repressed and there's a whole ocean of other meanng underneath the dialogue. It's like a Mike Leigh film. Dressler has

brought together her characters and lets them loose to improvise their own lines. It's fascinating and often surprising to "watch." This slice of life novel allows us a peak into the lives of these complex characters, giving us just enough history to create our own stories for them before and after this scene. A deceptively simple novel which packs a wallop! 10 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Poorly written By Katherine O'Connell Did not make sense. Unable to follow. Did not like or understand this book. The older couple were blood related versus parents of Sarah and Harry? Didn't understand. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. The Play's the Thing By Debbie Lee Wesselmann Mylne Dressler's third novel (after *THE MEDUSA TREE* and *THE DEADWOOD BEETLE*) is a departure book. Unlike her first two, *THE FLOODMAKERS* is less concerned with the lyricism of introspection than with the dynamics of character and dialogue, and how they reveal the innermost workings of a family. Narrator Harry Buelle, a gay playwright who seems destined to live in the shadow of his famous playwright father, arrives at the family's Texas beach house at the request of his stepmother, Jean. His father Dee is suffering from heart failure, and has decided to halt all medication in a calculated move to clear his mind and face his imminent death. Rebellious sister Sarah and her wide-eyed Slavic husband Paul are also invited. There, hovering around a rescued brown booby with a broken foot and colliding with one another, the Buelle family and their darkest, most defining moments are revealed. After a somewhat confusing start, this novel gets stronger with every page. The narrative, which is meant to have the feel of a play, reads like a cross between Tennessee Williams and Neil Simon, with melodrama and comedy mixed with a deeper sense of loss. Certain moments happen "off-stage" (as when Jean disappears into the bathroom and the reader "hears" an unexplained ruckus within) while others seem carefully orchestrated to show the awkward relationships this family fosters. Even the dialogue comes across as written for the stage. While the author's adherence to the idea of novel as play occasionally can be distancing, Dressler brings the reader closer through the use of Harry's first-person narration and flashbacks. The true nature of this creative, dysfunctional family is exposed through their interactions, and that, more than anything, is the strength of this novel. Dressler fans will certainly want to read her latest, as will readers intrigued by the exploration of family dynamics. Readers of literary fiction who like character-driven novels and a gentle mix of humor and drama will also find much to admire.

Harry Buelle awakes confused one morning in his bathtub. His stepmother phones him, complaining that his father, a successful-and cantankerous-elderly playwright, has stopped taking his heart medicine. Harry has never heard her sound so tired, and, with his own life in shambles, agrees to join his parents-and his sister and her husband-at their Southern beach house retreat. Having the whole family together, cooped up in the same space, gives rise to old tensions and battles-the ache of childhood disappointments, the hurtful truth of parental expectations. But underneath the surface of a ritual family weekend lies a web of bitter secrets-and a staggering revelation. In taut, sparse, but never less than lyrical prose that mirrors the restraint and quiet desperation of its inhabitants, *The Floodmakers* delivers a carefully drawn glimpse into the complexities and frailties of family.

From Publishers Weekly Midway through Dressler's third novel (after *The Medusa Tree* and *The Deadwood Beetle*), narrator Harry Buelle, the frustrated gay son of Dee Buelle, a famous Southern playwright, recalls his own first production, a one-act play in graduate school: the actors rely on improvisation and "a current should be palpable between them," but is not. His father derides Harry's efforts as "a waste." This flashback is a snapshot of the Buelle family dynamics-and unfortunately, it also mirrors the lack of current between the novel's key players. Harry is summoned from his home in Houston by his stepmother, Jean, to make an appearance at his father's home on the Gulf Coast, where Dee is old and ailing. Harry's younger sister, Sarah (an epileptic filmmaker), is also arriving with her husband to finish her documentary on her illustrious father. The usual tensions arise: Dee expounds upon the "life of the artist" and criticizes his children; warm and competent Jean, a former golf champion, tends uncomplainingly to his needs; and both siblings harbor long-simmering resentments. Deep family secrets are revealed (often in flashback, diluting much of their effect), and sister Sarah has one big revenge fantasy to play out-but somehow, this tightly wound group never quite comes to life. The narrative moves slowly, despite the brief chapters, and the spare style makes the blowups and revelations, when they come, seem implausible. Harry is a tortured soul trying to grapple with an odd family legacy, but Dressler's fans will find little here to grapple with themselves. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Dressler, author of *The Deadwood Beetle* (2001), has a penchant for imagining unusual family configurations and drastic family secrets, and in this mischievous tale of a family weekend from hell, she achieves a delicious level of drollery. Harry, the gay son of a famous southern playwright named Dee Buelle, is summoned to their shabby Gulf Coast home by his jaunty stepmother, Jeanie, formerly a professional golfer, who tells him that his father has stopped taking his heart medications. Harry's sister, Sarah, who suffers from epilepsy, and her annoying husband, Paul, also arrive, but they're on a mission: Sarah's making a documentary about their father. Dee and Jeanie, narcissistic and entwined, perform their shtick and their overly sensitive kids cringe while myriad resentments and rivalries surface, and thorny questions of love and ambition, family and inheritance, and life and death arise. Echoing Truman Capote in her gin-and-tonic humor and quirky charm, Dressler crafts hilariously poisonous dialogue and offers startling disclosures in a devilish

little tale that could be titled, "Whose Life Is It Anyway?" Donna Seaman Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved ...Dressler delivers a well-crafted mix of compelling characters, paying close attention to staging, dialog, and setting. -- Library Journal, February 2004...Dressler writes with a casual brilliance that allows this little gem of a book to sparkle and shine. -- Texas Monthly, March 2004