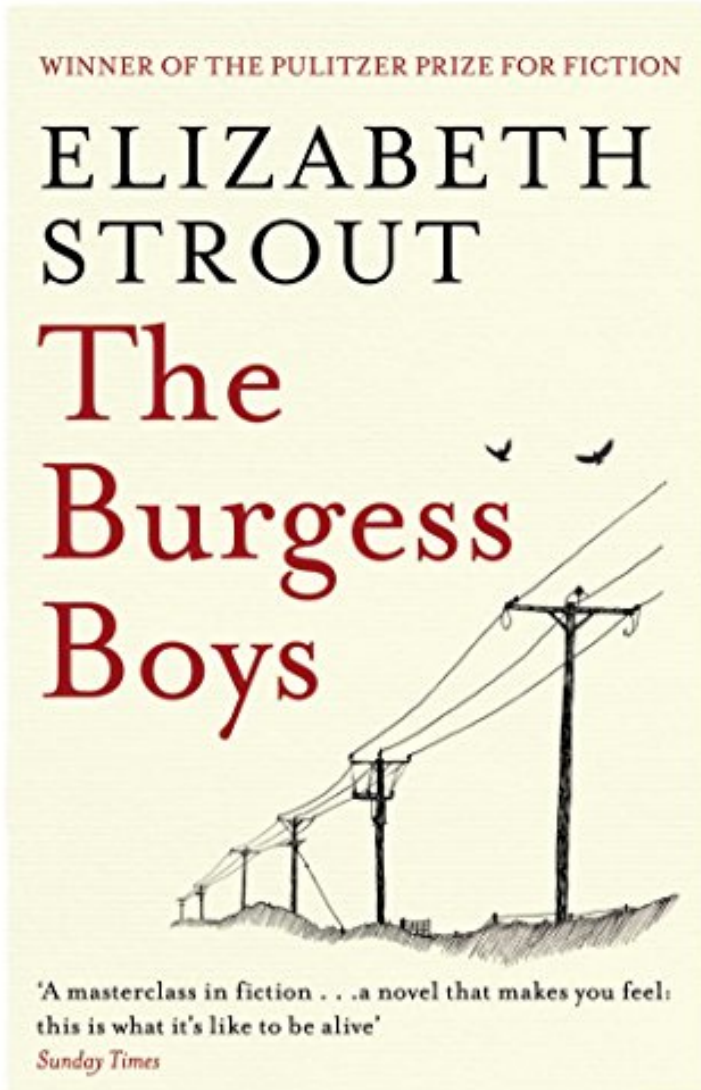


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The Burgess Boys (English Edition)



Par Elizabeth Strout

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Par Elizabeth Strout : The Burgess Boys (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Burgess Boys (English Edition):

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurFrom the Man Booker Prize longlisted author ofMy Name is Lucy Barton Two brothers' lives are irrevocably altered when their 19-year-old nephew is embroiled in a scandal of his own making Haunted by the freak accident that killed their father when they were children, Jim and Bob Burgess escaped from their Maine hometown of Shirley Falls for New York City as soon as they possibly could. Jim, a sleek, successful corporate lawyer, has belittled his bighearted brother their whole lives, and Bob, a legal aid attorney who idolises Jim, has always taken it in his stride. But their long-standing dynamic is upended when their sister, Susan - the sibling who stayed behind - urgently calls them home. Her lonely teenage son, Zach, has landed himself into a world of trouble, and Susan desperately needs their help. And so the Burgess brothers return to the landscape of their childhood, where the long-buried tensions that have shaped and

shadowed their relationship begin to surface in unexpected ways that will change them forever. * 'Strout animates the ordinary with an astonishing force' The New Yorker * 'As perfect a novel as you will ever read' Evening Standard on Olive Kitteridge * 'A novel of shining integrity and humour, about the bravery and hard choices of what is called ordinary life' Alice Munro on Amy Isabelle Visit the author's website: www.elizabethstrout.com Extrait 1 On a breezy October afternoon in the Park Slope neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York, Helen Farber Burgess was packing for vacation. A big blue suitcase lay open on the bed, and clothes her husband had chosen the night before were folded and stacked on the lounge chair nearby. Sunlight kept springing into the room from the shifting clouds outside, making the brass knobs on the bed shine brightly and the suitcase become very blue. Helen was walking back and forth between the dressing room with its enormous mirrors and white horsehair wallpaper, the dark woodwork around the long window walking between that and the bedroom, which had French doors that were closed right now, but in warmer weather opened onto a deck that looked out over the garden. Helen was experiencing a kind of mental paralysis that occurred when she packed for a trip, so the abrupt ringing of the telephone brought relief. When she saw the word private, she knew it was either the wife of one of her husbands law partner they were a prestigious firm of famous lawyers or else her brother-in-law, Bob, who had an unlisted number for years but was not, and never would be, famous at all. I'm glad it's you, she said, pulling a colorful scarf from the bureau drawer, holding it up, dropping it on the bed. You are? Bob's voice sounded surprised. I was afraid it would be Dorothy. Walking to the window, Helen peered out at the garden. The plum tree was bending in the wind, and yellow leaves from the bittersweet swirled across the ground. Why didn't you want it to be Dorothy? She tires me right now, said Helen. You're about to go away with them for a week. Ten days. I know. A short pause, and then Bob said, Yeah, his voice dropping into an understanding so quick and entire it was his strong point, Helen thought, his odd ability to fall feet first into the little pocket of someone else's world for those few seconds. It should have made him a good husband but apparently it hadn't: Bob's wife had left him years ago. We've gone away with them before, Helen reminded him. It'll be fine. Alan's an awfully nice fellow. Dull. And managing partner of the firm, Bob said. That too. Helen sang the words playfully. A little difficult to say, Oh, we'd rather go alone on this trip. Jim says their older girl is really messing up right now. She's in high school and the family therapist suggested that Dorothy and Alan get away. I don't know why you get away if your kids are messing up, but there we are. I don't know either, Bob said sincerely. Then: Helen, this thing just happened. She listened, folding a pair of linen slacks. Come on over, she interrupted. We'll go across the street for dinner when Jim gets home. After that she was able to pack with authority. The colorful scarf was included with three white linen blouses and black ballet flats and the coral necklace Jim had bought her last year. Over a whiskey sour with Dorothy on the terrace, while they waited for the men to shower from golf, Helen would say, Bob's an interesting fellow. She might even mention the accident how it was Bob, four years old, who'd been playing with the gears that caused the car to roll over their father and kill him; the man had walked down the hill of the driveway to fix something about the mailbox, leaving all three young kids in the car. A perfectly awful thing. And never mentioned. Jim had told her once in thirty years. But Bob was an anxious man, Helen liked to watch out for him. You're rather a saint, Dorothy might say, sitting back, her eyes blocked by huge sunglasses. Helen would shake her head. Just a person who needs to be needed. And with the children grown No, she'd not mention the children. Not if the Anglin's daughter was flunking courses, staying out until dawn. How would they spend ten days together and not mention the children? She'd ask Jim. Helen went downstairs, stepped into the kitchen. Ana, she said to her housekeeper, who was scrubbing sweet potatoes with a vegetable brush. Ana, were going to eat out tonight. You can go home. The autumn clouds, magnificent in their variegated darkness, were being spread apart by the wind, and great streaks of sunshine splashed down on the buildings on Seventh Avenue. This is where the Chinese restaurants were, the card shops, the jewelry shops, the grocers with the fruits and vegetables and rows of cut flowers. Bob Burgess walked past all these, up the sidewalk in the direction of his brother's house. Bob was a tall man, fifty-one years old, and here was the thing about Bob: He was a likeable fellow. To be with Bob made people feel as if they were inside a small circle of us-ness. If Bob had known this about himself his life might have been different. But he didn't know it, and his heart was often touched by an undefined fear. Also, he wasn't consistent. Friends agreed that you could have a great time with him and then you'd see him again and he'd be vacant. This part Bob knew, because his former wife had told him. Pam said he went away in his head. Jim gets like that too, Bob had offered. Were not talking about Jim. Waiting at the curb for the light to change, Bob felt a swell of gratitude toward his sister-in-law, who'd said, We'll go across the street for dinner when Jim gets home. It was Jim he wanted to see. What Bob had watched earlier, sitting

by the window in his fourth-floor apartment, what he had heard in the apartment down below it had shaken him, and crossing the street now, passing a coffee shop where young people sat on couches in cavernous gloom with faces mesmerized by laptop screens, Bob felt removed from the familiarity of all he walked by. As though he had not lived half his life in New York and loved it as one would a person, as though he had never left the wide expanses of wild grass, never known or wanted anything but bleak New England skies. Your sister just called, said Helen as she let Bob in through the grated door beneath the brownstones stoop. Wanted Jim and sounded grim. Helen turned from hanging Bobs coat in the closet, adding, I know. Its just the way she sounds. But I still say, Susan smiled at me once. Helen sat on the couch, tucking her legs in their black tights beneath her. I was trying to copy a Maine accent. Bob sat in the rocking chair. His knees pumped up and down. No one should try and copy a Maine accent to a Mainer, Helen continued. I dont know why the Southerners are so much nicer about it, but they are. If you say Hi, yall to a Southerner, you dont feel like theyre smirking at you. Bobby, youre all jumpy. She leaned forward, patting the air. Its all right. You can be jumpy as long as youre okay. Are you okay? All his life, kindness had weakened Bob, and he felt now the physicality of this, a sort of fluidity moving through his chest. Not really, he admitted. But youre right about the accent stuff. When people say, Hey, youre from Maine, you cant get they-ah from he-yah, its painful. Painful stuff. I know that, Helen said. Now you tell me what happened. Bob said, Adriana and Preppy Boy were fighting again. Wait, said Helen. Oh, of course. The couple below you. They have that idiot little dog who yaps all the time. Thats right. Go on, Helen said, pleased shed remembered this. One second, Bob. I have to tell you what I saw on the news last night. This segment called Real Men Like Small Dogs. They interviewed these different, sort of sorryfaggy-looking guys who were holding these tiny dogs that were dressed in plaid raincoats and rubber boots, and I thought: This is news? Weve got a war going on in Iraq for almost four years now, and this is what they call news? Its because they dont have children. People who dress their dogs like that. Bob, Im awfully sorry. Go on with your story. Helen picked up a pillow and stroked it. Her face had turned pink, and Bob thought she was having a hot flash, so he looked down at his hands to give her privacy, not realizing that Helen had blushed because shed spoken of people who did not have children as Bob did not. They fight, Bob said. And when they fight, Preppy Boyhusband, theyre marriedyells the same thing over and over. Adriana, youre driving me fucking crazy. Over and over again. Helen shook her head. Imagine living like that. Do you want a drink? She rose and went to the mahogany cupboard, where she poured whiskey into a crystal tumbler. She was a short, still shapely woman in her black skirt and beige sweater. Bob drank half the whiskey in one swallow. Anyways, he continued, and saw a small tightening on Helens face. She hated how he said Anyways, though he always forgot this, and he forgot it now, only felt the foreboding of failure. He wasnt going to be able to convey the sadness of what he had seen. She comes home, Bob said. They start to fight. He does his yelling thing. Then he takes the dog out. But this time, while hes gone, she calls the police. Shes never done that before. He comes back and they arrest him. I heard the cops tell him that his wife said hed hit her. And thrown her clothes out the window. So they arrested him. And he was amazed. Helens face looked as if she didnt know what to say. Hes this good-looking guy, very cool in his zip-up sweater, and he stood there crying, Baby, I never hit you, baby, seven years weve been married, what are you doing? Baby, pleeeeeease! But they cuffed him and walked him across the street in broad daylight to the cruiser and hes spending the night in the pens. Bob eased himself out of the rocking chair, went to the mahogany cupboard, and poured himself more whiskey. Thats a very sad story, said Helen, who was disappointed. She had hoped it would be more dramatic. But he might have thought of that before he hit her. I dont think he did hit her. Bob returned to the rocking chair. Helen said musingly, I wonder if theyll stay married. I dont think so. Bob was tired now. What bothered you most, Bobby? Helen asked. The marriage falling apart, or the arrest? She took it personally, his expression of not finding relief. Bob rocked a few times. Everything. He snapped his fingers. Like that, it happened. I mean, it was just an ordinary day, Helen. Helen plumped the pillow against the back of the couch. I dont know whats ordinary about a day when you have your husband arrested. Turning his head, Bob saw through the grated windows his brother walking up the sidewalk, and a small rush of anxiety came to him at the sight of this: his older brothers quick gait, his long coat, the thick leather briefcase. There was the sound of the key in the door. Hi, sweetheart, said Helen. Your brothers here. I see that. Jim shrugged off his coat and hung it in the hall closet. Bob had never learned to hang up his coat. What is it with you?, his wife, Pam, used to ask, What is it, what is it, what is it? And what was it? He could not say. But whenever he walked through a door, unless someone took his coat for him, the act of hanging it up seemed needless and . . . well, too difficult. Ill go. Bob said. I have a brief to work on. Bob worked in the appellate division of Legal Aid, reading case records at the trial

level. There was always an appeal that required a brief, always a brief to be worked on. Dont be silly, said Helen. I said wed go across the street for supper. Out of my chair, knucklehead. Jim waved a hand in Bobs direction. Glad to see you. Its been what, four days? Stop it, Jim. Your brother saw that downstairs neighbor of his taken away in handcuffs this afternoon. Trouble in the graduate dorm? Jim, stop. Hes just being my brother, Bob said. He moved to the couch, and Jim sat down in the rocking chair. Revue de presse* 'Strout animates the ordinary with an astonishing force' The New Yorker* 'As perfect a novel as you will ever read' Evening Standard on Olive Kitteridge* 'A novel of shining integrity and humour, about the bravery and hard choices of what is called ordinary life' Alice Munro on Amy Isabelle Visit the author's website:
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