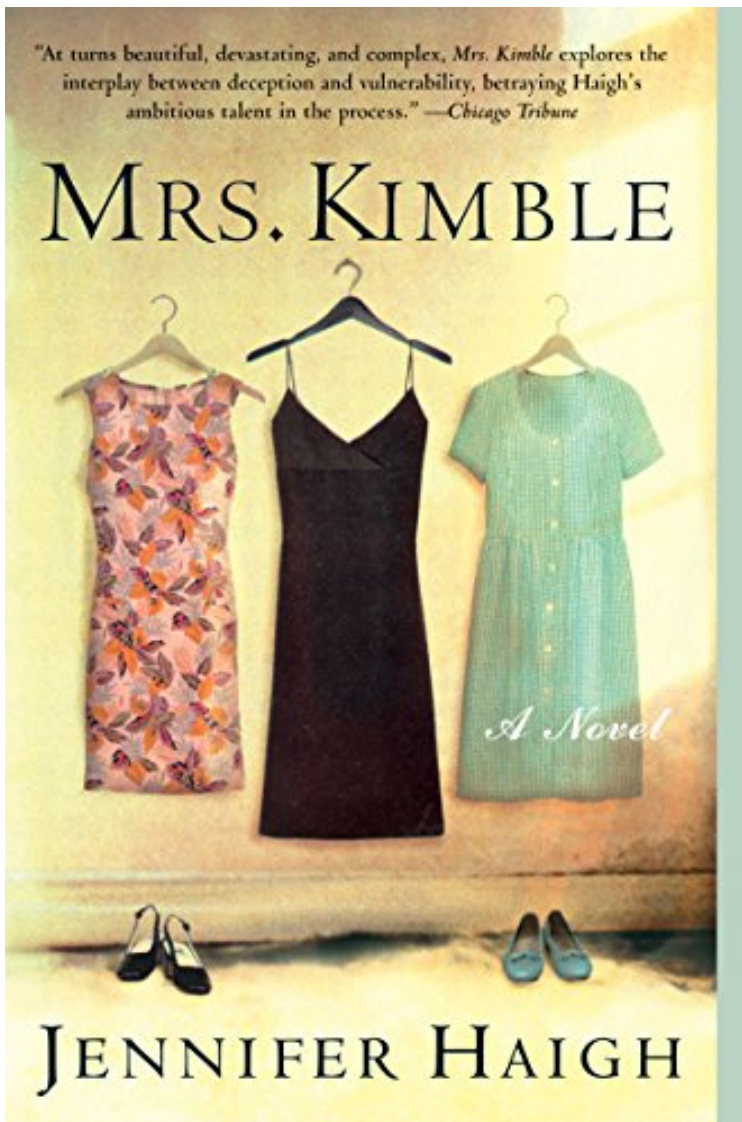


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Mrs. Kimble



Par Jennifer Haigh
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Par Jennifer Haigh : Mrs. Kimble
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Description : Description du produitIn her masterful first novel *Mrs. Kimble*, Jennifer Haigh delivers the riveting story of three women who marry the same man.Ken Kimble is revealed through the eyes of the women he seduces: his first wife, Birdie, who struggles to hold herself together following his desertion; his second wife, Joan, a lonely heiress shaken by personal tragedy, who sees in Kimble her last chance at happiness; and finally Dinah, a beautiful but damaged woman half his age. Woven throughout is the story of Kimble's son, Charlie, whose life is forever affected by the father he barely remembers. Kimble is a chameleon, a man able to become, at least for a while, all things to all women -- a hero to whom powerful needs and nameless longings may be attached. Only later do they glimpse the truth about this enigmatic, unknowable man.

Prsentation de l'diteurBeautiful, devastating and complex. Chicago TribuneThe award-winning debut novel

from Jennifer Haigh, author of *Baker Towers*, *The Condition*, and *Faith*, tells the story of Birdie, Joan, and Dinah, three women who marry the same charismatic, predatory, and enigmatic opportunist: Ken Kimble.

Resonating with emotional intensity and narrative innovation reminiscent of Ann Patchett's *Bel Canto*, Barbara Kingsolver's *The Poisonwood Bible*, and Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Haigh's *Mrs. Kimble* is a timeless story of grief, passion, heartache, deception, and the complex riddle of love. Sometimes a book can be utterly full of holes and you still can't put it down. In *Mrs. Kimble*, first-time novelist Jennifer Haigh follows the marital career of Ken Kimble, opportunist, serial husband, and all around schmuck. The first section, set in Virginia in the 1960s, revolves around alcoholic first wife Birdie. As we enter the story, Kimble has already left her alone with two small children she is ill equipped to raise on her own. Kimble's absence in this section sets the tone for the book, which is not so much about Kimble himself as it is about the women he dupes over the years. Next up is Joan, a *Newsweek* reporter recovering from a mastectomy at her late father's home in Florida. A wealthy, confident woman left unsteady by breast cancer, she falls for Kimble, who now turns up in a hippie-ish incarnation. In the final section, Kimble weds Dinah, who had been his children's babysitter back in Virginia. Their marriage unravels as, at the end of the book, Kimble's secrets are revealed one by one. Unfortunately, the central secret of the book is never laid bare: how did the man get to be such a jerk? Other problems are never dealt with, either: we never believe a whip-smart woman like Joan could be so transparently snow-jobbed. We never understand why Dinah stays with an aging crook. Nevertheless, *Mrs. Kimble* is still engrossing. Haigh is so gifted at creating vivid scenes and strong characters, we find ourselves surrendering our disbelief despite our better judgment. This isn't the terrific book it might have been, but it's still a superior read. --Claire Dederer
From *Publishers Weekly*
The three women who successively marry Ken Kimble all believe they've found the perfect partner, and all are proven wrong in Haigh's uneven debut. Birdie is a student at a Southern Bible college in the early 1960s when she meets Kimble, then a handsome young choir director; they marry less than a year later, a day before she turns 19. After seven unfaithful years of marriage, Ken walks out on Birdie and their two young children, leaving the hard-drinking Birdie impoverished. Ken next surfaces in Florida in 1969, engaged to a formerly ambitious coed who dropped out of college to travel the country with him. He summarily dumps her to court 39-year-old Joan Cohen, a strong-willed *Newsweek* reporter who is recovering from breast cancer surgery. He marries her (after falsely telling her that he's Jewish) and joins her rich uncle in his real estate business. A few years and one miscarriage later, the marriage has quietly soured, and a few years after that Joan has a recurrence of cancer and dies. Ken's third wife is the much-younger Dinah, who used to be his children's baby-sitter. This marriage survives Ken's rise to prominence in Washington, D.C., as the founder of a successful charity. Haigh's women are believable, if a touch clichéd, but Ken is a cipher. Haigh leaves us guessing about his motivations, and his irresistible appeal to these women—especially the tough-minded Joan—also remains murky. The novel has sharply incisive passages, but Haigh's thin characterizations don't quite live up to the promise of the clever, intricate premise. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.