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# Happening



## Synopsis

In 1963, Annie Ernaux, 23 and unattached, realizes she is pregnant. Shame arises in her like a plague: Understanding that her pregnancy will mark her and her family as social failures, she knows she cannot keep that child. This is the story, written forty years later, of a trauma Ernaux never overcame. In a France where abortion was illegal, she attempted, in vain, to self-administer the abortion with a knitting needle. Fearful and desperate, she finally located an abortionist, and ends up in a hospital emergency ward where she nearly dies. In *Happening*, Ernaux sifts through her memories and her journal entries dating from those days. Clearly, clearly, she gleans the meanings of her experience.

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