



The New Woman: A Staggerford Novel

Jon Hassler

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Since 1977, Jon Hassler's Staggerford series has entranced readers with its funny and charming depiction of life in small-town America. **The New Woman** is his latest visit to this Minnesota hamlet. At the age of eighty-eight, Agatha McGee has grudgingly moved out of her house on River Street and into the Sunset Senior Apartments. She's not happy about giving up her independence, and Sunset Senior's arts and crafts activities and weekly excursions to the Blue Sky Casino are hardly a consolation. Meanwhile two of her close friends pass away, her nephew Frederick is drifting into depression, and a kidnapped little girl has suddenly appeared on her doorstep. With characteristic poise and dignity, Agatha takes on her problems and finds that the bonds of friendship and family are still the key to happiness at any age. Affectionate and life-affirming, **The New Woman** is another delightful trip to a town with a soul as real as rural America itself.

The New Woman: A Staggerford Novel Details

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Author : Jon Hassler

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Patsy says

didn't finish

Since 1977, Jon Hassler's Staggerford series has entranced readers with its funny and charming depiction of life in small-town America. The New Woman is his latest visit to this Minnesota hamlet. At the age of eighty-eight, Agatha McGee has grudgingly moved out of her house on River Street and into the Sunset Senior Apartments. She's not happy about giving up her independence, and Sunset Senior's arts and crafts activities and weekly excursions to the Blue Sky Casino are hardly a consolation. Meanwhile two of her close friends pass away, her nephew Frederick is drifting into depression, and a kidnapped little girl has suddenly appeared on her doorstep. With characteristic poise and dignity, Agatha takes on her problems and finds that the bonds of friendship and family are still the key to happiness at any age. Affectionate and life-affirming, The New Woman is another delightful trip to a town with a soul as real as rural America itself.

Jan Stanton says

This is a typical Jon Hassler novel with rich, believable characters. Each one has a story to tell. I laughed, felt pity, and cried with some of the stories.

These are all independent people who needed others. It's a story about faith and courage. We all need to feel that we have worth.

I liked Agatha's statement at the end of the book "Well, I believe that range of motion applies to our psyches, as well as our bodies, Frederick. If we shut down parts of our thinking, we'll never get them back...."

booklady says

This is last book in Hassler's wonderful series. (sniff, sniff) I do not have it, so I may never read it, but then curiosity about Agatha and James may get the better of me... Hmmmmm... There is the library...

Claudia says

Having just finished my favorite Hassler novel, "Rookery Blues", this book was a disappointment. "The New Woman" is Hassler's final novel and ties together Staggerford's loose ends. Agatha McGee is 87 years old and trying to adjust to living in the Sunset Senior Apartments. This plot is as tired as Agatha. Even Agatha's aiding and abetting (after the fact) a kidnapping, lacks real vigor.

Taylor Giannullo says

Really boring.

Randall J. says

Sweet, episodic finish to the Staggerford series and Hassler's writing career. Trying to figure out the continuity of Hassler's stories will give you a headache, but if you don't let that worry you, this is a nice little book. I still wonder whatever happened to "Jay O'Malley", the book Hassler was said to have completed right before his death.

Katelyn says

3.5 stars. This was a fun, light, quick read. It follows Agatha as she reluctantly moves from her farmhouse to senior living apartments in fictional small town Staggerford, MN. She's instantly set upon by nosy neighbors and quickly moves back to her house, only to accept that she can't live by herself and must give the senior apartments another go.

I look forward to reading more in the Staggerford series. I think they'd be good books to get me out of a reading slump.

Tessa says

I first met Agatha McGee over 25 years ago when I read my first Jon Hassler novel, A Green Journey. While The New Woman novel is not as rich as Hassler's earlier novels, including A Green Journey, I am still glad to have spent time again with Agatha McGee, even if in a simpler story.

Deb says

We love you Agatha. Hassler keeps his sense of humor about aging even though he is dealing with Parkinsons. Excellent reading.

Tisha says

I read in one night. Story about Agatha who is 87 years old. She is a retired school teacher in Minnesota. She decides to move into the Sunset Senior Apartments when she had a scare home alone during a snow storm. I find out after the fact that this is the latest novel about Agatha and/or her neighbors in the town of Staggerford. I definitely want to read the others now. Very enjoyable stuff.

Found out reading these review that this is the authors last novel before he passed.

Debbie Swier says

Another wonderful story in the life of Staggerford and Agatha Mc Gee. Even as she ages, Hassler keeps Miss Mc Gee's character true.

Pamela says

Simply charming! A bit of humor, a touch of mystery, a slight tingle of suspense, a few anecdotes here and there, a good bit of small town eccentricities - and a whole lot of warmth, camaraderie, friendship, and life-well-lived moments.

Superbly written (and edited) with a deep abiding, good-feeling appeal. One of those quiet little gems that seem simple on the surface but hold a great deal of wisdom when it's all said and done.

Aging isn't a walk in the park, that's for sure. One not only must face their mortality, they often must do so within the walls of a retirement or nursing home, losing a good deal of their autonomy and independence. In which, one begins to question whether or not their lives mattered. Did they make a difference in the world? Do they still have qualities and abilities that contribute to the world or their community? What does one do to stay viable when time seems to be running out....

Agatha is soon to find out And her senior living story is a delightful one. She's got enough spunk and class to keep the Sunset Senior Center in line.

3.75

FOUR ***** Quietly Wise and Witty, Delightfully Humorous and Charming - Senior Protagonist *****
STARS

Linda Kenny says

Pulled this book off of a bookshelf and fell in love with the cast of characters in this nursing home. I hope my old age is as full of friends.

Joan says

I enjoyed reading this book. I recently found out that it existed. I thought I had read all of his writings until I found this one. It is about a woman of 87 who moves out of her house and into "senior" apartments and her adventures there. I am hoping this book is available in large print as most of the homebound readers I visit in my job will relate to her adjustments. Some funny and touching moments occur just as in real life.

John says

"The New Woman" is a coming-of-age novel.

The protagonist is Agatha McKee, and the age she has come to is 87. As the book opens, she has just moved from her longtime home into a senior apartment building, and she's not sure she likes it.

Hassler was one of those rare novelists who realized how interesting senior citizens are. We've probably had enough traditional coming-of-age novels to last until eternity, which won't prevent more from being written. But people in their 80s are simply more interesting than people in their teens. They've lived so much more life. I know I'm more interesting at 59 than I was at 19, and I'm sure I'll be more interesting yet at 79, should I live that long.

"The New Woman" isn't great literature, and some of the plot twists seem far-fetched. But the overall feel is genuine, and funny, and poignant.
