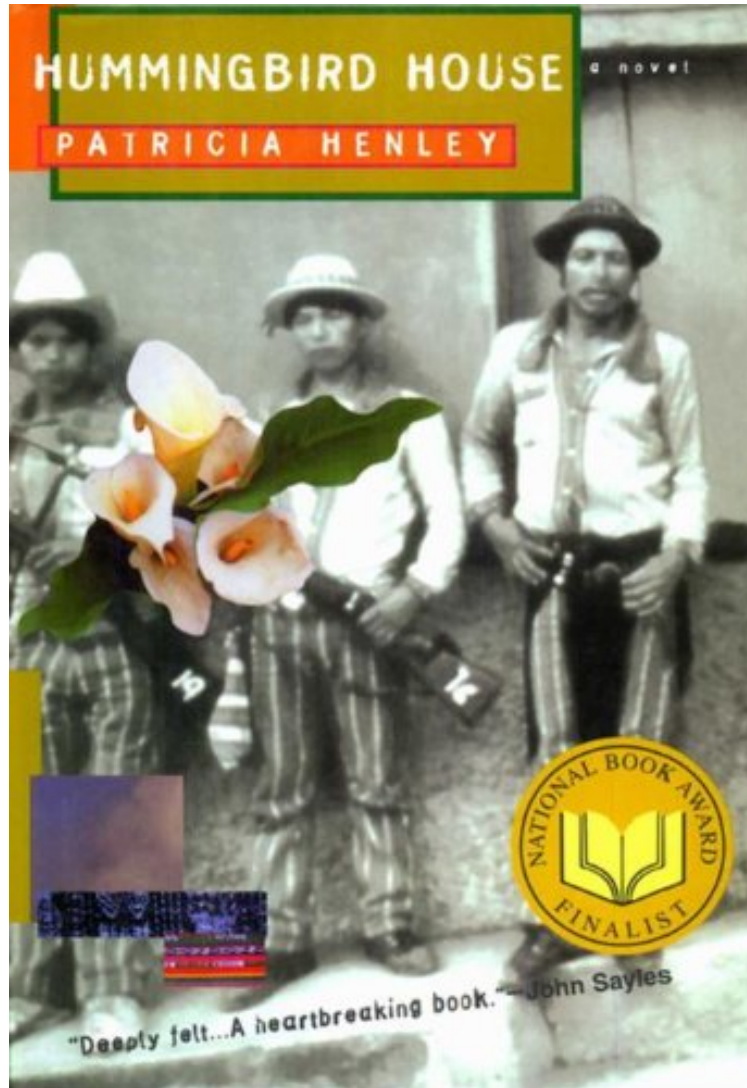


(Read and download) Hummingbird House (English Edition)

## Hummingbird House (English Edition)

Von Patricia Henley

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**Von Patricia Henley : Hummingbird House (English Edition)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hummingbird House (English Edition):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A substantive and vivid first novelVon WordsworthWhat's not to love about Kate Banner? She is noble, altruistic, intelligent, desirable and driven by service to mankind. She is willing to risk her own safety to help innocent people caught in the cross-fire of revolutions in Guatemala and Nicaragua. She offers medical comfort and guidance and shelter to those who would perish without it. She is the voice of reason and conscience in a part of the world where

both appear in short supply. I applaud Patricia Henley for the time she spent in Central America researching this book -- she seems to understand from experience the essence of the cultures there. And it shows in the characters and story line and in the dialogue, which is especially vivid and real. Henley conveys a grasp of her setting amid its turmoil without overtly espousing political positions. I learned nothing much new about Nicaragua, which I have also visited: Henley didn't penetrate deeply into the substance of the conflict between the Contras and Sandinistas or the glorious landscape or the human paradox of Managua, which somewhat disappointed me. But she was able to shed significant new light on the Guatemala situation for me. Despite the intrusive, overwhelming absurdity of man and nature that Kate encounters in Central America, she remains resolute in her service to mankind, which often seems unworthy of such devotion. I deeply respect such noble optimism and integrity. Henley's portrayal of Father Dixie Ryan was excellent: what a wonderful character and so roundly drawn! I was pleased to learn of Henley's inclusion on the short lists for the National Book Award and the New Yorker's Top Book of the Year. The publisher took a well-calculated risk on this work, which is far removed from formulaic New York publishing fare. I look forward to more of such substantive fiction over the most promising literary career of Patricia Henley. Hummingbird House is milagro, a miracle.0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Tight, vivid description, but character development lacking. Von Philip C. Armstrong (parmstrong@hcc-nd.edu) Henley achieved success in portraying the setting of her novel, but came up short in both plot and character development (e.g., Vidaluz and the inauguration of the mothers' vigil). She had published short stories and poetry before this her first novel, and the characteristics of those forms stand out in this work but are not appropriately or adequately developed there. One perhaps unintentional achievement is in her accurate portrayal of the individualized and personal agendas that have brought the expatriates to Latin America, agendas that continue to motivate each fundamentally despite circumstances of politics and culture that throw these characters together, sometimes closely so. I also found Henley inserting a few literary contrivances, one or two of which were clearly directed to the resolution of the narrative, others somewhat like red herrings to tease the reader into expectations never fulfilled. I also question the author's presumption in writing, presumably experientially, of an area of the world not her own, one visited by her for such a brief time. Whatever the depth of her perceptive powers and the vastness of her geographical coverage of Mexico and Central America, she can not claim to appreciate the situations she portrays out of such a brief exposure to climate, culture, political ambient, and psychological responses to these elements. The book was worth reading for the issues it called to the reader's attention and for the vibrancy of its prose, but did not convince me as a novel of significant import.0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. supremely haunting Von Jason Markouc Patricia Henley has woven a most spectacular story in this book. It was difficult at first to find a way into the story -- I was confused and lost for a bit, but I managed to find my way in and unearth the triangle of lives that she builds the story around. Kate Banner is a noble and flawed woman -- and beautiful all the more in dealing with her struggles personally as well as in the treacherous world she chooses to live in. Into her world come a myriad of people -- most notably a priest with questions about his path in life (without compromising his faith and vibrancy) and a young orphan girl, whose impact on Kate changes her entire perspective. This is a book delicately written with such lush images that found myself reading certain passages over and over again. Couple that with human insights so bald, raw, and true that they still haunt me, and there's a beginning of an understanding of just how powerful a book this is. I loved the book when I read it, and as time passed after finishing it, the story stayed with me. I kept remembering it -- kept revisiting it -- kept seeing it. The story itself is wonderful wonderful and complex on its own... it has beauty and horror, love and hate, sense and incredulity, passion and war... its a love story as well as a crusade for humanity -- a story of a cause and an individual fighting to stay on top of the world long enough to make a difference -- a fight for self knowledge and understanding... and underneath it all is a masterwork of language, which lifts this book out of a story and into an experience. Henley's writing is so ripe in language there are phrases you can almost taste when read -- there is so much power in her choice of words that it will haunt you only moments after you've read them. She's created a beautiful experience for a reader -- one overflowing in humanity and haunting in language -- stay with the initial confusion, the reward is an experience that will stay with one for a long, long time.

Kurzbeschreibung Kate Banner, an American midwife, heads to Mexico for a three-week visit in the mid-1980s and ends up staying south of the border for eight years. From Mexico she travels first to Nicaragua and then to Guatemala, two nations torn by revolution and sunk in horrific poverty and violence. Along the way, she delivers babies, administers what first aid she can, and becomes involved with a group of activists, most of them from North America. The novel opens in the midst of a hurricane, during which a young pregnant woman goes into labor in a rowboat. Kate successfully delivers the child, but the mother dies soon afterwards. It is this event that starts the wandering midwife thinking about going home at last. When a longtime love affair with an American arms supplier to the Sandinistas goes south, Kate heads to Guatemala where friends have a house for a little rest and some thinking time. All thoughts of Indiana are banished, however, when she meets her fellow lodger, Father Dixie Ryan, a priest who is struggling with

his vocation. The two become lovers and decide to open Hummingbird House, a clinic and school for Guatemalan children. Unfortunately, even the best intentions can go disastrously awry, and Kate must experience terrible loss before she can find eventual salvation.

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Patricia Henley spent many months traveling the roads her fictional heroine treads, gathering firsthand accounts from refugees, activists, and indigenous people. Though her novel never feels researched, every page bristles with quiet indignation at the political and military atrocities visited upon the innocent. "The maps do not tell you that the forests of Belize and Honduras were cut down to rebuild London after the Great Fires of 1666," Kate muses, sitting in her kitchen in the Guatemalan highlands. They do not show you the scars of Nicaraguan children who lost their arms and legs when their school bus struck a Contra mine buried in the road. Nor do the maps delineate the precise number of Mayan cornfields soaked in gasoline and set afire by Guatemalan government soldiers. And they cannot tell you the exact words of the sermon given by Oscar Arnulfo Romero, the archbishop of San Salvador, before his murder at his own altar. Political novels run the risk of becoming polemical; Henley largely avoids this pitfall by concentrating on her characters' personal lives within the context of the extreme circumstances in which they find themselves. Some of her stylistic choices can prove, at times, confusing, such as her liberal use of flashback to flesh out her characters' pasts, and the occasional switch in voice from third person to first. Still, her dark tale is compelling enough to overcome such minor defects, and *Hummingbird House*, in the end, is an impressive first novel.

--Margaret Prior

Kurzbeschreibung

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