



# On Helwig Street: A Memoir

*Richard Russo*

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## **On Helwig Street: A Memoir** Richard Russo

"Whoever said beggars can't be choosers," my grandfather would remark when she was out of earshot, "never met your mother." Jean Russo was a single mother in the 1950s, badly paid and living with her only son, Richard, in the upstairs apartment of her parents' home on Helwig Street in Gloversville, New York. When Richard left for University, Jean saw her chance to escape a dead-end town in search of a better life elsewhere. So began a series of ill-conceived adventures, as ambitious son and restless mother strove to find somewhere to belong. Hilarious and heartbreaking, a story of growing up and of growing old, of becoming a man whilst remaining a son, of thinking that the grass is greener somewhere else, but knowing that going home is inevitable: "On Helwig Street" is a poignant tribute to a complicated mother and a brilliant evocation of mid-century America.

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