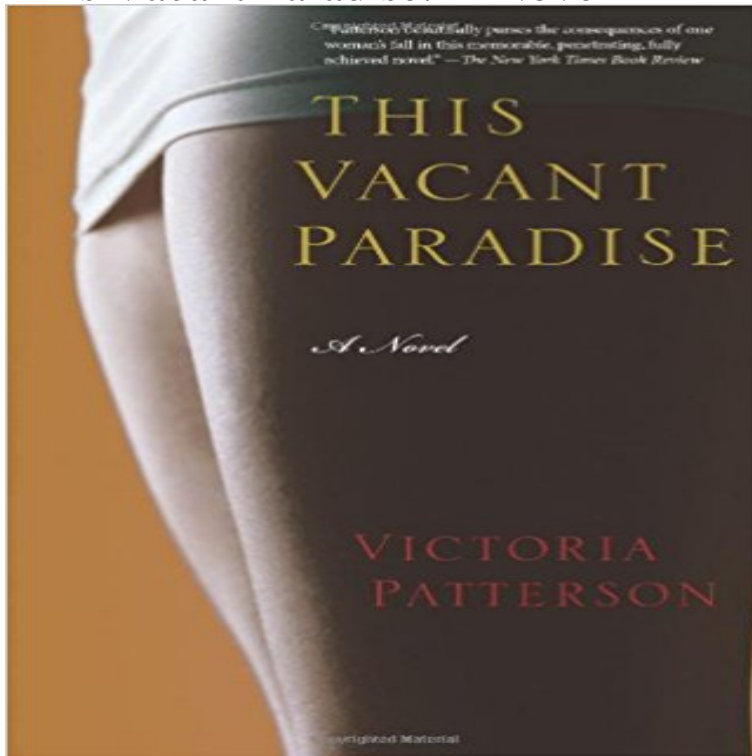


This Vacant Paradise: A Novel



The 1990s Newport Beach, California. Money is God. A mans worth is judged by the size of his boat, the make of his car. A womans value is assessed by the blank perfection of her quantifiable desirability: dress size, cup size, the whiteness of her teeth. And oh yes: her youth. Though Esther Wilson, the heroine of Victoria Pattersons debut novel, has the looks to marry well, things arent going as planned. Shes nearing her mid-30s and possibly aging out of the only role shes equipped to play: wife to a powerful member of the elite. In the tradition of Edith Wharton and Henry James, This Vacant Paradise recasts the important questions about our very American obsessions: class, caste, race, age, and the roles of men and women in our drive toward an ever more lofty sense of our upward mobility. Victoria Patterson, author of the story collection Drift, a Story Prize and California Book Award finalist, gives us a novel of such rigor and complexity that it feels too masterful to be her first. Like ZZ Packer or Robert Stone, Pattersons prose is at once wickedly entertaining and searingly intelligent.

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