

Books

Penelope Lively

How It All Began

by Penelope Lively | ★★★★★

REVIEWED BY ANNE LESLIE

FICTION

When 77-year-old retired literature teacher Charlotte Rainsford gets mugged, more than her own life changes course. The crime also affects her middle-aged daughter Rose, who's struggling in a safe yet tedious marriage; Rose's employer Lord Henry Peters, a pompous academic; his niece Marion, a decorator involved in a shallow affair with a married man; and Anton, an Eastern European immigrant with a *joie de vivre* as unquenchable as his determination to learn English. Each character wrestles with the incident's repercussions; as one cure for her discomfort, Charlotte distracts herself with the papers, finding solace in the banality of the daily news: "Everything going on regardless, the helter-skelter of the historical process, and in the grand scheme of things you yourself are neither here nor there." With grace, wit and wisdom, Booker Prize winner Lively has crafted a highly readable tale about fates intersecting amid the chaos of modern life.

In the Booker Prize winner's latest, a London mugging triggers a chain reaction.

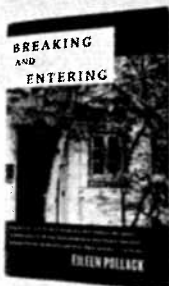


HOW
IT ALL
BEGAN a novel

GREAT READS NEW IN FICTION



THE LITTLE RUSSIAN
by Susan Sherman
Set during the Russian pogroms, Sherman's debut traces one upper-class woman's shifting fortunes.



BREAKING AND ENTERING
by Eileen Pollack
Moving to rural Michigan in an effort to save their marriage, a California couple encounter new challenges.



THE CROWN
by Nancy Bilyeau
When her cousin is condemned to death by King Henry VIII, daring young nun Joanna risks everything to be by her side.