

Praise for **INSIDE HENRY CATO**

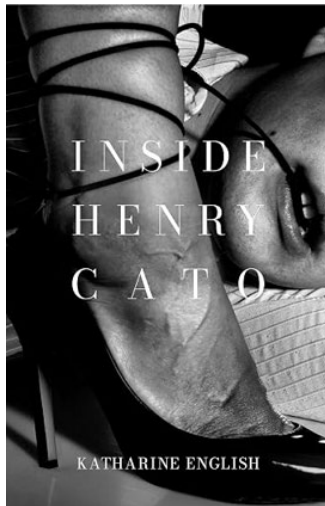
"Katharine English's *Inside Henry Cato* is an intimate portrait of a man and all his varied layers. Dig into the pages of this brilliant debut, and you won't only discover the truth about Henry; you might just find yourself. A delightful read."

—*Eli Cranor, Hammett Prize-winning and bestselling author of DON'T KNOW TOUGH and BROILER*

"An original, deftly crafted, and compelling 'coming of age' novel. ... With an effective and engaging narrative style of storytelling, ... author Katharine English raises her novel to an impressive level of literary excellence."

— *Jim Cox, Midwest Book Review*

Some secrets shape you. Belonging has a price.



All Henry Cato wants is to belong. But he was born to a woman who saw the world as a series of stains to be scrubbed clean – and Henry as the deepest stain of all. In a root cellar deep below the Kansas topsoil, he does penance for being different, nurturing a secret obsession with shoes he was never meant to wear.

In 1967, with nothing but a sharp eye for detail, a talent for thievery, and a desperate need for belonging, Henry flees to San Francisco. There, Del, a charismatic Texas oil heir, exploits Henry's taboo fascination and catapults him to cult stardom. For the first time, Henry feels seen – but the persona that promises liberation becomes a gilded cage.

When he escapes to the gritty, industrial playground of New York City's Meatpacking District, Henry must navigate predators, fame, and reinvention – and reconcile the boy who still feels like a forgery with the man he is becoming. Or risk losing himself entirely.

Reminiscent of Douglas Stuart, Frank McCourt, and Hanya Yanagihara, *Inside Henry Cato* is a bold, compassionate exploration of identity, sexuality, and the tactile language of shoes – the story of a survivor learning to stand in the light of an ambiguous world.

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About the Author

Katharine English grew up in the Midwest, where she developed a lifelong fascination with the hidden lives of ordinary people. Whether writing about the quiet corners of rural Kansas or the gritty streets of New York City, she is drawn to stories about unconventional beauty and finding grace in the outsider. A tech consultant turned storyteller, she received an MLA in Creative Writing and Literature from Harvard University. She publishes the newsletter *Nobody Famous* on Substack, a series of vignettes and stories dedicated to the people and things that often get lost in our daily hustle. Katharine lives in New York and Pennsylvania with her husband and an ever-sprawling collection of books. *Inside Henry Cato* is her debut novel.

Potential Talking Points

- The story takes place in San Francisco and New York City during tumultuous times in America's history: the Haight-Ashbury scene, the underground BDSM scene in the Meatpacking District, the emergence of LGBTQ+, Women's, and African American rights, and all while the war in Vietnam was raging and igniting civil unrest at home. How do the events of this specific moment in time parallel or resonate with what America is going through today?
- As a society, we continue to struggle with what an "authentic" identity means. Human beings want to seamlessly and comfortably fit others into categories and assign labels that they understand. What happens when individuals don't fit that easily? When someone's authenticity can't be neatly categorized?
- How do "found families" play a role in shaping our identities? Henry's own mother sees him as something to be scrubbed away, while the people who ultimately "see" him – Del, Cherub, others in San Francisco and New York – often have their own motives for doing so. What does it mean to find family, or love, or acceptance, in people who see you clearly but whose motives may be *unclear*? How do you know what to trust? And is being seen enough, even when it comes at a cost?

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More Praise for **INSIDE HENRY CATO**

In her gripping debut novel, Katharine English takes us on a staggering journey over several decades of America through the poignant eyes and (often shattered) heart of Henry Cato. Inviting the reader to literally walk in Henry's shoes, English cinematically captures the five senses in which looking, touching, feeling, smelling, and tasting might never be the same.

—Susan Kouguell, Senior Contributing Editor, *Script Magazine*

Katharine English fills this enthralling odyssey with complex characters ... building suspense and delivering a satisfying payoff. The storytelling is confessional and intimate, and Henry's first-person narration blends humor with lyricism, while diary entries and letters expand the plot and deepen the mystery. *Inside Henry Cato* treats sexuality, trauma, and gender fluidity without any sensationalism. The emotional honesty wins in this well-paced story, which is partly confession and partly picaresque adventure.

—Christian Sia, *Readers' Favorite*

"[A] gripping and refreshingly nuanced coming-of-age story. ... Come for the shoe fetishes and Grateful Dead cameos but stay for the provocative treatment of what it means to know and love yourself."

—Andy Barrow, author of *Peter in Progress*

Bold, intimate, and unapologetically direct, the novel offers a powerful ... experience exploring identity, memory, and the truths of childhood.

—S.G. Hyde, author of *Jackdaw Affliction*

Inside Henry Cato is a young man's quest to discover himself during the confusing and chaotic era of the late 1960's. Henry is different. Different from his Kansas-bred and ultra-religious family. He seeks beauty ... the beauty of impractical, yet glorious shoes. [His] innocence and identity are challenged in unfathomable ways. This haunting story is beautiful in unexpected ways, as Henry transforms from victim to guardian and advocate for his own life. *Inside Henry Cato* is unforgettable.

—Cathy Schieffelin, author of *The Call and Snakeroot and Cohosh*

Inside Henry Cato unlocks a door exposing a world of self-discovery and artistic expression entwined in the shadows of a complicated upbringing.

Katharine English's writing intricately captures the delicate interplay between trauma, identity, and creativity. Her prose is lyrical and raw creating a story that is both haunting and hopeful. A captivating read with a profound sense of empathy and introspection.

—Sonja Koch, author of ***Bookends of Life***