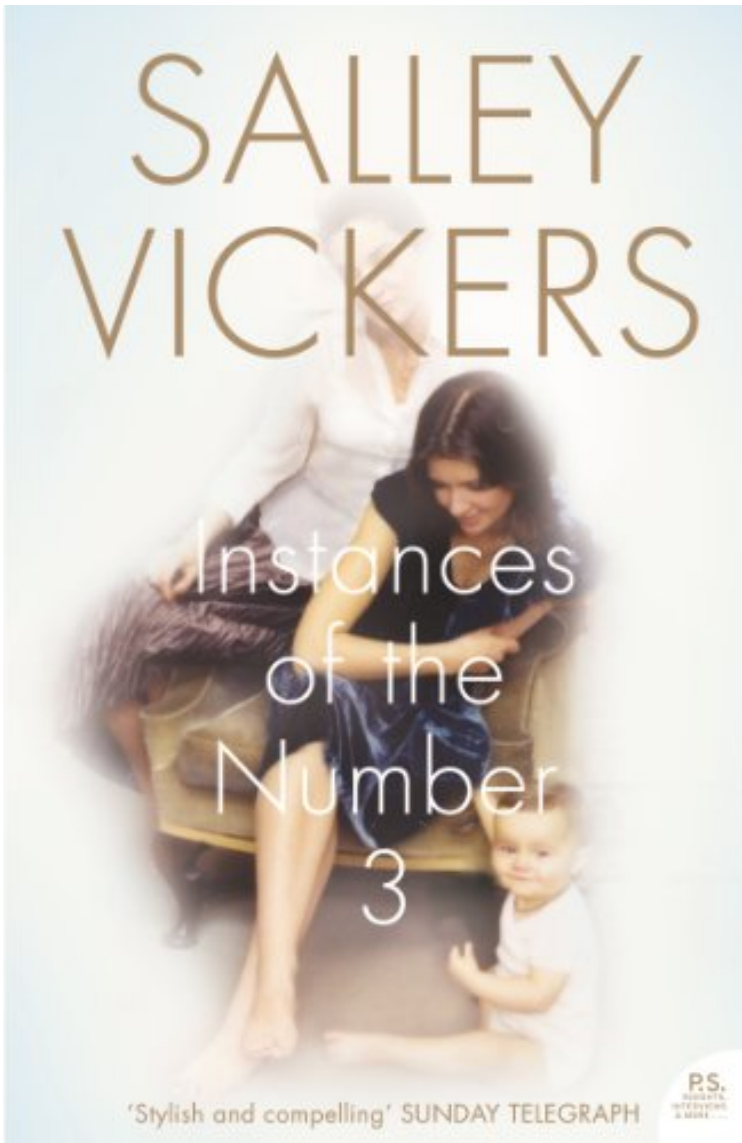


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Instances of the Number 3



Par Salley Vickers
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Description : Description du produitWhen a man dies and leaves behind a wife and a mistress, we expect certain responses to follow. But as the narrator of Salley Vickers's second novel explains, "this is not an account of feminine jealousy, or even revenge, and not all human beings (not even women) conform to the attitudes generally expected." Indeed, in this ironic and witty novel nothing is quite as we expect to find it. Telling the story of Bridget Hansome and Frances Slater, Vickers brings to life a loving marriage and a love affair that exist side by side for years - and continue to reverberate after secretive, generous, sexually prodigal Peter Hansome dies suddenly in a car accident, on his way home from an assignation with yet another lover, about whom neither woman knows. While Frances, a London art dealer and sometime artists' model, gradually makes friends with the older, Shakespeare-loving Bridget, these two unconventional women start to learn the whole truth (or almost the whole truth) about the man whose death brought them

together and whose ghost watches over them still. Wise, wry, and intellectually playful, *Instances of the Number 3* explores the mysterious power of triangles in love, art, and theology. It confirms Salley Vickers as one of the most intelligent new voices in British fiction.

*Prsentation de l'diteur*The fantastic new edition of the bestselling second novel from the author of *Miss Garnets Angel*. Bridget Hansome and Frances Slater have only one thing in common. And that's Peter Hansome, who has died suddenly. Without their husband or lover, the women find that before they can rebuild their lives they must look to themselves and unravel mysteries that they had never before even suspected. So begins an unlikely alliance between wife and mistress and a voyage of discovery that is as comic as it is profound. *Instances of the Number 3* is a funny, beguiling exploration of love, bereavement, Shakespeare, illusion and the impossibility of escaping your past. Following on from *Miss Garnets Angel*, this brilliant novel confirms Salley Vickers as a writer who transcends generations..co.uk Salley Vickers' novel *Instances of the Number Three* is set in London and Shropshire. It describes the relationship between a dead man, his wife and his mistresses and is illuminated by philosophical ponderings on Hamlet and his ghost, and the poetry of Dante, Gerald Manley Hopkins and John Donne. Peter Hansome is the dead husband who walks through the pages of the novel, appearing to his wife Bridget in "his old tweed jacket and cords. He was, in fact, exactly, but without the disfiguring cuts and bruises of the accident, as she had seen him last--in his coffin. "To come to terms with his life and death, literature-loving Bridget makes friends with his mistress, Francis, an ex-artists' model: "She ... had a capacity for stillness and the kind of body which reflects planes of light." But as the omniscient narrator says: This is not an account of feminine jealousy, or even revenge, instead its a story of negotiation and discovery as the characters orbit each other like little planets. Vickers' prose style is witty, literary and decorous, her musing on the instances of the number three take in purgatory, heaven and hell; the eternal lovers triangle and the trinity (memorably described as the "different flavours of a Neapolitan ice"). The book is a controlled meditation on personal identity, passion and art, where emotions are analysed and reconciled. Sally Vickers' trick is to keep you interested in the hearts and lives of the characters as her novel of ideas gently unfurls. This is a fine successor to Vickers' hugely successful debut novel, *Miss Garnett's Angel*, a subtle story of an older woman's emotional epiphany set in contemporary Venice. --Eithne Farry From Publishers Weekly The classic threesome husband, wife, mistress proves mathematically unstable in Vickers's profound comic novel (following her debut, *Miss Garnet's Angel*). When 62-year-old Londoner Peter Hansome dies in a car crash, his widow, Bridget, and his mistress, Frances, develop an awkward intimacy cemented by their shared loss. But before Bridget can come to terms with Peter's absence, a "breathtaking" young Iranian man named Zahin arrives to see Peter and winds up moving in as houseguest/housekeeper. Zahin is charming deferential and superhumanly industrious, he fills the air with the "satisfying scent of lavender Pledge" but there's also something unsettling about his presence, which drives Bridget to her Shropshire cottage, where she meets Stanley Godwit, a Shakespeare-loving chimney sweep. Frances, too, finds unexpected joy as she learns to make sense of life without Peter. But Peter is never actually gone, as his ghost watches over his former "consorts." This ghost is no jealous meddler; he's more ambiguous, prompting Bridget to meditate on the ambiguity of the ghost in Hamlet and on her own uneasy Catholicism. Though Vickers begins unpromisingly by adopting a pedantic tone, she abandons this posture soon enough, allowing her appealing characters to bloom as the world opens up to them in surprising but logical ways. Philosophical concerns are woven seamlessly with earthly incident, so that bad cocktail parties resonate and good bubble baths matter. In the tradition of the late Iris Murdoch, this extraordinary book will inspire and delight. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.