



## Prisoner's Dilemma

By Richard Powers

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Something is wrong with Eddie Hobson Sr., father of four, sometime history teacher, quiz master, black humorist and virtuoso invalid. His recurring fainting spells have worsened, and with his ingrained aversion to doctors, his worried family tries to discover the nature of his sickness. Meanwhile, in private, Eddie puts the finishing touches on a secret project he calls Hobbstown, a place that he promises will save him, the world and everything that's in it.

A dazzling novel of compassion and imagination, *Prisoner's Dilemma* is a story of the power of invalid experience.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Eddie Hobson Sr. is paterfamilias personified. A retired history teacher in DeKalb, Ill., he has raised his children Artie, Lily, Rachel and Eddie Jr. by talking to them in riddles and plaguing them with questions and tests. After a lifetime of being ruled by this petty tyrant, the now-grown children find it almost impossible, and painfully distressing, to concede that Pop might be really ill. But the virtuoso invalid and black comedian keeps passing out, and it seems the family must accept the inevitable. Artie, who worships the old man while hating him, describes his father's slow decline, interspersing his account with childhood memories and details of the mysterious dictaphone recordings that Pop has been making in private for so long. The recordings that Artie listens to secretly at last reveal the father to the son. Skillfully alternating lively colloquial dialogue with Artie's fluid, elegiac recollections, Powers, author of the praised *Three Farmers on Their Way to a Dance* brings each member of the family to vivid, quirky life in this accomplished narrative.

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From Library Journal

Eddie Hobson is a former history teacher who cannot escape the past. Seared by a painful experience during World War II, he develops a mysterious illness that gradually alienates him from even his own wife and children. Hobson's illness has grim physical symptoms, but its essence is "his need to love people without knowing whether they deserved it." Interlaced with a third-person anatomy of the Hobson family are the first-person musings of a son trying to understand his father's eventual death. Although his subject is pathology, Powers provides a dazzling display of wit (riddles, triple puns, and palindromes) that may entertain, but also contributes to the themes of this remarkably well-crafted novel. Albert E. Wilhelm, Tennessee Technological Univ., Cookeville

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### Review

"We happily pitch ourselves into Scobie Malone's wonderful adventures in Aussie-land...real thrills and surprising laughs."--"New York Times" When the ruminants and lucre-chasers are growing lichen on library shelves, Jon Cleary will continue to be read."--"Los Angeles Times" The Malone stories come alive through their setting...Cleary's writing is seamless and his plots imaginative and mature."--"Miami Herald" Enough plot twists and conspiracy-making ingredients to satisfy the most demanding aficionado of the genre."--"Irish Times" The business of a novelist is to tell a story. Jon Cleary has that talent in abundance."--"Sunday Express

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**George Seal:**

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