



## The assistant (Blackbirds)

*Bernard Malamud*

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**The assistant (Blackbirds)** Bernard Malamud

Introduction by Jonathan Rosen

Bernard Malamud's second novel, originally published in 1957, is the story of Morris Bober, a grocer in postwar Brooklyn, who "wants better" for himself and his family. First two robbers appear and hold him up; then things take a turn for the better when broken-nosed Frank Alpine becomes his assistant. But there are complications: Frank, whose reaction to Jews is ambivalent, falls in love with Helen Bober; at the same time he begins to steal from the store.

Like Malamud's best stories, this novel unerringly evokes an immigrant world of cramped circumstances and great expectations. Malamud defined the immigrant experience in a way that has proven vital for several generations of writers.

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