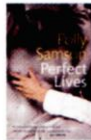


Perfect Lives

by Polly Samson

(£15.99, Virago) ★★★



It's called *Perfect Lives*, but short story writer Polly Samson knows that life is rarely foolproof. Things happen organically to characters scattered through the 11 stories. Mostly living in an English seaside town, they weave in and out of each other's lives, while retaining distinct voices – a small boy in love with a babysitter, a wife betrayed but not beaten, pianists good and bad. It's not a book of fireworks and tragedy, but it feels like life, and Samson captures that with some beautiful writing.