



Esther Freud

I was entranced
and moved
by Maggie
O'Farrell's **The
Hand That First**

Held Mine (Headline, £10.99),
a novel that proves yet again
what a brilliant storyteller she is.
Louise Doughty's **Whatever You
Love** (Faber, £12.99), about a
woman reeling from the death
of her daughter, is a masterful,
structurally perfect thriller. Helen
Simpson's elegant short stories
In-Flight Entertainment (Cape,
£14.99) cleverly bring home
their serious message, and Polly
Samson's **Perfect Lives** (Virago,
£15.99) is a life-enhancing treat
of a book, stories too, but strung
together cleverly into a novel. I
also loved Tim Parks's searingly
honest memoir, **Teach Us to
Sit Still** (Harvill Secker, £12.99)
about his prostate problems, which
unlikely as it sounds, was funny and
inspiring.