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My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun

Theo Padnos

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My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun Theo Padnos
In a nely wrought memoir, thirty-three-year-old Theo Padnos describes his experiences teaching a literature class inside a locked prison room at the Woodstock Correctional Facility in Vermont. His students, ages seventeen to twenty-ve, stand accused of grisly, calculated crimes: beatings, rape, drug dealing, and murder. All are drifting, including the teacher himself. By rejecting standard prison safety precautions-videotape, monitored windows, an open door-Padnos creates an atmosphere of trust, and through the works of seminal American writers, enables these young prisoners to talk about their lives and the apocalyptic myths and metaphors that motivate their crimes. Armed with self-deprecating humor, Theo Padnos guides his students to discover themselves and each other through the power of the written word-and nds himself along the way. My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun is a clear-eyed work that penetrates a formerly unmapped territory and unflinchingly tackles questions that haunt us.

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