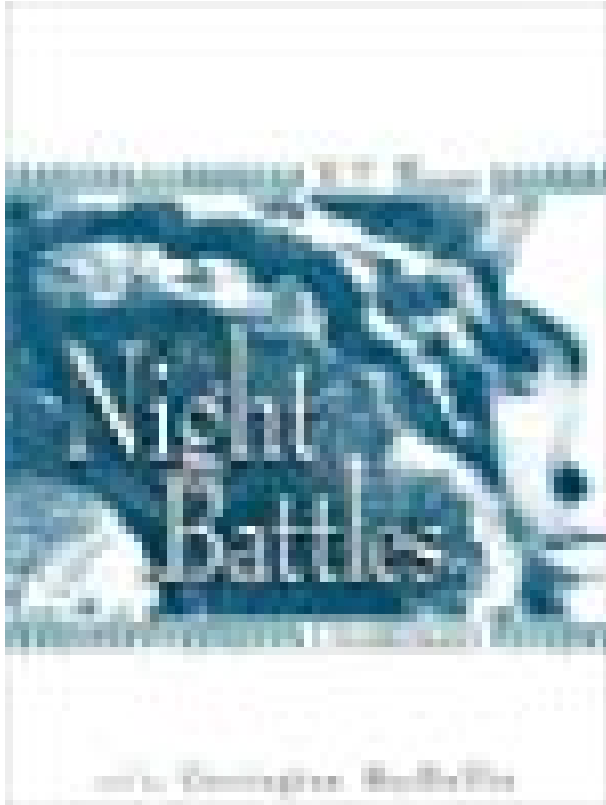


The Night Battles



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Historian Joan Severance returns to the Sicily of her childhood, ostensibly to do research in the archives of the remote fortress town of Valparuta. In truth, her academic career lies in ruins behind her; she has been relieved of her teaching duties at Brown University after assaulting a student. Unable to approach her own long-buried history of loss and displacement, Joan takes refuge in the cool library rooms and the crumbling probate lists from Renaissance times. As Joan's disturbed, hyperintuitive mind falls increasingly under the spell of Valparuta and the charismatic resident archivist, Chiesa, a beautifully dressed heroin addict, she is forced to confront her long-submerged past.