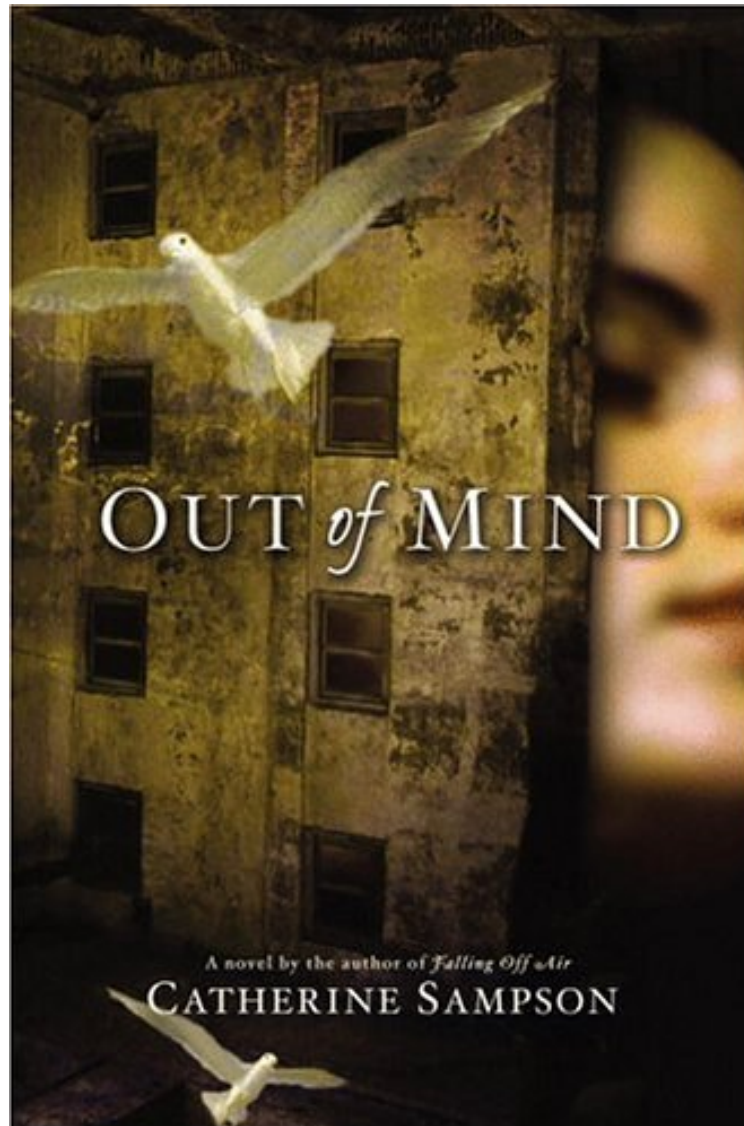


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Out of Mind

Catherine Sampson

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Catherine Sampson : Out of Mind before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Out of Mind:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A marvelous read...By Armchair InterviewsThe critics were not kind to Catherine Sampson's sophomore novel, *Out of Mind*. Publisher's Weekly called it "uneven" and Booklist referred to it as "mildly appealing." I, on the other hand, had a much different experience. Maybe it was because I didn't read her first novel, *Falling Off Air*, but I found *Out of Mind* a marvelous read.Robin Ballantyne is now the single mother of three-year-old twins, a nightmare all by itself. Her job as a journalist for a London television company keeps her

doubly busy. Robin makes documentaries and is working on a show about missing people. Then one of her colleagues, Melanie Jacobs, disappears from an embedded-journalist training school, yet no one seems concerned. Robin barely knew Melanie other than by sight and by her reputation as a woman unafraid of man, beast, or war. After calling Melanie's parents to express her sympathies, Melanie's mother asks Robin to look into things since it seems that neither the law nor the television station seem to care. When Robin agrees, that sets the entire chain of events into action. Robin identifies the last person to see her alive, Mark Darling. Mark is in Cambodia, but that doesn't stop Robin from using her expense account, and with her photographer, takes the next flight out. The plot gets a little confusing when Robin returns to England, with more questions than answers. Her investigation leads her to Mark's completely dysfunctional family, with whom Robin becomes more and more obsessed. With a twist I never saw coming, Sampson created a character that was for the most part believable. I had some trouble believing that Robin would leave her kids with her neighbor to look for a woman she never knew, but on the other hand, hard journalism often requires that kind of willingness to abandon home and hearth. *Out of Mind* was, for me, a suspenseful read that kept me up past my bedtime. *Armchair Interviews* says: If you like suspense with your mysteries-and good writing, check this out. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Disappointing follow-up...By ReaderI enjoyed 'Falling Off Air', Sampson's debut novel featuring Robin Ballantyne, but had to slog through this dreary follow-up. It started out quite well but about a third of the way into the book, I felt Sampson lost impetus (it seemed to me as if she herself was bogged down and bored with the characters) and started meandering all over the place. Robin's relationship with her detective boyfriend is bloodless and unconvincing, her bratty twins tedious and somehow unreal (hard to believe she has three children of her own), and Robin herself is unlikeable and colorless. In fact, none of the characters seem like real people. The story line had potential, but became totally lost in a thicket of silly sub-plots and unconvincing characters. And the number of phone calls from one player to another was ridiculous! At one point there seemed to be three or four per page and the only way the author could think of to convey the plotline to the reader. I made myself finish it, just to see how Sampson extricated herself from the morass, but it was a chore. 1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Staying in control and out of danger!By Betsie's Literary PageSeptember 15, 2005Robin Ballantyne is the single mother of twins and a TV documentary maker who has recently returned to work. She convinces her bosses to let her film a series about missing people. A project that will attempt the reconstruction of vanished lives when a daring and reckless camerawoman named Melanie Jacobs suddenly vanishes without a trace from HazPrep, a military training camp for journalists, and a private security operation just outside of London. Melanie's mother approaches Ballantyne with a request to help uncover the truth regarding her daughter's mysterious disappearance. Ballantyne in turn promises her co-workers distraught mother that she will investigate. But when she begins asking questions, Ballantyne heads directly into the depths of a dangerous and conspiratorial world as conflict rises with a group of army veterans, as well as with her boyfriend, DCI Tom Finney. Ballantyne's employer, "The Corporation," does nothing to support her, instead an executive requests she back off and drop Melanie from the series altogether. Melanie's boyfriend, Fred, confesses there were problems in their relationship. Persistence will reveal that the last person to have seen Melanie alive is ex-special forces soldier turned mercenary, Mike Darling who is clearing up land mines in the killing fields of Cambodia. Darling is hesitant to speak of Jacobs despite a rumored relationship. A landmine explodes, sending Ballantyne home before she can dredge up more. But when Darling's own child is abducted Ballantyne suspects there is a connection between the two disappearances. The devious plot twists and turns to an explosive end that is sure keep readers glued to their seats!Reviewed by Betsie

The critically acclaimed author of *Falling Off Air* returns with her heart-pounding second novel, in which Robin Ballantyne tracks a kidnapper-and ends up on the trail of a killer. Robin Ballantyne heads to Cambodia to film a documentary about landmines. That's her cover story, but she really wants to interview Mike Darling, who happened to be on a retreat with her friend Donna right before Donna mysteriously disappeared. The trip turns disastrous after one of the men at Mike's camp, whose parents share a home with Mike and his wife in England, steps on a landmine and loses his leg. Then the Darlings' own son is kidnapped. Mike returns from Cambodia furious that the police are making no progress, and then someone is found stabbed to death in the home the Darlings share. Robin begins her own investigation into the murder and the kidnapping that preceded it-risking her own job, love, and life in the process.

From Publishers WeeklyIn British author Sampson's uneven second thriller (after 2004's *Falling Off Air*), London TV journalist Robin Ballantyne looks into the disappearance of a colleague, Melanie Jacobs, an adventurous camerawoman. Warned off the case by her bosses, Robin persists, even traveling to Cambodia to interview the last person to see Melanie alive, former Special Forces officer Mike Darling, now a private security specialist. Back in London, Robin is drawn to Darling's extended family. When baby Christopher Darling is kidnapped, Robin suspects a link with Melanie's case and determines to investigate, despite continued opposition from her employer and the police, including her lover, DCI Tom Finney. Robin is the kind of heroine who ignores advice, makes instinctive accusations, forges ahead, steps on figurative and literal minefields, yet the unusual feature of this series is a caring and concerned single mother of twins. As in her first novel, Sampson assembles a bewilderingly large cast of intriguing characters,

especially Robin's dysfunctional family, and meanders into subplots that are well done but distracting, then produces a slam-bang climax revealing a surprise culprit. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist This mildly appealing follow-up to the well-received *Falling Off Air* (2004) finds British TV documentary producer Robin Ballantyne digging into the disappearance of a colleague. The danger-seeking camerawoman vanished, ironically enough, from a survival school, but no one besides Robin and the woman's mother seems all that keen on tracking her down. Told with oddly flattened affect, the story takes quite a while to pick up steam as Robin battles officious network bureaucrats to interview aggressively reluctant sources, slog through clues, and finally face a few perilous encounters of her own. The best parts of this sophomore series entry concern Robin's home life. Her button-pushing sister invites their deadbeat dad to stay at Mom's place while she is away; Robin's cop boyfriend may be courting his ex on the side; and her rambunctious young twins are a constant challenge. Sampson, a BBC and London Times vet, also provides a nuanced, realistic look at the modern news-gathering process. But her fans might hope she is able to concoct a more compelling mystery for Robin to tackle next time out. Frank Sennett Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved " ... this author has created a smart and funny character worthy of serialization." --ForeWord magazine