

[PDF] The Year Of The Flood

Margaret Atwood - pdf download free book

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Author: Margaret Atwood

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Description:

Book Description The long-awaited new novel from Margaret Atwood. *The Year of the Flood* is a dystopic masterpiece and a testament to her visionary power.

The times and species have been changing at a rapid rate, and the social compact is wearing as thin as environmental stability. Adam One, the kindly leader of the God's Gardeners--a religion devoted to the melding of science and religion, as well as the preservation of all plant and animal life--has long predicted a natural disaster that will alter Earth as we know it. Now it has occurred, obliterating most human life. Two women have survived: Ren, a young trapeze dancer locked inside the high-end sex club Scales and Tails, and Toby, a God's Gardener barricaded inside a luxurious spa where many of the treatments are edible.

Have others survived? Ren's bioartist friend Amanda? Zeb, her eco-fighter stepfather? Her onetime lover, Jimmy? Or the murderous Painballers, survivors of the mutual-elimination Painball prison? Not

to mention the shadowy, corrupt policing force of the ruling powers...

Meanwhile, gene-spliced life forms are proliferating: the lion/lamb blends, the Mo'hair sheep with human hair, the pigs with human brain tissue. As Adam One and his intrepid hemp-clad band make their way through this strange new world, Ren and Toby will have to decide on their next move. They can't stay locked away...

By turns dark, tender, violent, thoughtful, and uneasily hilarious, *The Year of the Flood* is Atwood at her most brilliant and inventive.

Margaret Atwood on *The Year of the Flood*

I've never before gone back to a novel and written another novel related to it. Why this time? Partly because so many people asked me what happened right after the end of the 2003 novel, . I didn't actually know, but the questions made me think about it. That was one reason. Another was that the core subject matter has continued to preoccupy me.

When *Oryx and Crake* came out, it seemed to many like science fiction--way out there, too weird to be possible--but in the three years that passed before I began writing *The Year of the Flood*, the perceived gap between that supposedly unreal future and the harsh one we might very well live through was narrowing fast. What is happening to our world? What can we do to reverse the damage? How long have we got? And, most importantly--what kind of "we"? In other words, what kind of people might undertake the challenge? Dedicated ones--they'd have to be. And unless you believe our planet is worth saving, why bother?

So the question of inspirational belief entered the picture, and once you have a set of beliefs--as distinct from a body of measurable knowledge--you have a religion. The God's Gardeners appear briefly in *Oryx and Crake*, but in *The Year of the Flood*, they're central. Like all religions, the Gardeners have their own leader, Adam One. They also have their own honoured saints and martyrs, their special days, their theology. They may look strange and obsessive and even foolish to non-members, but they're serious about what they profess; as are their predecessors, who are with us today. I've found out a great deal about rooftop gardens and urban beekeeping while writing this book!

Another question frequently asked about *Oryx and Crake* concerned gender. Why was the story told by a man? How would it have been different if the narrator had been a woman? Such questions led me to Ren and Toby, and then to their respective lives, and also to their places of refuge. A high-end sex club and a luxury spa would in fact be quite good locations in which to wait out a pandemic plague: at least you'd have bar snacks, and a lot of clean towels.

In his book, , Denis Dutton proposes that our interest in narrative is built in--selected during the very long period the human race spent in the Pleistocene--because any species with the ability to tell stories about both past and future would have an evolutionary edge. Will there be a crocodile in the river tomorrow, as there was last year? If so, better not go there. Speculative fictions about the future, like *The Year of the Flood*, are narratives of that kind. Where will the crocodiles be? How will we avoid them? What are our chances? --Margaret Atwood

(Photo © George Whiteside)

--This text refers to the edition.

From Publishers Weekly Starred Review. SignatureReviewed by Marcel TherouxIn her 2002

speculative novel, *Oryx and Crake*, Margaret Atwood depicted a dystopic planet tumbling toward apocalypse. The world she envisaged was in the throes of catastrophic climate change, its wealthy inhabitants dwelling in sterile secure compounds, its poor ones in the dangerous pleeblands of decaying inner cities. Mass extinctions had taken place, while genetic experiments had populated the planet with strange new breeds of animal: liobams, Mo'Hairs, rakunks. At the end of the book, we left its central character, Jimmy, in the aftermath of a devastating man-made plague, as he wondered whether to befriend or attack a ragged band of strangers. The novel seemed complete, closing on a moment of suspense, as though Atwood was content simply to hint at the direction life would now take. In her profoundly imagined new book, *The Year of the Flood*, she revisits that same world and its catastrophe. Like *Oryx and Crake*, *Year of the Flood* begins just after the catastrophe and then tracks back in time over the corrupt and degenerate world that preceded it. But while the first novel focused on the privileged elite in the compounds and the morally bankrupt corporations, *The Year of the Flood* depicts more of the world of the plebs, an edgy no-man's land inhabited by criminals, sex workers, dropouts and the few individuals who are trying to resist the grip of the corporations. The novel centers on the lives of Ren and Toby, female members of a fundamentalist sect of Christian environmentalists, the God's Gardeners. Led by the charismatic Adam One, whose sermons and eco-hymns punctuate the narrative, the God's Gardeners are preparing for life after the prophesied Waterless Flood. Atwood plays some of their religion for laughs: their hymns have a comically bouncing, churchy rhythm, and we learn that both Ren and Toby have been drawn toward the sect for nonreligious reasons. Yet the gentleness and benignity of the Gardeners is a source of hope as well as humor. As absurd as some of their beliefs appear, Atwood seems to be suggesting that they're a better option than the naked materialism of the corporations. This is a gutsy and expansive novel, rich with ideas and conceits, but overall it's more optimistic than *Oryx and Crake*. Its characters have a compassion and energy lacking in Jimmy, the wounded and floating lothario at the previous novel's center. Each novel can be enjoyed independently of the other, but what's perhaps most impressive is the degree of connection between them. Together, they form halves of a single epic. Characters intersect. Plots overlap. Even the tiniest details tessellate into an intricate whole. In the final pages, we catch up with Jimmy once more, as he waits to encounter the strangers. This time around, Atwood commits herself to a dramatic and hopeful denouement that's in keeping with this novel's spirit of redemption. *Marcel Theroux's most recent novel, Far North, was published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux in June.*

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