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Oryx And Crake (English Edition)



Par Margaret Atwood
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Par Margaret Atwood : Oryx And Crake (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Oryx And Crake (English Edition):

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Description : Description du produitA stunning and provocative new novel by the internationally celebrated author of *The Blind Assassin*, winner of the Booker PrizeMargaret Atwoods new novel is so utterly compelling, so prescient, so relevant, so terrifyingly-all-too-likely-to-be-true, that readers may find their view of the world forever changed after reading it.With breathtaking command of her shocking material and with her customary sharp wit and dark humour, Atwood projects us into a conceivable future of our own world, an outlandish yet wholly believable place left devastated in the wake of ecological and scientific disaster and populated by characters who will continue to inhabit your dreams long after the book is closed.This is Margaret Atwood at the absolute peak of her powers. For readers of *Oryx and Crake*, nothing will ever look the same again.

Presentation de l'auteur Pigs might not fly but they are strangely altered. So, for that matter, are wolves and racoons. A man, once named Jimmy, lives in a tree, wrapped in old bedsheets, now calls himself Snowman. The voice of Oryx, the woman he loved, teasingly haunts him. And the green-eyed Children of Crake are, for some reason, his responsibility. In Jimmy, Atwood has created a great character: a tragic-comic artist of the future, part buffoon, part Orpheus. An adman who's a sad man; a jealous lover who's in perpetual mourning; a fantasist who can only remember the past' - Independent 'Gripping and remarkably imagined' - London of Books.com

In Oryx and Crake, a science fiction novel that is more Swift than Heinlein, more cautionary tale than "fictional science" (no flying cars here), Margaret Atwood depicts a near-future world that turns from the merely horrible to the horrific, from a fool's paradise to a bio-wasteland. Snowman (a man once known as Jimmy) sleeps in a tree and just might be the only human left on our devastated planet. He is not entirely alone, however, as he considers himself the shepherd of a group of experimental, human-like creatures called the Children of Crake. As he scavenges and tends to his insect bites, Snowman recalls in flashbacks how the world fell apart. While the story begins with a rather ponderous set-up of what has become a clichéd landscape of the human endgame, littered with smashed computers and abandoned buildings, it takes on life when Snowman recalls his boyhood meeting with his best friend Crake: "Crake had a thing about him even then.... He generated awe ... in his dark laconic clothing." A dangerous genius, Crake is the book's most intriguing character. Crake and Jimmy live with all the other smart, rich people in the Compound--gated company towns owned by biotech corporations. (Ordinary folks are kept outside the gates in the chaotic "pleeblands.") Meanwhile, beautiful Oryx, raised as a child prostitute in Southeast Asia, finds her way to the West and meets Crake and Jimmy, setting up an inevitable love triangle. Eventually Crake's experiments in bioengineering cause humanity's shockingly quick demise (with uncanny echoes of SARS, ebola, and mad cow disease), leaving Snowman to try to pick up the pieces. There are a few speed bumps along the way, including some clunky dialogue and heavy-handed symbols such as Snowman's broken watch, but once the bleak narrative gets moving, as Snowman sets out in search of the laboratory that seeded the world's destruction, it clips along at a good pace, with a healthy dose of wry humor. --Mark Frutkin, .ca

Extrait 1

Snowman wakes before dawn. He lies unmoving, listening to the tide coming in, wave after wave sloshing over the various barricades, wish-wash, wish-wash, the rhythm of heartbeat. He would so like to believe he is still asleep. On the eastern horizon there's a greyish haze, lit now with a rosy, deadly glow. Strange how that colour still seems tender. The offshore towers stand out in dark silhouette against it, rising improbably out of the pink and pale blue of the lagoon. The shrieks of the birds that nest out there and the distant ocean grinding against the ersatz reefs of rusted car parts and jumbled bricks and assorted rubble sound almost like holiday traffic. Out of habit he looks at his watch - stainless-steel case, burnished aluminum band, still shiny although it no longer works. He wears it now as his only talisman. A blank face is what it shows him: zero hour. It causes a jolt of terror to run through him, this absence of official time. Nobody nowhere knows what time it is. "Calm down," he tells himself. He takes a few deep breaths, then scratches his bug bites, around but not on the itchiest places, taking care not to knock off any scabs: blood poisoning is the last thing he needs. Then he scans the ground below for wildlife: all quiet, no scales and tails. Left hand, right foot, right hand, left foot, he makes his way down from the tree. After brushing off the twigs and bark, he winds his dirty bedsheet around himself like a toga. He's hung his authentic-replica Red Sox baseball cap on a branch overnight for safekeeping; he checks inside it, flicks out a spider, puts it on. He walks a couple of yards to the left, pisses into the bushes. "Heads up," he says to the grasshoppers that whirl away at the impact. Then he goes to the other side of the tree, well away from his customary urinal, and rummages around in the cache he's improvised from a few slabs of concrete, lining it with wire mesh to keep out the rats and mice. He's stashed some mangoes there, knotted in a plastic bag, and a can of Sveltana No-Meat Cocktail Sausages, and a precious half-bottle of Scotch - no, more like a third - and a chocolate-flavoured energy bar scrounged from a trailer park, limp and sticky inside its foil. He can't bring himself to eat it yet: it might be the last one he'll ever find. He keeps a can opener there too, and for no particular reason an ice pick; and six empty beer bottles, for sentimental reasons and for storing fresh water. Also his sunglasses; he puts them on. One lens is missing but they're better than nothing. He undoes the plastic bag: there's only a single mango left. Funny, he remembered more. The ants have got in, even though he tied the bag as tightly as he could. Already they're running up his arms, the black kind and the vicious little yellow kind. Surprising what a sharp sting they can give, especially the yellow ones. He rubs them away. "It is the strict adherence to daily routine that tends towards the maintenance of good morale and the preservation of sanity," he says out loud. He has the feeling he's quoting from a book, some obsolete,

ponderous directive written in aid of European colonials running plantations of one kind or another. He can't recall ever having read such a thing, but that means nothing. There are a lot of blank spaces in his stub of a brain, where memory used to be. Rubber plantations, coffee plantations, jute plantations. (What was jute?) They would have been told to wear solar topis, dress for dinner, refrain from raping the natives. It wouldn't have said raping. Refrain from fraternizing with the female inhabitants. Or, put some other way . . . He bets they didn't refrain, though. Nine times out of ten. "In view of the mitigating," he says. He finds himself standing with his mouth open, trying to remember the rest of the sentence. He sits down on the ground and begins to eat the mango. Flotsam On the white beach, ground-up coral and broken bones, a group of the children are walking. They must have been swimming, they're still wet and glistening. They should be more careful: who knows what may infest the lagoon? But they're unwary; unlike Snowman, who won't dip a toe in there even at night, when the sun can't get at him. Revision: especially at night. He watches them with envy, or is it nostalgia? It can't be that: he never swam in the sea as a child, never ran around on a beach without any clothes on. The children scan the terrain, stoop, pick up flotsam; then they deliberate among themselves, keeping some items, discarding others; their treasures go into a torn sack. Sooner or later - he can count on it - they'll seek him out where he sits wrapped in his decaying sheet, hugging his shins and sucking on his mango, in under the shade of the trees because of the punishing sun. For the children - thick-skinned, resistant to ultraviolet - he's a creature of dimness, of the dusk. Here they come now. "Snowman, oh Snowman," they chant in their singsong way. They never stand too close to him. Is that from respect, as he'd like to think, or because he stinks? (He does stink, he knows that well enough. He's rank, he's gamy, he reeks like a walrus - oily, salty, fishy - not that he's ever smelled such a beast. But he's seen pictures.) Opening up their sack, the children chorus, "Oh Snowman, what have we found?" They lift out the objects, hold them up as if offering them for sale: a hubcap, a piano key, a chunk of pale-green pop bottle smoothed by the ocean. A plastic BlyssPluss container, empty; a ChickieNobs Bucket O'Nubbins, ditto. A computer mouse, or the busted remains of one, with a long wiry tail. Snowman feels like weeping. What can he tell them? There's no way of explaining to them what these curious items are, or were. But surely they've guessed what he'll say, because it's always the same. "These are things from before." He keeps his voice kindly but remote. A cross between pedagogue, soothsayer, and benevolent uncle - that should be his tone. "Will they hurt us?" Sometimes they find tins of motor oil, caustic solvents, plastic bottles of bleach. Booby traps from the past. He's considered to be an expert on potential accidents: scalding liquids, sickening fumes, poison dust. Pain of odd kinds. "These, no," he says. "These are safe." At this they lose interest, let the sack dangle. But they don't go away: they stand, they stare. Their beachcombing is an excuse. Mostly they want to look at him, because he's so unlike them. Every so often they ask him to take off his sunglasses and put them on again: they want to see whether he has two eyes really, or three. "Snowman, oh Snowman," they're singing, less to him than to one another. To them his name is just two syllables. They don't know what a snowman is, they've never seen snow. It was one of Crake's rules that no name could be chosen for which a physical equivalent - even stuffed, even skeletal - could not be demonstrated. No unicorns, no griffins, no manticores or basilisks. But those rules no longer apply, and it's given Snowman a bitter pleasure to adopt this dubious label. The Abominable Snowman - existing and not existing, flickering at the edges of blizzards, apelike man or manlike ape, stealthy, elusive, known only through rumours and through its backward-pointing footprints. Mountain tribes were said to have chased it down and killed it when they had the chance. They were said to have boiled it, roasted it, held special feasts; all the more exciting, he supposes, for bordering on cannibalism. For present purposes he's shortened the name. He's only Snowman. He's kept the abominable to himself, his own secret hair shirt. After a few moments of hesitation the children squat down in a half-circle, boys and girls together. A couple of the younger ones are still munching on their breakfasts, the green juice running down their chins. It's discouraging how grubby everyone gets without mirrors. Still, they're amazingly attractive, these children - each one naked, each one perfect, each one a different skin colour - chocolate, rose, tea, butter, cream, honey - but each with green eyes. Crake's aesthetic. They're gazing at Snowman expectantly. They must be hoping he'll talk to them, but he isn't in the mood for it today. At the very most he might let them see his sunglasses, up close, or his shiny, dysfunctional watch, or his baseball cap. They like the cap, but don't understand his need for such a thing - removable hair that isn't hair - and he hasn't yet invented a fiction for it. They're quiet for a bit, staring, ruminating, but then the oldest one starts up. "Oh Snowman, please tell us - what is that moss growing out of your face?" The others chime in. "Please tell us, please tell us!" No nudging, no giggling: the question is serious. "Feathers," he says. They ask this question at least once a week. He gives the same answer. Even over such a short time - two months, three?

He's lost count - they've accumulated a stock of lore, of conjecture about him: Snowman was once a bird but he's forgotten how to fly and the rest of his feathers fell out, and so he is cold and he needs a second skin, and he has to wrap himself up. No: he's cold because he eats fish, and fish are cold. No: he wraps himself up because he's missing his man thing, and he doesn't want us to see. That's why he won't go swimming. Snowman has wrinkles because he once lived underwater and it wrinkled up his skin. Snowman is sad because the others like him flew away over the sea, and now he is all alone. "I want feathers too," says the youngest. A vain hope: no beards on the men, among the Children of Crake. Crake himself had found beards irrational; also he'd been irritated by the task of shaving, so he'd abolished the need for it. Though not of course for Snowman: too late for him. Now they all begin at once. "Oh Snowman, oh Snowman, can we have feathers too, please?" "No," he says. "Why not, why not?" sing the two smallest ones....