

[PDF] Dhalgren

William Gibson, Samuel R. Delany - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: Dhalgren

Author: William Gibson, Samuel R. De

Released: 1996-07-19

Language:

Pages: 817

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Description:

What is *Dhalgren*? *Dhalgren* is one of the greatest novels of 20th-century American literature. *Dhalgren* is one of the all-time bestselling science fiction novels. *Dhalgren* may be read with equal validity as SF, magic realism, or metafiction. *Dhalgren* is controversial, challenging, and scandalous. *Dhalgren* is a brilliant novel about sex, gender, race, class, art, and identity.

A mysterious disaster has stricken the midwestern American city of Bellona, and its aftereffects are disturbing: a city block burns down and is intact a week later; clouds cover the sky for weeks, then part to reveal two moons; a week passes for one person when only a day passes for another. The catastrophe is confined to Bellona, and most of the inhabitants have fled. But others are drawn to the devastated city, among them the Kid, a white/American Indian man who can't remember his own name. The Kid is emblematic of those who live in the new Bellona, who are the young, the poor, the mad, the violent, the outcast--the marginalized.

Dhalgren is many things, but instantly accessible isn't one of them. While most of this big, ambitious, deeply detailed novel is beautifully pellucid, the opening pages will be difficult for some: the novel starts with the second half of an incomplete sentence, in the viewpoint of a man who doesn't know who he is. If you find the early pages rough going, push on; the story soon becomes clear and fascinating. But--fair warning--the central nature of the disaster, of its strange devastations and disruptions, remains a puzzle for many readers, sometimes after several readings.

Spoiler warning: If you want to figure out the secret of the novel as you read *Dhalgren*, then stop reading this review right now! If you want to know the secret before you start, this is what the novel is about: the experience of existence inside a novel. Time passes differently for different characters. A river changes location. Stairs change their number. The Kid looks in a mirror and sees not himself, but someone who looks an awful lot like Samuel R. Delany. Central images include mirrors, lenses, and prisms, devices that focus, reflect--and distort. The Kid fills a notebook with a journal that may be *Dhalgren*, and is uncertain if he has written much, or any, of it. The characters don't know they're in a novel, but they know something is wrong. *Dhalgren* explores the relationship between characters and author (or, perhaps, characters, "author," and author).

The final chapter can be even tougher going than the opening pages, with its viewpoint change and its stretches of braided narrative--and the novel ends with the beginning of an unfinished sentence. But the last chapter becomes clear as you persevere; and when you get to that unfinished closing line, turn to the first line of the novel to finish the sentence and close the narrative circle. --*Cynthia Ward* --This text refers to the edition.

From Library Journal Vintage launches its new Delany series with this 1974 epic. In coming months the volumes *Babel 17/Empire Star*, *Nova*, and an expanded edition of *Driftglass* will also be reissued. Though pushing 30, *Dhalgren* features themes of racial identity, religious faith, and self-awareness revealed in a multilayered plot that will be right at home with today's audiences. Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the edition.

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