



The Olive Readers

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I cannot recall the exact moment when I decided to become a Reader. This is unusual for me, as I am always precise about beginnings...Imagine a future without a past, a time without memory, a state in which nationality, ancestry, tradition, language, history have no place. Governing this world is a hyper-organised system of corporations, a network of companies, each responsible for a particular product, each with a workforce conditioned to one end...But, somewhere, a clandestine group is operating to preserve the past...In the Olive producing region of Olea, the Readers are smuggling and storing books in a secret library hidden away in the house of Jephzat and her family. When her sister disappears under suspicious circumstances, and her parents are hastily relocated by the Company, Jephzat is ordered to remain behind. Alone and facing the suspicion and hostility of the villagers, she falls in love with Homer, an olive picker she once rescued from the hands of Company Commissioners - and a long-time member of the Readers. As Homer introduces her to the library, and her hunger for knowledge grows, so do her questions, and soon she finds herself closely involved not only in the recovery and preservation of books, but in a secret plan which endangers Jephzat herself...

The Olive Readers Details

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Elo says

Gute Idee, aber schlechte Umsetzung. Den Schluss hab ich nicht verstanden. Zwischendurch wars ungewollt komisch. Ein Beispiel (Achtung Spoiler) für eine natürliche Reaktion, wenn man die (ermordete) Leiche seines Partners findet:

"Ich streckte die Hand aus, um die Haare zu berühren, die mit geronnenem Blut verkrustet waren. Sein Gesichtsausdruck war friedlich, nur der Mund war ein wenig verzogen - der Ansatz zu einem Schrei vielleicht. Wilde, unkontrollierbare Schluchzer schüttelten mich, fielen über mich her wie Räuber, die mir den letzten Rest Verstand nahmen. Ich stand auf, sodass die krässliche Erscheinung meine Schienbeine anstarnte. Ich riss mir die Kleider vom Leib und ging wieder in die Knie, um die Hände in die Blutlache zu tauchen und es mir auf die Haut und in die Haare zu schmieren. [!!!!] Ich nahm den blutigen Teller, auf dem sein Kopf lag, aus dem Schrank. Er war so schwer, dass ich ihn kaum halten konnte. Ich starrte in Homers blicklose Augen und zwang mich, ihn ein letztes Maal zu küssen. Dann setzte ich ihn behutsam auf dem Tisch ab. Jetzt erst gestattet ich mir zusammenzubrechen. Schreiend rannte ich hinaus in den Garten und lief blindlings immer weiter, nackt und blutbeschmiert wie ich war. Ich wusste nicht, wohin ich lief, aber irgendwann fand ich mich im Dorf wieder ..." "

Hessa Al Awadhi says

A story set in the future, where the whole world is ruled by corporations...

what i liked:

- The importance of books & reading, in a world where people are restricted from gaining knowledge.. Books enlighten, books give people HOPE, AMBITION and pleasure.. books open new horizons, creates new perspectives and pleases our curiosity a book can build a civilization, and it even has the power to destroy it!

- the fight for freedom, every individual has his/her right to live his life the way he wishes, to choose which path to follow, to decide which directions he wants for himself... a person who is caged will eventually rebel....

What i did not like:

things were pretty much straight forward, most parts were predictive and the idea is kind of worn out, THE FUTURE, many books/movies and even cartoons (Adnan wa Leena for example) were revolved around the same idea of a high tech COLD BOLD ROBOTIC world...

finally, i think the author was able to give me the feeling that Identity was indeed really lost, for example, the mention of OLIVE TREES, Brahman theories, western frocks and many other symbols have made it very hard to decide on where people belonged to, to what culture or background... which is what i believe the author wanted us to live...

Dorian says

Several two and three star reviews have already eloquently described the faults of this novel. The writing of the opening few pages shows promise and builds anticipation, but this is very quickly dissipated by some intrusive and clumsy exposition. This strips the novel of its early air of mystery and leaves it as neither credible science fiction nor convincing fantasy. It makes me wonder if the publishers were unsure of who their target audience ought to be. Not the accustomed readers of those two genres I suspect, or the more literary fiction the opening suggests, but a mainstream or younger audience less concerned with immersion in the detail of world building and more interested in a direct and rapid narrative. This does no favours to either author or work, leaves the whole enterprise feeling horribly compromised by commercial considerations, and in the end results in an unsatisfactory novel.

Jeane says

Jephzat wasn't born in the olive company, her sister was. She doesn't know where she was born. Everybody has been 'moved' by the company to a new company where they grow olives or wheat. They are taught about the past by the company and aren't allowed to talk about anything not mentioned in the companies history or anything else which they aren't allowed to speak about. One day, her parents are told they will be going for a while to another company to continue the important work they do. Jephzat stays alone in the bih house and discovers more about the other rooms in the house and about the past and future.

The story is written in the future and tells about the past which is present for us now. I guess we will only find out in the future if what was told in the story about our future will be like that, similar or completely different.

This is a story which absorbed me completely. I loved the way it was told and what was told. The different characters and the way Jephzat's character develops. Every little part of the secret puzzle about many 'unimportant' characters that you discover, makes you read on and on.

Kellie Hatton says

I fell in love with the authors writing and the story itself. That is until the last section where things seemed to trail off; the writing less beautiful, more lazy and the story; unsure of where it had intended to go. The ending rushed and disappointing. Never the less, I still really enjoyed the read.

Wicked Incognito Now says

I didn't get very far with this book.

This is a dystopic novel. Set in the near future, after the big evil corporate giants truly take over the world and have everyone locked down to small corporate "camps."

I'm sorry, but this makes so little sense to me that I couldn't finish! For one thing, we're **ALREADY** controlled by big evil corporate giants. Nothing new or ground-breaking there. But it's not in the best interest of these corporations to "lock-down" societies and make everyone burn all their connections to the past. It makes no sense!!! How are corporations to truly profit from this scenario? They've got it better now, with our illusions of freedom and our rampant need to consume.

For a dystopia to work it needs to be scary, and scarily viable. We need to be all "whoa, that could happen to US!"

Now, this author **DOES** have a clever way with words. With a more realistic storyline, I see that she could write something really good.

But this novel? No. Not working.

Cath says

A book of two halves. It says somewhere in the blurb that she took years to write the first half of this book and two months to write the rest and unfortunately this is entirely obvious when you read it. The first half is beautiful and intriguing, the second half is preposterous.

Joanne says

Started off well, with some beautiful writing. The story seemed tantalizing – a different take on the post-apocalyptic saga – and pulled together many different intersecting strands, weaving a country both archaic and futuristic, where people have been uprooted and separated from their homes, their languages and their nationalities, to the point where no one knows their own origins. Governments have been replaced by Companies which produce a particular product, such as olives, or water, and exploit their populations in the process.

It all travels well enough until about halfway, when a romantic interest appears. The story mills about aimlessly for a while, and then never regains its momentum after that. The ending is rushed and obscure, and ultimately unsatisfying. It's a shame because the first half was written beautifully and kept me reading, but I had to force myself to finish it. I found myself willing the writing to pick up and catch me again, but it just didn't.

Marianne says

Either 2.5 or 3 stars.

The plot and concept is very promising, intriguing and creative. (This is for the bulk of my rating).

The execution thereof was just sloppy and disappointing. Also...some of the characters were one dimensional and boring.

Janet Hood says

An enjoyable read with some interesting ideas until the last quarter of the book when it felt like the writer had run out of ideas on how to finish the story and the end was disappointing.

Melanie says

Started off well, then escalated in the final section to an unbelievable climax, all over too quickly like the author wanted to get it over and done with. Disappointed

Sami says

I initially bought this simply because I found the name of the author an interesting one - a clearly Christian forename with an Arab surname.

Growing up, I've become very used to it now, but other than this the book itself did not impress much on me.

Until now.

Unbenownst to me, this book sowed the seed of a fear of multi billion dollar corporations into my head.

And now every time I hear of a corporation such as Amazon buying up Goodreads (the same Amazon that is the reason for so many of my local bookstores going bankrupt because they can avoid millions of dollars' worth of taxes) it's starting to worry me.

Not all dystopian books are realistic anymore (see: Divergent) but this one seems to be a creepy commentary on what is actually happening today and where society is genuinely headed.

I've increased the stars on my rating just for the creep factor.

Xabier Cid says

It happens to me very seldom that the book I am reading starts great and goes worse and worse until it sounds like a relief to turn the last page eventually. This is one of those. I'll start with the positive things though.

It is not easy to create a whole dystopian scenario when so many have been created already. All of them have echoes of the pioneers in the genre, and certainly Aziz manages to create a quite distinctive one, resolving in my view the huge problem about technology: how can we imagine a particular technology in the future without the need of building all of it covering every aspect of life. In this novel, the generic destruction of

civilisation, the erasure of our daily technology, is well explained, and at the same time it leaves room for the creation of new, revolutionary technology that is the centre of the novel. That said despite that the new technology that Aziz came up with is quite unscientific and weak, but that's not the point now.

I loved some of the characters, some of the situations, particularly in the first two thirds of the book. I think the author is able to create a wonderful story, and very genuine love tales. And that certainly kept me very interested and thrilled. I wasn't that happy with some of the secondary characters, or rather, with how they enter and leave the novel. It looks like at some point the author decides to remove them, or to displace them thousands of miles away, with very little explanation of how that is done or the amount of pain and hope that this creates (for instance, now Homer is the reason for her to live, then is just an undetectable memory fully forgotten; or Lomez, who has the privilege of starting the novel, gains relevance when feels the passion in the corpse's lips, and then disappears for good).

But what really puts me off is the naïvety of the dystopian future (corporations are bad, states are good) and the moralistic approach to the character of the sister, almost a moralistic representation of evil: sex with multiple men, lies, treason, incest!, lack of love to family, conspiracy with the enemy, ambition, etc. That's why the last pages, where the plot's simplicity is more obvious, were a page turner but in the wrong sense: quickly, to start a new, better book.

Kindling Micky says

Probably my first sci-if/utopian read, way before I really discovered this genre in more recent years. I was gripped.

Danielle Alice says

It almost made it to 3 stars but was spoiled by latter half and the ending. Interesting premise and some really well written parts - I was very invested for the first half - but the last half felt rushed, and bordering on bizarre at times. Character development was limited and I didn't really care about or understand any of the characters, especially their choices at the end. In the positive, there were some beautifully written sections.
