

BOOK CLUB IN A BOX

THE COMPLETE PACKAGE
FOR READERS AND LEADERS

DISCUSSES MARGARET ATWOOD'S NOVEL

ORYX AND CRAKE

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BOOK CLUB IN A BOX

Bookclub-in-a-Box presents the discussion companion for Margaret Atwood's novel **Oryx and Crake**

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Quotations used in this guide have been taken from the text of the hardcover edition of **Oryx and Crake**. All information taken from other sources is acknowledged.

This discussion companion for **Oryx and Crake** has been prepared and written by Marilyn Herbert, originator of Bookclub-in-a-Box. Marilyn Herbert, B.Ed., is a teacher, librarian, speaker and writer. Bookclub-in-a-Box is a unique guide to current fiction and classic literature intended for book club discussions, educational study seminars, and personal pleasure.

Assistance for this project was provided by Nuzhat Khurshid and Ramya Jegatheesan. For more information about the Bookclub-in-a-Box team, visit our website.

Bookclub-in-a-Box discussion companion for Oryx and Crake

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CONTACT INFORMATION: SEE BACK COVER.

BOOKCLUB-IN-A-BOX

Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*

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BOOKCLUB-IN-A-BOX

Readers and Leaders Guide

Each Bookclub-in-a-Box guide is clearly and effectively organized to give you information and ideas for a lively discussion, as well as to present the major highlights of the novel. The format, with a Table of Contents, allows you to pick and choose the specific points you wish to talk about. It does not have to be used in any prescribed order. In fact, it is meant to support, not determine, your discussion.

You Choose What to Use.

You may find that some information is repeated in more than one section and may be cross-referenced so as to provide insight on the same idea from different angles.

The guide is formatted to give you extra space to make your own notes.

How to Begin

Relax and look forward to enjoying your bookclub.

With Bookclub-in-a-Box as your behind the scenes support, there is little for you to do in the way of preparation.

Some readers like to review the guide after reading the novel; some before. Either way, the guide is all you will need as a companion for your discussion. You may find that the guide's interpretation, information, and background have sparked other ideas not included.

Having read the novel and armed with Bookclub-in-a-Box, you will be well prepared to lead or guide or listen to the discussion at hand.

Lastly, if you need some more 'hands-on' support, feel free to contact us. (See Contact Information)

What to Look For

Each Bookclub-in-a-Box guide is divided into easy-to-use sections, which include points on characters, themes, writing style and structure, literary or historical background, author information, and other pertinent features unique to the novel being discussed. These may vary slightly from guide to guide.

INTERPRETATION OF EACH NOVEL REFLECTS THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE BOOKCLUB-IN-A-BOX TEAM.

Do We Need to Agree?

THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION IS NO.

If we have sparked a discussion or a debate on certain points, then we are happy. We invite you to share your group's alternative findings and experiences with us. You can respond on-line at our website or contact us through our Contact Information. We would love to hear from you.

Discussion Starters

There are as many ways to begin a bookclub discussion as there are members in your group. If you are an experienced group, you will already have your favorite ways to begin. If you are a newly formed group or a group looking for new ideas, here are some suggestions.

Ask for people's impressions of the novel. (This will give you some idea about which parts of the unit to focus on.)

- Identify a favorite or major character.
- Identify a favorite or major idea.
- Begin with a powerful or pertinent quote. (not necessarily from the novel)
- Discuss the historical information of the novel. (not applicable to all novels)
- If this author is familiar to the group, discuss the range of his/her work and where this novel stands in that range.
- Use the discussion topics and questions in the Bookclub-in-a-Box guide.

If you have further suggestions for discussion starters, be sure to share them with us and we will share them with others.

Above All, Enjoy Yourself

INTRODUCTION

Novel Quickline

Keys to the Novel

Author Information

INTRODUCTION

Novel Quickline

Oryx and Crake, a tale set in the not-too-distant future, begins intriguingly with the apparent end of the human race. Snowman, the “last man,” acts as narrator, weaving his present and past into an intricate narrative told partly through flashbacks.

We follow Snowman as he struggles to survive in a hostile environment where he must take care of the Crakers, a species perfectly and harmoniously adapted to the new world. Throughout his efforts to survive, Snowman recounts the story of his past as Jimmy.

notes

We learn of Jimmy's friendship with Glenn, the cold boy genius later known as Crake, whose view of the world and humanity provides him the impetus to unleash upon the world an appalling and genocidal experiment. The third character we meet is Oryx, a child prostitute, who has both a working and personal relationship with Crake. The three form a bizarre love triangle and each plays a vital role in the coming human holocaust, which only Jimmy and the new humanoids – the Crakers – survive. But as the story unfolds, the Crakers begin to follow a developmental path different from what Crake envisioned, and Jimmy is their sole witness – or is he?

Keys to the Novel

The epigraphs to a novel are designed to pinpoint the essence of the story and the writer's aim. Atwood has chosen quotes from two classic literary figures: Jonathan Swift and Virginia Woolf. Ironically, neither of the works from which these quotes are taken would have survived in Snowman's world.

To Inform and Not to Entertain

I could perhaps like others have astonished you with strange improbable tales; but rather I chose to relate plain matter of fact in the simplest manner and style; because my principal design was to inform you, and not to amuse you. – Jonathan Swift, **Gulliver's Travels**

The message and tone of this epigraph tells us not to expect any extravagance of style or form. More importantly, it tells the reader that this novel was not conceived and written for the reader's entertainment but rather for the reader's information. This quote urges the reader to pay attention.



**Thanks for previewing this
Bookclub-in-a-Box discussion guide.**

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print or PDF format, just visit:**

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