



The Completionist

Siobhan Adcock

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Find her. You need to keep looking, no matter what. I'm afraid of what might've happened to her. You be afraid too.

A young Marine, Carter Quinn, comes home from war to his fractured family, in a near-future America in which water is artificially engineered and technology is startlingly embedded in people's everyday lives. At the same time, a fertility crisis has terrifying implications for women, including Carter's two beloved sisters, Fred and Gardner. Fred, accomplished but impetuous, the eldest sibling, is naturally pregnant—a rare and miraculous event that puts her independence in jeopardy. And Gardner, the idealistic younger sister who lived for her job as a Nurse Completionist, has mysteriously vanished, after months of disturbing behaviour.

Carter's efforts to find Gard (and stay on Fred's good side) keep leading him back home to their father, a veteran of a decades-long war just like Carter himself, who may be concealing a painful truth that could save or condemn them all.

The Completionist Details

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Author : Siobhan Adcock

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From Reader Review The Completionist for online ebook

Geonn Cannon says

I wanted to like this book a lot more than I did, in the end. It was very well-written, great world-building, but with the plot being so heavily about what it's like to be a woman in this world, it seemed odd that the POV character is male. I did like it a lot, but I wound up feeling like it could have been something more.

Ana Harvey says

Siobhan Adcock's novel, "The Completionist" was a whirlwind of a read, leaving me engrossed in its storyline and concerned for its characters. Set in a future where a government system controls its citizens lives through electric monitors inserted in everyone's arms and access to clean water, we meet a young soldier, CQ, who comes home to search for a beloved sister who has disappeared. This sister, Gardner, is a Completionist, a type of medical specialist working to facilitate successful pregnancies in a time when fertility rates are dangerously low. As CQ and his older sister Fred search for Gardner, a whole world of corruption, government control, and a rising resistance unfolds before them. Adcock expertly leads the reader through astonishing truths that are revealed at just the right moment. The story is suspenseful and heartbreaking; it is a completely satisfying read.

Jaimie says

I wanted to know more about the world, what happened

Bandit says

There has been a good amount of female authored dystopian fiction lately concentrated on babies. Fertility appears to be a fertile subject. Certainly a relevant one in these days of increasingly terrifying politics, but still it seems so gender specific, maybe a case of write what you know or even write what you fear. Anyway, this is yet another one of those books and sadly not the best of the bunch. Particularly sadly since I seem to be the first person to review this one on GR. Mind you, this isn't to flat out dis The Completionist, it's a quite well written book with some interesting and original ideas, but it does have some detractors, the chief one being pacing. The bulk of the book (minus the flashbacks) actually takes place over a course of only several days, reading it shouldn't feel like several days. Ok, I did read it in a day, but it moved slowly, partly due to the being overly detailed, partly due to repetition, partly due to just a deliberately exhaustively protracted narrative. The plot is essentially a young Marine returning from a war who sets off to find his sister, while also dealing with his other very pregnant sister's impending nuptials and his strict disapproving father. What makes it stand out is that the story takes place in a future America devastated by natural disasters, deprived of water, with ravaged coasts and some cities in between rebuild and renamed New this or that, the story is set in New Chicago. There's an ongoing decades long internecine war, the army in charge of protecting deliveries of engineered food and water are fighting those left outside of the new cities struggling to survive. And, of course, the baby crisis. Only 31000 births a year or so. Creating a correlated societal

paradigm change...the relationships with low to no chance of procreation are deprioritized, so it's a somewhat promiscuous world. The really interesting thing is that those who do managed by chance or design to get pregnant are treated...well, insanely. The women are essentially expected to sign their lives away and become functional incubators (sort of logical given the odds), while maintaining nearly impossible standards of care, strictly monitored and (this isn't logical at all) restrictively financially punitive. Wait...what? So there's a drastic shortage of babies being born with all the concordant ramifications (no future, etc.) and mothers to be are being fined? Fined? Punished? The wealthy can barely afford it, the others have to go as far as maim themselves for credits. Why wouldn't the government encourage and support these babymamas? WTF? Unless this was meant to be a sort of social satire about the fact that US is the only first world country without proper paid maternity/paternity leaves, it just doesn't add up. And it really doesn't read as a satire either. It's a pretty meticulously built world that frustratingly lacks rationality in its LEGO bricks. There's also the fact that the disappeared sister mystery is dragged out so exasperatingly with only the tiniest nuggets of information dispersed...it becomes difficult to care. This is why I quit watching Glitch...pacing, everyone, pacing, don't pose more questions that are answered. This book, particularly its stretched out dénouement, is much like a theatre play, without the inherent theatrical intimacy or immediacy. Just imagine watching a play where everyone narrated their thoughts out loud soliloquy style...it's kinda like that. For a story The Completionist isn't without a promise, it's properly bleak for a dystopia, it showcases some genuinely good writing and imagination. There's a chance it was too eerily bang on...reading about a country that seems determined to shoot itself in a foot and continue dancing. But the main emotion evoked for me was frustration, which probably isn't what a book strives for with its audience. Who knows what this one might have been with a different editor, actually I'd be very interested to read other reviews of the book and/or author interviews to see some other takes or the behind the scenes thinking that went into this. This isn't a sort of thing to eagerly recommend personally, but might very well be an acquired taste. Is there a subgenre for this yet? Baby fi? I'm still not sure why anyone wants to reproduce in a dystopia. It just doesn't seem like an ideal place to bring life into. Then again everyone's always been very unreasonable about procreation, so maybe that's the moral right there. Something to think about anyway. Thanks Netgalley.

Janet says

Dystopian novel about water wars and low birthrate. Lots of good potential but the story was flawed.

Erin says

I received this book through Goodreads First Reads.

There were a few different giveaway books I won all around the same time frame. When I was picking which one I should read first, I immediately grabbed this one since the book summary caught my attention right away. Unfortunately, the book didn't exactly turn out the way I hoped. My main issue was first the narrator, I just had a hard time rooting for him. His main goal was to find his sister yet he seemed to spend a good portion of the book getting drunk and acting obnoxious. My other issue was the explanation of the dystopian angle of the book, I didn't quite understand it. The whole care system for the pregnant women seemed convoluted and hard to follow. I think the idea could have been simplified and in extension, made it a more interesting read. The author gets points for writing style which bumped up my rating to what it is.

Pam says

I feel like this is a typical "dystopian" type novel. Some parts were very engaging and other parts were a bit of a struggle to get through.

I will say that my biggest struggle were the characters. I just didn't care much for any of them.

My thanks to netgalley and Simon and Schuster for this advanced readers copy.

Carolyn says

Heralded as speculative fiction and perfect for fans of The Handmaid's Tale, of course I had my reservations that it could possibly be that good, but I was cautiously optimistic about this one! I think I need a good dystopian story right about now.

Unfortunately, this one just fell flat for me.

?Told from a future where fertility rates are scary low and resources scarce, female rights and their choices have waned and completely surround their fertility and choices in child rearing are practically nonexistent this one definitely does give off a Handmaid's Tale vibe. However, about 1/3 of the way through this book I still had very little idea of what this future looked like and what events had transpired to get us there. I found it very frustrating to have a story surrounding a mystery (Gard's disappearance) and still have so many questions about everything else that was going on. I also found Carter, our narrator (*fresh to have a male narrator in this sub-genre), to be somewhat unlikeable, very unreliable and overall a little puzzling in what his end goal was and how little actual motivation or bond to his family he seemed to have.

?Overall I found this to be a little slow, hard to follow and ultimately a story I didn't find myself to be very invested in. The premise and future that Adcock has created was still somewhat interesting and intriguing to ponder, but I just never fully bought in to this one.?I'd recommend it to lovers of this genre craving a new dystopian future to consider.

Cory Buchanan says

I really wanted to love this book, but I couldn't. I only finished it because I just *had* to know what happened. I was a bit disappointed from beginning to end.

Jeanette says

On the whole, it was good. I am not usually fond of dystopian fiction, but there are occasions when i feel like reading something different to my norm. If you enjoy dystopian, then i will say that this book is worth a read.

My thanks to Netgalley and the Publishers for my copy. This is my honest review.

Reading.Between.Wines says

????? / 5

The Completionist by Siobhan Adcock was such a strange book, and I think for that reason alone it will be pretty unforgettable.

The Completionist is about Carter Quinn, a 24-year-old Marine back from an ongoing war against a rebel group. The place he lives is now called New Chicago and the world is a completely different place from what it used to be. There is now a major fertility crisis that has made it hard for women to even have a child, let alone the new standards that make it hard for them to raise them. On top of that water is gone and has been replaced with something called H2.0, but most people use a type of sanitizer because they can't afford to have H2.0 run to their homes. Carter is dealing with unexplained physical symptoms that are basically taking over his life, all while his older sister Fred is pregnant and his other sister Gard has vanished.

The book switches between present and Carter's time as a Marine, both pretty disturbing to read about but especially the war parts. There are also messages to Carter from his sisters while he was gone interspersed throughout the book that go backwards in time. This was a very interesting way to read the book, and I enjoyed that part of it. The major mystery in the book is what happened to Gard, but I found it hard to really focus on that with all the symptoms that Carter is experiencing. I felt like a lot of the book was overshadowed by Carter's symptoms when we are in his POV which made it hard to focus on what was going on.

I was also pretty bored with the start of the book and didn't get into it until I was around the 80-something page mark. The ending was left pretty open-ended as well, but that didn't bother me as much as it will some people. I just think that this book wasn't executed in a way that really had me invested in the characters and I wish there would have been more world-building not seen through the eyes of a drunk/struggling Carter.

Final Thought: I really want to read more dystopian novels, and while this book gave me that, it wasn't in quite the format I would have preferred. I'm not really sure who to recommend this book to, but I think if the synopsis grabs your attention you should give it a shot. It was also a fast read despite starting out slow for me, and I didn't find myself wanting to skim anything. I really want to know what more people think about it so check it out and let me know!

The Completionist in 3-ish words: Complex, Dangerous, Unexpected

Out of the Bex says

The Completionist has been compared to the Handmaid's Tale, it even says so on its own jacket copy. While the two share a premise of near-future societies grappling with infertility crises, that is where the comparison stops. And a good thing, too. It can be a blessing and a curse to have your work compared to one so seminal, the pivotal criteria being the author's ability to stand out through their own unique voice—no matter how similar the setting.

In her latest story, Brooklyn-based author Siobhan Adcock shares the experiences of a damaged but enduring family as their brother returns from war, one sister discovers her unplanned pregnancy, one sister goes

missing, and a father that strives to keep them together in an otherwise disjointed world.

Any great science-fiction dystopia will pay attention to not only changes in technology but how society is affected by them, something Adcock does well. The author connects this near-future world to the present with wearable technologies not too far off from our own, making the Completionist world easy to imagine without distracting the story or the reader from the core structure of its plot for sci-fi edge that doesn't overwhelm.

Adcock explores what changes might happen in a society racked with infertility when a governmental system is used as a false solution to a complex problem and mirrors the inherent issues in some of our real-world systems that serve to make a problem better, but can end up making it much worse.

In the Completionist's world expecting mothers are heavily controlled, billed, taxed, and reprimanded when any behavior is found outside of extremely stringent and unattainable care regulations. When expectant mothers find it near impossible to live up to care regulation standard, to what extremes will they go in order to survive?

Some serve to help these expectant mothers in whatever way they can, the solutions as extreme as the care standard reprimands they seek to avoid, and the result is dangerous. This is the case for the missing sister who her war veteran brother returns home to find.

This novel is, at its core, about the bonds of family that just happens to be set in a dystopian world and while it was an enjoyable read, it failed to make a strong stance on the very issues it presented, something I think any dystopian author should be prepared to do and do well. While it does acknowledge the effects of a unique societal structure, it neglects to explore the events or the systems that put that structure in place, who or what is in control on a grander scale, and how those structures are enforced.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

An enjoyable read for those who prefer character-driven novels about the exploration of family ties with a dystopian sci-fi edge. It also questions the effect of war on our soldiers, the role of regulation in societal issues, and the importance of individual choice. However, be warned that this novel fails to make a final statement on any of the grander subjects it questions, leaving the reader searching for a core message they'll be unable to find.

VERDICT: Borrow It

Rating: 3 Stars

Aristotle says

An absolute mess.

What was this book about?

Sometime in the near future mankind has run out of water. Water is engineered with one small side effect, it causes infertility. Wars are fought over this precious commodity.

Mother Necessity with her good intentions, where would this country be without her inventions? Ever heard of a desalination plant? Elon Musk to the rescue. Premise of the book made no sense.

So back to the infertility. Pregnant women are monitored on a daily basis to ensure the health of the baby. If they do not follow a strict code they are charged for prenatal care. Uhm, what?

Women hurt themselves so they won't have to pay a fine for being pregnant. Uhm, what?

Gardner, a completionist nurse who helps pregnant women stay on course, goes missing. Her brother Carter, just back from protecting the H₂O, is searching for her. Fredrika a self made millionaire who is pregnant is forced to sell her company to ensure the safety of the baby. Uhm. what?

This was a jumbled mess. Boring characters and a ridiculous plot.

I won this through Goodreads giveaway. Thanks for nothing.

Marjorie says

In an America in the near future, there is little natural water and most is artificially engineered. The people have technological portals embedded in their skin, which keep track of their every movement. There's a fertility crisis and those women who do become naturally pregnant are considered miracles but their independence is taken away from them and they're fined for every small thing they do that isn't within a certain code that has been set up to ensure the safety of these babies, a code that is practically impossible to adhere to.

Carter Quinn is a marine who has fought the battle to protect the engineered water and now has come home after 2 and a half years. He's obviously ill from the "triggers" used in battle. His sister, Fred, has miraculously conceived and now has permission to wed. She's frantic due to the disappearance of their sister, Gard, a Nurse Completionist, one who helps women through their pregnancies. Carter sets off on a quest to find Gard.

The author has created a unique and horrifying future world, yet doesn't explain how we got to this point. Apparently, the problem was in the water and therefore there is now a need to engineer water. The main characters each have their own distinctive voices and you can tell who's telling the story or writing a letter just by their written voice, which I believe shows the author's talent. The characters are very realistic and down to earth and believable, except for Carter. While I liked the guy, I found the character to be very frustrating. Granted, he was ill from whatever was being used as a weapon in the war and was not thinking clearly. But he was constantly drunk which just didn't seem to go with his determination to find his sister. The thought "you can't be that stupid" came to mind too often.

The most problem I had with this book was that I found it to be very repetitious and far too drawn out. Also it seemed to be very unrealistic that such a ridiculous child care code would be set up, which defeated the purpose of protecting these treasured unborn children. But it was an interesting concept and I found it to be a horrifying world for women to live in. Just the fact that women's independence was so jeopardized by this situation compelled me to keep on reading.

This book was given to me by the publisher in return for an honest review.

Amy says

2.5/5

Dystopian fiction can be a tricky genre for me, it either works incredibly well or it just flat out doesn't most of the time and *The Completionist* sounded like it would be one that worked well for me. On the whole it was excellent and there were many aspects that I enjoyed, but I had enough issues that I'm torn, I'm not even sure if I actually liked it or not, so bear with me while I try to explain my thoughts.

I'm gonna expand on the blurb just a bit because it doesn't give enough detail for once. Carter has just returned home after being in the war, there is a huge water shortage and now even engineered H2.0 is not readily available unless you have money. No showers, no running taps period and a fertility crisis is rampant as well. Women only usually get pregnant by using Inseminia, again for the wealthy but his sister, Fred gets pregnant the old fashioned way and is considered a miracle. They live in New Chicago and the world building was pretty great, the premise was interesting and I loved both Fred and Carter's characters. So what went wrong....

I can be pretty picky about endings of books, they can truly make or break it for me. I've bumped books up an entire star rating based on an amazing ending and I've also bumped them way down for a weak ending and if I'm being brutally honest this had one of the most disappointing endings I've encountered in a long time. Everything was great, I was predicting a solid 4 star read, the mystery surrounding Gard was intriguing and the writing was top notch. Then the book just ended. Zero resolution and way too many questions left unanswered for me, it irritated me enough to bump my rating way down. If there was a planned sequel I guess I wouldn't be as annoyed, but I can't get past all that time and being invested in the story to leave with no clear answers.
