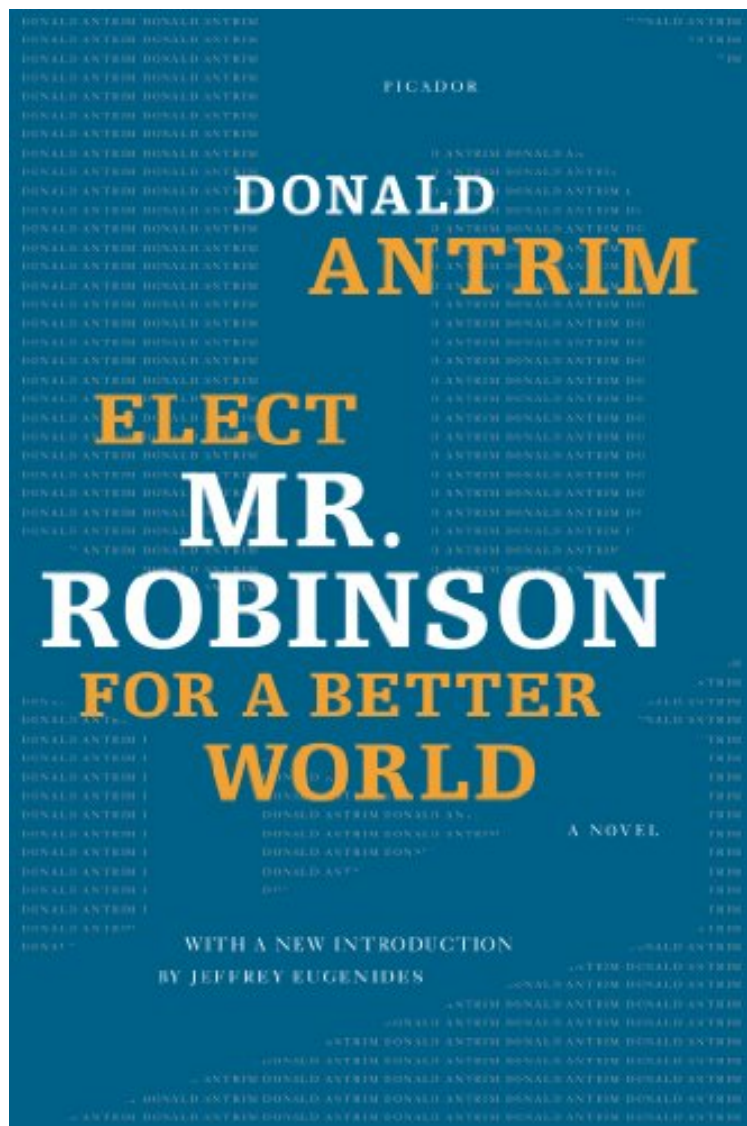


[Free] Elect Mr. Robinson for a Better World: A Novel

Elect Mr. Robinson for a Better World: A Novel

Donald Antrim

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Donald Antrim : Elect Mr. Robinson for a Better World: A Novel before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Elect Mr. Robinson for a Better World: A Novel:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. strange and interestingBy PassionateReaderThis is a strange book; it doesn't always work but it's never boring. Antrim is a singular writer. He doesn't necessarily write beautifully, but his stories are unusual, compelling, and thought provoking. He writes more about ideas and situations, and less about actual characters and places--which I think is a hallmark of the writer who doesn't want to descend into the emotional

depths of a story. Nonetheless, if you've never read him, it's worth reading this relatively short book. 7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Dark, innovative, but not my cup of tea By Benjamin M. Davis Book reviews likely say more about the reviewer than the book. This is a masterfully written piece of innovative fiction. I just disliked it. Something about Mr Antrim's imagination while unique, is too dark and twisted for me. Not to say I don't enjoy a good dark read - Celine, the Patrick Melrose novels. Just not this one. I also found the stylistic choice of a single continuous narrative without chapter breaks, while very effective at creating a propulsive force, to be on balance a detriment to my becoming immersed in the novel as I did not have the luxury of reading it in one sitting. 5 stars for excellent fiction writing, 1 star for my dislike, hence the compromise 3 stars. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Quirky By fox with mox When I started reading this book selected by my book club I just thought it was strange, but I dutifully finished it. After reflection and our club discussion I found myself deciding I really liked it. Some of the black humor is hilarious, especially the part about using library books to try to detonate hidden land mines. But the book is definitely not for everyone. A warped sense of humor helps.

"A dark, suburban fantasy . . . richly funny, even whimsical, and bizarrely familiar." ?The New Yorker In the seaside community of Donald Antrim's *Elect Mr. Robinson for a Better World*, the citizens are restless. The mayor has fired stinger missiles into the Botanical Garden reflecting pool, and his public execution was a messy affair. As these hawkish suburbanites fortify their houses with deadly moats and land mines, a former third-grade teacher named Pete Robinson steps forward with a tenuous bid to replace the mayor. But can anyone satisfy the terrible will of the people? By turns funny and phantasmagorical, fiercely intelligent and imaginative, Donald Antrim's story of suburban civics turned macabre is a new American classic.

From Publishers Weekly Entropy, violence and weird fetishism confound citizens and local institutions in this breezy, darkly comic lampoon of civic duty and ambition. Things have gone awry in a small, seaside community somewhere in the American subtropics, and schoolteacher Pete Robinson wants to lead his fellow citizens back to sanity. Unfortunately, he may not remember the way. An expert in the history of torture, he supervises the drawing and quartering of the town's mayor by four automobiles. Meanwhile, the local citizenry is busy surrounding their homes with moats filled with broken glass, bamboo spears and water moccasins; the school has been converted into a factory creating talismans from marine animals; and the public library's duplicate books are being used to detonate claymore mines in Turtle Pond Park ("I do enjoy the way The Riverside Shakespeare rides the wind on a long toss," says one character, while another notes, "For hang time, give me The Complete Poems of Robert Frost any day"). Robinson reopens school in his own basement--with the ulterior motive of promoting himself as a mayoral candidate. If all this seems bewildering, first novelist Antrim presents it, ironically, as a sunny slice of life. His crisp, effective prose and Robinson's odd academic notions echo Don DeLillo's *White Noise*. There is much to chuckle at, and even a bit to ponder in this imaginative debut. First serial to Harper's and the Paris . Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Mr. Robinson is a teacher without a school--the result of a taxpayer revolt--who has a fascination with the instruments of the Inquisition. He has a wife who, as a result of an encounter with a New Age anthropologist, has discovered the coelacanth within her--a real problem since it is a buffalo. His neighbors are building moats and booby traps around their property, and Robinson's own choice is a spike-filled trench. Following the dismemberment of the previous mayor for lobbing Stinger missiles into the Botanical Garden, Robinson decides to launch his own political campaign for a better world, using the young students at his proposed home school to spread his message. Antrim's caustic commentary on the breakdown of our sense of community, our grabbing at trendy straws in an attempt to discover our spiritual selves, and the foibles of educational theorists is full of black and bleak humor. While definitely not a mainstream work, this first novel should be seriously considered for its cutting-edge approach. Recommended.- David W. Henderson, Eckerd Coll. Lib., St. Petersburg, Fla. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus s Civilization's thin crust tears again. Atavistic violence bubbles up in a small oceanside Florida (maybe) town in this not- quite black comedy, Antrim's debut. What horror befell little Sarah Miller in narrator Pete Robinson's basement? Why are he and his neighbors protecting their homes by digging deadly concealed pits in their yards? And what on earth could have provoked this middle-class community to draw and quarter one of its own, ex-Mayor Jim Kunkel? A lot of questions at the start here--and beyond the questions, more questions. Thus Kunkel was dismembered by four cars operated by his neighbors- turned-vigilantes as a punishment for killing some picnickers with Stinger missiles. But what set old Jim off? Apparently (this is murky) Pete's Rotary luncheon talk on *The Barbarity of the Past*, with special emphasis on the rack. So does that mean Pete triggered all the violence? What is clear is that third-grade teacher Pete is the central figure, working hard to establish a school in his home (the local system is bankrupt) as a cover for his messianic ambition to be mayor. We also know that his sympathetic wife, Meredith, is afraid of him. Perhaps that's why she symbolically escapes him by becoming a coelacanth during a trance-state at a "theriomorphism workshop"--though she can't save little Sarah from her fate in the basement, the climax of this short work. Pete, though mad as a hatter, comments on the grisly goings-on (including his ritual burial of the ex-Mayor's body parts) with a cool, ironic intelligence; this dissonance is the novel's most striking feature--and effective

up to a point. But Antrim's failure to orchestrate his flashy set-pieces leaves the impression of a first draft, albeit from a promising new talent with a wonderfully keen ear. (First serial to Harper's and The Paris .) -- Copyright ©1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.