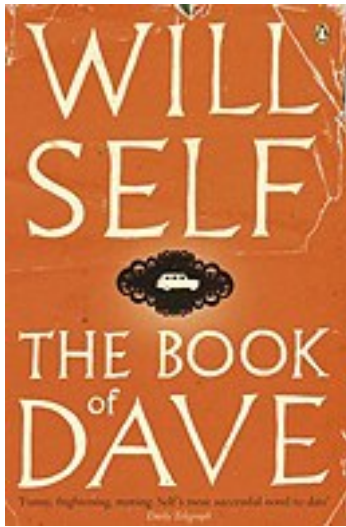


# The Book of Dave



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When East End cabdriver Dave Rudman's wife takes from him his only son, Dave pens a gripping text--a compilation about everything from the environment, Arabs, and American tourists to sex, Prozac, and cabby lore--that captures all of his frustrations and anxieties about his contemporary world. Dave buries the book in his ex-wife's Hampstead backyard, intending it for his son, Carl, when he comes of age. Five hundred years later, Dave's book is found by the inhabitants of Ham, a primitive archipelago in post-apocalyptic London, where it becomes a sacred text of biblical proportions and the template for a new civilization. Only one islander, Symum, remains incredulous. But, after he is imprisoned for heresy, his son Carl must journey through the Forbidden Zone and into the terrifying heart of New London to find the only thing that will reveal the truth once and for all: a second Book of Dave that repudiates the first. "The Book of Dave" is a profound meditation upon the nature of religion and a caustic satire of contemporary life. Will Self is the acclaimed author of such books as "The Quantity Theory of Insanity," "Great Apes," and "How the Dead Live.

"He won the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize and was shortlisted for the Whitbread Book of the Year. Will Self lives in London. When cabdriver Dave Rudman's wife of five years deserts him for another man, taking their only child with her, he is thrown into a tailspin of doubt and discontent. Fearing his son will never know his father, Dave pens a gripping text--part memoir, part deranged philosophical treatise, and part handbook of "the Knowledge" learned by all London cab drivers. Meant for the boy when he comes of age, the book captures the frustration and anxiety of modern life. Five hundred years later, the "Book of Dave" is discovered by the inhabitants on the island of Ham, where it becomes a sacred text of biblical proportion, and its author is revered as a mighty prophet. "The first 90 pages of this book read like a cross between 'Jabberwocky' and 'A Clockwork Orange.' It's a devilishly catchy argot and once readers sink into it, they will find themselves wondering if the characters are traveling north or south. . . . Like Martin Amis, with whom he's often compared, Self marries his verbal acrobatics to social critique, gamely taking on corporate culture, family law, London urban sprawl, religion, racial division and the received wisdom of women's magazines and the pub. . . . You're left with the intoxication of Self's wordplay and the clarity of his visions."--Regina Marler, "Los Angeles Times" "" "Fans of Self's previous edgy satires won't be disappointed with "The Book of Dave," his latest riff on the strange complexities of the modern world. Balancing stories of pained intimacies between fathers and sons, it also brilliantly caricatures the fervor of literal-minded religious fundamentalism. . . . Blisteringly astute."--Geoffrey Bateman, "Rocky Mountain News" "" "In this tale of an embittered taxi-driver whose psychotic rantings become the creed of a blighted people hundreds of years after his death, Self unleashes his apparently boundless misanthropy on modern London, the origins of religion, and the postapocalyptic future. Dave Rudman, driven mad by divorce and ill-prescribed antidepressants, thinks he is God and writes a vitriolic screed, which he has printed on metal plates and buries in a garden. Discovered by the survivors of a catastrophic flood and adopted as a gospel, it demands the complete separation of mothers and fathers (children to spend exactly half the week with each). Switching between a narrative of Dave's unlucky life and the phonetically rendered 'Mokni' speech of his wretched followers, Self achieves an elaborate vision of vicious superstition and hopeless struggle, but his insights never quite repay the effort of engaging with his stylistic pyrotechnics."--"The New Yorker" "In "The Book of Dave," his satiric masterpiece thus far, Self proves again that with talent like his, it's never the what, but the how. . . . Though his invention (often via inversion) of a future language owes an obvious debt to Russell Hoban's "Riddley Walker," Anthony Burgess's "A Clockwork Orange," and Orwell, Self spins his own brilliantly macaronic web between Now and Later. . . . Self's inventiveness and control are dazzling. . . . Self's novel achieves depth not by skewering organized religion, though it does so quite adroitly, but by exploring the many grids of modern despair, how we find ourselves cast adrift, and how, much like Dave, whose loneliness is unabated by the 'hateful company of his own kind,' we fester unseen. . . . A gripping, funny, and pleasurably intricate novel."--Sam Lipsyte, "Bookforum" "" "This searing satire maps the unraveling of London cabbie Dave Rudman's life--and the resulting "Book of Dave" he prints on metal pages and buries in his former backyard after his ex-wife cuts off visitations with his son. Meanwhile, sometime in the twenty-sixth century or beyond (dating of the period is pegged to 'the purported discovery of "The Book of Dave"'), England has entered a second Dark Age; the country, now called Ing, is broken apart by rising seas and spiritually bankrupted by the twisted teachings of Dave, which mix mad misogynistic dictates with the legendary knowledge of London streets ('the runs and the points') that the city's cabdrivers must internalize. On the former heights of Hampstead, now known as the isle of Ham, villagers live side by side with the gentle motos--walruslike creatures who talk like lisping human children, products of twenty-first-century genetic engineering. As present-day Rudman slowly reclaims his life, the future sons of Ham seek out Dave's rumored second

book--the one recanting his earlier ravings and giving mummies and daddies permission to love each other again. But as Dave's ex prophetically muses, 'everyday life was made up of a series of small botched actions, which, althou

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