

White Eye: A Novel by the Author of Turtle Beach



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著者:

出版者:

出版时间:

装帧:

isbn:9780671620059

From Publishers Weekly This novel of murder and scientific intrigue in the Australian Outback is an ill-conceived scientific cautionary tale in the mode, but not the engaging style, of Crichton and Cook. Aussie animal activist Diana Pembroke finds the mutilated body of her onetime playmate and longtime rival on the outskirts of the Exotic Feral Species and Microbiology Research Center. Unknown to Diana and to the authorities who investigate the murder, an affiliate of the institute, John Parker, has been illegally importing chimpanzees to the center for an illicit research project. Parker is working on two vaccines to fight White Eye, a bacteria developed by his surreptitious employer, a laboratory animal breeder called Siam Enterprises. One vaccine will protect the animals entirely, the other will leave them sterile. Although Siam's original goal was to destroy the lab animals and thereby increase the value of

their stock, Parker sees White Eye and the sterilizing vaccine as a way of saving the earth from human depredations through "politically painless mass sterilization." D'Alpuget (Turtle Beach) strives too hard to press her fine style and character insights into the thriller genre, moving from one point of view to another, succeeding only in imparting basic plot information more elliptically than necessary. More problematic is the way characters drop in and out of the plot without developing cogent relationships. If D'Alpuget lacks Crichton's authorial vision, a skillful scriptwriter could nonetheless make this decidedly commercial offering into a fine movie. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist D'Alpuget's eco-disaster novel covers all the bases: genetic engineering gone awry, corporate greed run amok, human populations spinning out of control, animal populations decimated. The director of a biotechnology center in the Australian Outback is engaged in dangerous secret research underwritten by a shady businessman from Thailand, who is trying to create a virus that will leave human beings sterile without destroying their sex drive. To accomplish this radical goal, the director is working with a second engineered virus, one that causes its victims to suffer a horrible death. It doesn't take a genius to figure out that the killer virus is going to escape, but it seems to take forever for the inevitable to happen--as if the novel were taking its pace from the stifling heat of the Outback. The characters don't help much, either: you wouldn't want to share a seat on a long flight with any of them. Still, d'Alpuget's material is not without interest. Genetic engineering is an important topic, and this sluggish tale raises serious ethical questions about the exploitation of animals, especially primates, in scientific research. A marginal recommendation for larger collections. George Needham See all Editorial Reviews

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