



Dogeaters (Contemporary American Fiction)

By Jessica Hagedorn

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“As sharp and fast as a street boy’s razor . . . a rich small feast of a book.”—*The New York Times Book Review*

Welcome to Manila in the turbulent period of the Philippines’ late dictator. It is a world in which American pop culture and local Filipino tradition mix flamboyantly, and gossip, storytelling, and extravagant behavior thrive.

A wildly disparate group of characters—from movie stars to waiters, from a young junkie to the richest man in the Philippines—becomes caught up in a spiral of events culminating in a beauty pageant, a film festival, and an assassination. In the center of this maelstrom is Rio, a feisty schoolgirl who will grow up to live in America and look back with longing on the land of her youth.

“Entertaining and compelling. . . . At the end, you emerge from its intense, dreamlike world feeling as if you’ve been to the Philippines.”—*The Philadelphia Inquirer*

“Hagedorn transcends social strata, gender, culture, and politics in this exuberant, witty, and telling portrait of Philippine society.”—*The San Diego Union*

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This novel, set in the politically volatile Philippines of the recent past, offers the diverse impressions of a well-to-do Manilan schoolgirl, a DJ/male prostitute and the Philippines's candid First Lady, among others. "Although in many respects a thinly disguised roman a clef, the book succeeds on the strength of its characterization," said PW. "Hagedorn's unflinching view of Manila . . . is leavened by ironic, often humorous observations."

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From Library Journal

This jazzy, sardonic novel depicts the nightmare world that was the Philippines of the Marcoses. Its terrain is familiar to us from the writings of Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Manuel Puig: a lush, fantastical, overheated landscape, where the fractured lives of the poor are rendered palatable solely by dreams. Rich and poor, everyone sells something here; everyone has a price. The common dream of a myriad group of characters--bored teenagers, timid shop girls, male prostitutes on the make--is that hollowest of all modern apotheoses, "stardom." A visiting filmmaker, a German degenerate, buys the services of a pretty boy, who soliloquizes: "I'll have it all worked out, soon. I know I will. I have to. I'll hit the jackpot with one of these guys. Leave town. Get lucky Soon." This is a novel about the death of the good life of the soul: of all virtue, meaning, and hope. Exceptionally well written and emotionally wrenching. Recommended.

- David Keymer, *SUNY Inst. of Technology, Utica*

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Review

Dogeaters presents a montage of Filipino people during the Marcos era and the circumstances that define their motivations. It is a metaphoric album of raw snapshots: Joey Sands, the classic victim, son of a prostitute and an African-American soldier; the adolescent Rio Gonzaga, who reassesses the dynamics of her well-to-do family and concludes that she will be different; the military henchmen, the movie stars, the obscenely wealthy; and, of course, the sacrificial opposition leaders. Jessica Hagedorn gives voice to those disinherited and powerful individuals who were casualties of a deluded, self-proclaimed aristocracy, chronicling the lives of people who are much more than the political periphery which has engulfed them. The pictures are graphic and conflicting, sometimes brutal, sometimes shimmering with the intoxicating, seductive mood of American movies that seem to be the only means of momentary escape. Joey describes the river where his mother committed suicide: "a watery grave black with human shit, every dead thing and piece of garbage imaginable." Rio writes of her mother's "mysterious, mauve rooms": "Wherever she looks in any of her mirrors it is always night and she is always beautiful." Out of the fragmentary confusion and the preoccupation with appearances that characterized the Marcos era, Jessica Hagedorn sets out to resurrect a country's cultural identity. -- *For great reviews of books for girls, check out Let's Hear It for the Girls: 375 Great Books for Readers 2-14.* -- *From 500 Great Books by Women; review by Mary J*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Henry Jensen:

As people who live in the particular modest era should be update about what going on or information even

knowledge to make these individuals keep up with the era that is certainly always change and move forward. Some of you maybe can update themselves by examining books. It is a good choice to suit your needs but the problems coming to you is you don't know what one you should start with. This Dogeaters (Contemporary American Fiction) is our recommendation so you keep up with the world. Why, as this book serves what you want and need in this era.

Fannie Garcia:

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