

[PDF] My Ishmael

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Title: My Ishmael
Author: Daniel Quinn
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Description:

From Library Journal In this sequel to Quinn's controversial best seller, *Ishmael*, the telepathic gorilla has another pupil intent on saving the world: 12-year-old Julie Gerchak.

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From Kirkus Reviews Another irresistible rant from Quinn, a sequel to his Turner Tomorrow Fellowship winner, *Ishmael* (1992), concerning a great, telepathic ape who dispenses ecological wisdom about the possible doom of humankind. Once more, Quinn focuses on the Leavers and Takers, his terms for the two basic, warring kinds of human sensibility. The planet's original inhabitants, the Leavers, were nomadic people who did no harm to the earth. The Takers, who have generally overwhelmed them, began as aggressive farmers obsessed with growth, were the builders of cities and empires, and have now, in the late 20th century, largely run out of space to monopolize.

Quinn's books have not featured many memorable characters, aside from Ishmael. This time out, though, he invents a lively figure, 12-year-old Julie Gerchak, who is tough and wise beyond her years, having had to deal with a self-destructive, alcoholic mother. Julie responds to Ishmael's ad seeking a pupil with an earnest desire to save the world (a conceit carried over from the earlier novel). Once again, the gentle ape shares his wisdom in a series of questions and answers that resemble, in method, a blend of the Socratic dialogues and programmed learning. Moving beyond his theories about Leavers and Takers, Ishmael presents a detailed critique of educational systems around the world, suggesting that their function is not to usefully educate but to regulate the flow of workers into a Taker society. This is all very well, but what does Ishmael/Quinn suggest be done to redeem the Takers, and to save the earth? Quinn seems to want to sketch out how change might come about, but it's never fully explored. Instead, the novel is increasingly taken up with the mysteries surrounding Ishmael's travels and fate. This is the weakest of Quinn's novels, but his ideas are as thought-provoking as ever, even so. (Author tour) -- *Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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