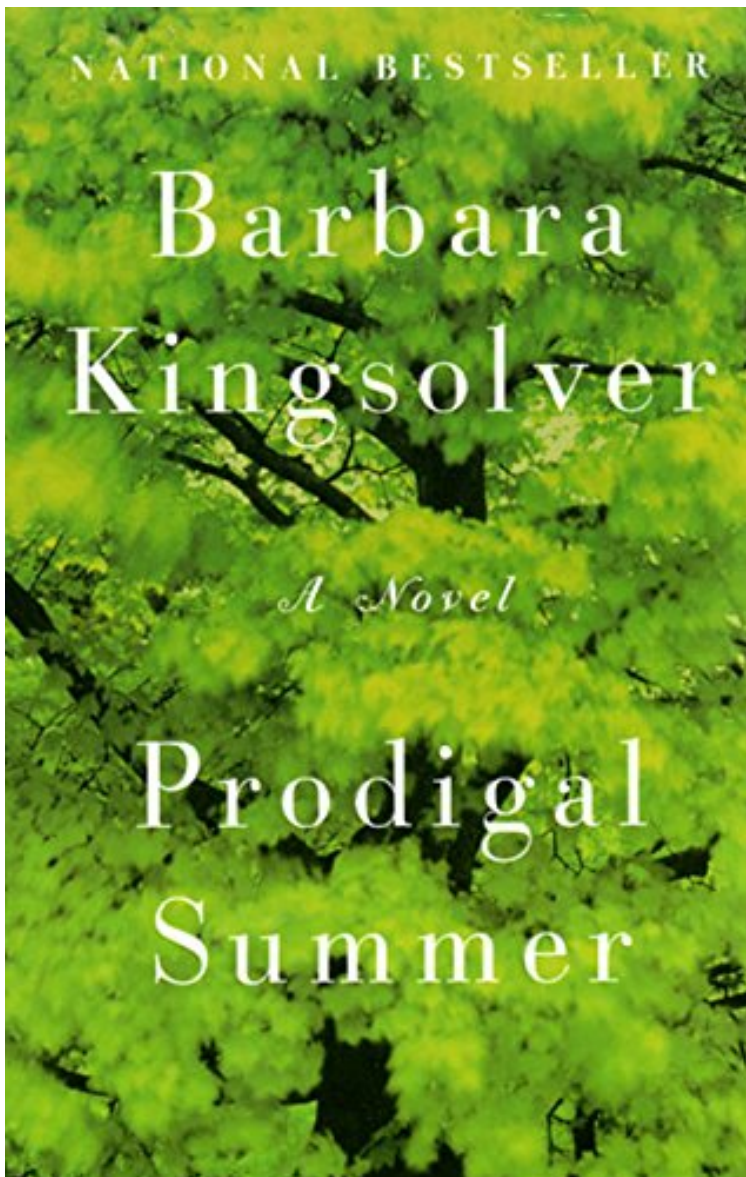


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Prodigal Summer: A Novel



Par Barbara Kingsolver
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[E-BOOK] Prodigal Summer: A Novel

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Summer: A Novel:

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurBarbara Kingsolver's fifth novel is a hymn to wildness that celebrates the prodigal spirit of human nature, and of nature itself. It weaves together three stories of human love within a larger tapestry of lives amid the mountains and farms of southern Appalachia. Over the course of one humid summer, this novel's intriguing protagonists face disparate predicaments but find connections to one another and to the flora and fauna with which they necessarily share a place..comThere is no one in contemporary literature quite like Barbara Kingsolver. Her dialogue sparkles with sassy wit and earthy poetry; her descriptions are rooted in daily life but are also on familiar terms with the eternal. With Prodigal Summer, she returns from the Congo to a "wrinkle on the map that lies between farms and wildness." And there, in an

isolated pocket of southern Appalachia, she recounts not one but three intricate stories. Exuberant, lush, riotous--the summer of the novel is "the season of extravagant procreation" in which bullfrogs carelessly lay their jellied masses of eggs in the grass, "apparently confident that their tadpoles would be able to swim through the lawn like little sperms," and in which a woman may learn to "tell time with her skin." It is also the summer in which a family of coyotes moves into the mountains above Zebulon Valley: The ghost of a creature long extinct was coming in on silent footprints, returning to the place it had once held in the complex anatomy of this forest like a beating heart returned to its body. This is what she believed she would see, if she watched, at this magical juncture: a restoration. The "she" is Deanna Wolfe, a wildlife biologist observing the coyotes from her isolated aerie--isolated, that is, until the arrival of a young hunter who makes her even more aware of the truth that humans are only an infinitesimal portion in the ecological balance. This truth forms the axis around which the other two narratives revolve: the story of a city girl, entomologist, and new widow and her efforts to find a place for herself; and the story of Garnett Walker and Nannie Rawley, who seem bent on thrashing out the countless intimate lessons of biology as only an irascible traditional farmer and a devotee of organic agriculture can. As Nannie lectures Garnett, "Everything alive is connected to every other by fine, invisible threads. Things you don't see can help you plenty, and things you try to control will often rear back and bite you, and that's the moral of the story." Structurally, that gossamer web is the story: images, phrases, and events link the narratives, and these echoes are rarely obvious, always serendipitous. Kingsolver is one of those authors for whom the terrifying elegance of nature is both aesthetic wonder and source of a fierce and abiding moral vision. She may have inherited Thoreau's mantle, but she piles up riches of her own making, blending her extravagant narrative gift with benevolent concise humor. She treads the line between the sentimental and the glorious like nobody else in American literature. --Kelly Flynn

From Publishers Weekly

HA beguiling departure for Kingsolver, who generally tackles social themes with trenchantly serious messages, this sentimental but honest novel exhibits a talent for fiction lighter in mood and tone than *The Poisonwood Bible* and her previous works. There is also a new emphasis on the natural world, described in sensuous language and precise detail. But Kingsolver continues to take on timely issues, here focusing on the ecological damage caused by herbicides, ethical questions about raising tobacco, and the endangered condition of subsistence farming. A corner of southern Appalachia serves as the setting for the stories of three intertwined lives, and alternating chapters with recurring names signal which of the three protagonists is taking center stage. Each character suffers because his or her way of looking at the world seems incompatible with that of loved ones. In the chapters called "Predator," forest ranger Deanna Wolfe is a 40-plus wildlife biologist and staunch defender of coyotes, which have recently extended their range into Appalachia. Wyoming rancher Eddie Bondo also invades her territory, on a bounty hunt to kill the same nest of coyotes that Deanna is protecting. Their passionate but seemingly ill-fated affair takes place in summertime and mirrors "the eroticism of fecund woods" and "the season of extravagant procreation."

Meanwhile, in the chapters called "Moth Love," newly married entomologist Lusa Maluf Landowski is left a widow on her husband's farm with five envious sisters-in-law, crushing debts and a desperate and brilliant idea. Crusty old farmer Garnett Walker ("Old Chestnuts") learns to respect his archenemy, who crusades for organic farming and opposes Garnett's use of pesticides. If Kingsolver is sometimes too blatant in creating diametrically opposed characters and paradoxical inconsistencies, readers will be seduced by her effortless prose, her subtle use of Appalachian patois. They'll also respond to the sympathy with which she reflects the difficult lives of people struggling on the hard edge of poverty while tied intimately to the natural world and engaged an elemental search for dignity and human connection. (Nov.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.