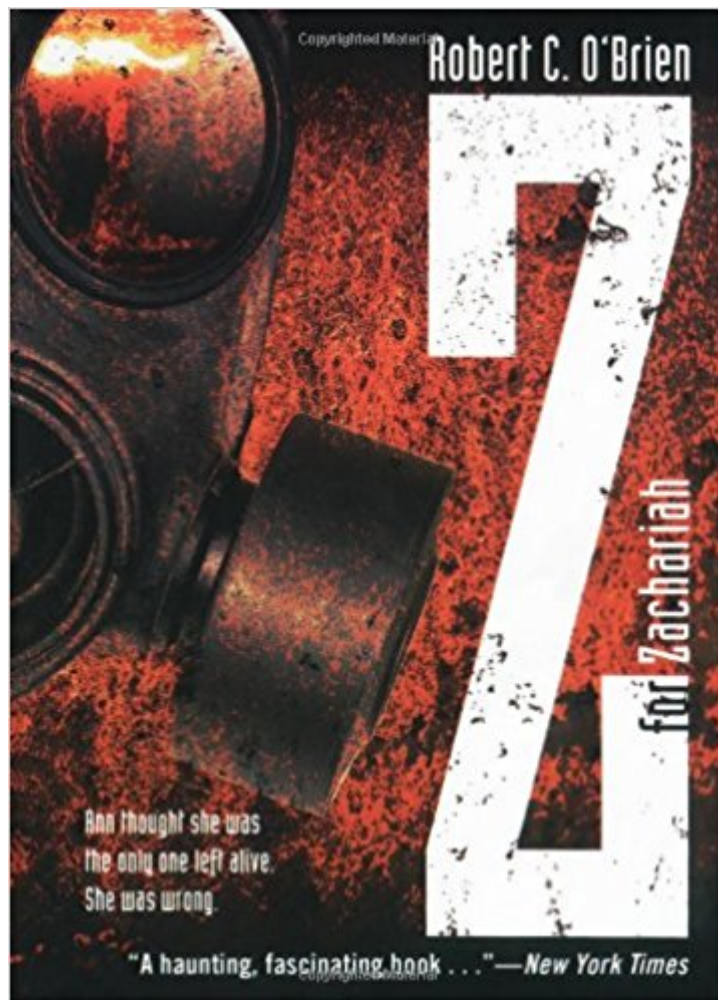




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Z For Zachariah



Synopsis

Is anyone out there? Ann Burden is sixteen years old and completely alone. The world as she once knew it is gone, ravaged by a nuclear war that has taken everyone from her. For the past year, she has lived in a remote valley with no evidence of any other survivors. But the smoke from a distant campfire shatters Ann's solitude. Someone else is still alive and making his way toward the valley. Who is this man? What does he want? Can he be trusted? Both excited and terrified, Ann soon realizes there may be worse things than being the last person on Earth.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 820 (What's this?)

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster (2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1416939210

ISBN-13: 978-1416939214

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.7 x 7 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 265 customer reviews

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

A gripping story about the survivors of a nuclear holocaust, by a Newbery Medalist. Ages 12up.

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Robert C. O'Brien was born in Brooklyn, New York. He attended Williams College and graduated from the University of Rochester. He was a writer and editor for Newsweek, National Geographic, and other publications. He lived in New York City and then in Washington, DC, with his wife and four children. Z for Zachariah is now a major motion picture starring Margot

Robbie, Chris Pine, and Chiwetel Ejiofor. — was completed by his wife and daughter, with the help of his notes, after his death in 1973. He is also the author of *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* and *The Silver Crown*.

In Sunday School when she was much younger, Ann Burden learned the alphabet from "The Bible Letter Book." A was for Adam, B was for Benjamin, C was for Christian. "The last page of all was 'Z is for Zachariah,' and since I knew that Adam was the first man, for a long time I assumed that Zachariah must be the last man." Now, nearly sixteen, Ann has had to come to terms with the fact that she just might be the last woman. The earth is dead everywhere the bombs fell. Ann's valley, a "meteorological enclave" with its own self-contained weather system, escaped the radioactive fallout, but her family and neighbors were killed when they went out to search for other survivors. Keeping up the family farm, taking supplies from the neighbors' general store, she has managed well enough in the year that has passed since the war. Then, one day, she sees smoke in the distance, and every day it's a little closer. Someone else has survived, and is exploring, camping out, certain eventually to find the last spot of green in the still-radioactive landscape. Ann is excited at the prospect of having some human companionship again, but can't help worrying, too: "suppose it was someone mean, or even cruel, and brutal?" Ann's "Zachariah" turns out to be a research chemist, John Loomis, who was in an underground laboratory when the bombs hit - along with a prototype radiation-proof suit. Wearing the suit, he's wandered around the country for a year before he finds the valley. Despite his precautions, he chooses the wrong stream to bathe in when he finally removes his suit, and Ann must nurse him through the agonies of radiation sickness. Will her new companion, this Adam to her Eve, be taken from her almost as soon as they've found each other? And if he doesn't, then what happens? Listening to the fevered Loomis's delirious rantings, Ann finds herself suspecting the the man in whom she's suddenly invested so much hope is holding back a sinister secret. Robert C. O'Brien's "Z for Zachariah" is, along with Peter Dickinson's "Eva," about as bleak as any novel can get, let alone one targeted to the juvenile audience - bleak even for the post-apocalyptic genre - and, like "Eva," it's gripping and thought-provoking and likely to haunt the reader for years. O'Brien originally intended this is a novel for adults; I don't know whether he changed his mind or if it was his wife and daughter, who completed the novel from his notes after his death, who decided it belonged in the YA market. However it happened, O'Brien managed to create a novel that should engage and enthrall adults, adolescents, and even mature preteens. It's a deceptively simple novel, a quick read, and Ann is an engaging and sympathetic narrator. At the same time, the real richness to be found in this novel comes in contemplating it afterwards,

weighing, evaluating, questioning, reconsidering. Ann and Loomis are people who have survived, and inevitably been changed by, a year of isolation, grief, fear, struggle, and repeatedly dashed hopes. O'Brien sets them down together in a sort of perilous paradise, and what happens there is as inevitable as it is unsettling.

Just a fantastic book because Ann Burden, out of any fictional character ever created, would be someone I'd choose to be my best friend. Selfless, godly, smart, wise... she is thrown in the worst possible situation and always comes out competently and strong. Love Ann!

I love the end of world survival genre, but this book was written for young adults and teens. They would enjoy it more than I did. It is a good story with some good characters, but it simply wasn't as contemporary or adult orientated as I like.

Post apocalyptic or survival stories happen to be a favorite of mine. When I heard that there was a movie called Z for Zachariah coming out in 2015 that was post apocalyptic and that it was based on a book, I had to pick this up. I basically finished reading this in two sittings, being unable to put the book down. It was an easy, quick read and I really enjoyed it. I do have a couple things to point out though: Towards the end of the book the character Loomis completely does a 180. Now, I understand that characters may change if they have been through something traumatic, or in this instance (spoiler) severe radiation poisoning, but it just didn't flow like I thought it should have, and I was a little taken off guard (focusing on the writing instead of the story). Come to find out, this book was never finished by O'Brien and instead had to be stitched together by his wife and daughter after his death. The flow may have seem disjointed because the author suddenly changed. This may also be why the ending seemed cut off - I was left with wanting more, but knowing that the author is no longer with us to complete a second book, I am mourning the loss of a story that was cut off too short.

Good book

My kid read this for 9th grade summer reading and I did too just to read it. Not a bad story, you need to suspend a little disbelief that a nuclear war would leave a valley alone and uncontaminated. That aside it was an ok book

I read this for the first time in middle school. As a nostalgic gesture, I purchased the book again for light reading. The story is great, and really challenges the human reaction to nuclear war fallout and what it would mean to be the last person alive on earth. The story from a sixteen year old girl's perspective shows the maturity, strength, and inner determination that humans, regardless of age, race, or gender, have to survive and thrive when everything else is gone. I gave it 4 stars because the ending has always been somewhat lacking. While I applaud O'Brien's wife and daughter for finishing his work posthumously, one can only wonder how the ending might have been different if this novel had been finished before his time was up.

Interesting read but I could not get on board with the main characters' decisions.

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Z for Zachariah

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