

After the Flood

William Morrow

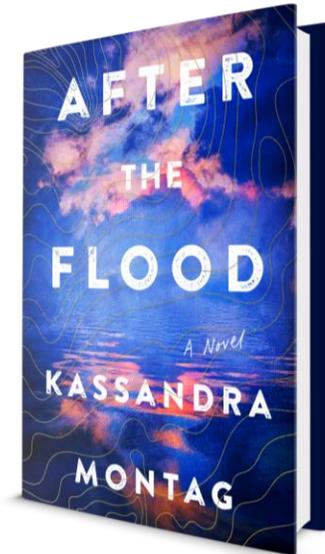
By Cassandra Montag

ISBN: 9780062889362

Introduction

An inventive and riveting epic saga, *After the Flood* signals the arrival of an extraordinary new talent.

A little more than a century from now, our world has been utterly transformed. After years of slowly overtaking the continent, rising floodwaters have obliterated America's great coastal cities and then its heartland, leaving nothing but an archipelago of mountaintop colonies surrounded by a deep expanse of open water.



Stubbornly independent Myra and her precocious seven-year-old daughter, Pearl, fish from their small boat, the *Bird*, visiting dry land only to trade for supplies and information in the few remaining outposts of civilization. For seven years, Myra has grieved the loss of her oldest daughter, Row, who was stolen by her father after a monstrous deluge overtook their home in Nebraska. Then, in a violent confrontation with a stranger, Myra suddenly discovers that Row was last seen in a far-off encampment near the Arctic Circle. Throwing aside her usual caution, Myra and Pearl embark on a perilous voyage into the icy northern seas, hoping against hope that Row will still be there.

On their journey, Myra and Pearl join forces with a larger ship and Myra finds herself bonding with her fellow seekers who hope to build a safe haven together in this dangerous new world. But secrets, lust, and betrayals threaten their dream, and after their fortunes take a shocking—and bloody—turn, Myra can no longer ignore the question of whether saving Row is worth endangering Pearl and her fellow travelers.

A compulsively readable novel of dark despair and soaring hope, *After the Flood* is a magnificent, action packed, and sometimes frightening odyssey laced with wonder—an affecting and wholly original saga both redemptive and astonishing.

Questions for Discussion

1. The opening lines of *After the Flood* are “Children think we make them but we don’t...They come into the world and make us. They make us by breaking us first.” What does it mean to be “broken” this way? In a broken world, why does Myra feel that it’s her children, not the flood, that broke her?
2. Cassandra Montag imagines a world almost entirely transformed by natural disaster. What aspects of the post-flood world surprised you or frightened you the most? What felt the most familiar? What felt the most alien?
3. When she discovers that Row might still be alive, Myra says “Her being alive meant I had to go after her, had to risk everything.” Would you have done the same?
4. Myra says that she hated her father for giving into despair and killing himself. Her mother says that “There were as many ways to react as people” when it came to the catastrophe that permanently changed their world. Thinking of yourself and the people around you—what would be your reactions?
5. “I’d look at Pearl and think of all she wouldn’t know. Museums, fireworks on a summer night, bubble baths.” If you lived in Myra’s world, what about the pre-flood world would you miss the most? How would you describe those things and that loss to children like Pearl?
6. Myra’s friend Beatrice, a former teacher, tells her about how one of the raider gangs built a library full of salvaged and newly transcribed books, proof that even after the flood there can still be “Little bit of good in everything.” Do you agree? Is there other evidence of a little bit of good in the post-flood world?
7. The descriptions of breeding ships in *After the Flood* echo other dystopian visions of what might happen to women in a bleak future, like *The Handmaid’s Tale*, *The Children of Men*, or *Red Clocks*. How did the flood change women’s fate? How do Myra and the women aboard the Sebna grapple with their new reality?
8. Were you surprised to discover Jacob at the end of the book? Do you think Myra was?
9. “I wouldn’t be here for whatever new things would grow out of this new world; I’d be ash before they sprouted fully formed. But I wondered about them, wondering what Pearl would live to see and hoped they’d be good things.” What good things might grow out of that new world? What new things would you dream for Pearl’s generation, and her children’s generation?