

Night Always Comes, The

Harper Perennial

By Willy Vlautin

ISBN: 9780063035096

Introduction

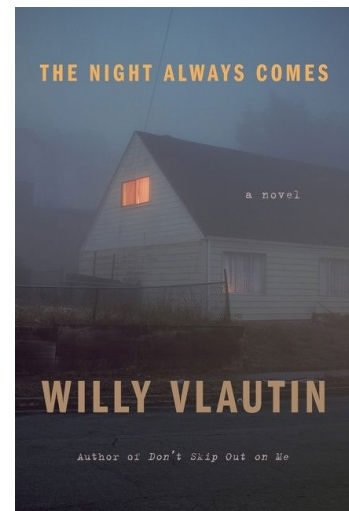
“Willy Vlautin is not known for happy endings, but there’s something here that defies the downward pull. In the end, Lynette is pure life force: fierce and canny and blazing through a city that no longer has space for her, and it’s all Portland’s loss.”—*Portland Monthly Magazine*

Award-winning author Willy Vlautin explores the impact of trickle-down greed and opportunism of gentrification on ordinary lives in this scorching novel that captures the plight of a young woman pushed to the edge as she fights to secure a stable future for herself and her family.

Barely thirty, Lynette is exhausted. Saddled with bad credit and juggling multiple jobs, some illegally, she’s been diligently working to buy the house she lives in with her mother and developmentally disabled brother Kenny. Portland’s housing prices have nearly quadrupled in fifteen years, and the owner is giving them a good deal. Lynette knows it’s their last best chance to own their own home—and obtain the security they’ve never had. While she has enough for the down payment, she needs her mother to cover the rest of the asking price. But a week before they’re set to sign the loan papers, her mother gets cold feet and reneges on her promise, pushing Lynette to her limits to find the money they need.

Set over two days and two nights, *The Night Always Comes* follows Lynette’s frantic search—an odyssey of hope and anguish that will bring her face to face with greedy rich men and ambitious hustlers, those benefiting and those left behind by a city in the throes of a transformative boom. As her desperation builds and her pleas for help go unanswered, Lynette makes a dangerous choice that sets her on a precarious, frenzied spiral. In trying to save her family’s future, she is plunged into the darkness of her past, and forced to confront the reality of her life.

A heart wrenching portrait of a woman hungry for security and a home in a rapidly changing city, *The Night Always Comes* raises the difficult questions we are often too afraid to ask ourselves: What is the price of gentrification, and how far are we really prepared to go to achieve the American Dream? Is the American dream even attainable for those living at the edges? Or for too many of us, is it only a hollow promise?



Questions for Discussion

1. The book opens with a quote from the 45th President of the United States of America: “The point is you can’t be too greedy.” Discuss the theme of greed in this book. How does greed drive the motivations of the characters?
2. Even though the house is filled with many of Lynette’s most troubling moments, she still is intent on purchasing it. What does home represent for Lynette? What do you think about when you think about home?
3. Why do you think Lynette’s mother decided to buy a car and move out? Do you agree with her decision?
4. Lynette and her mother both have unique relationships with Kenny. How do their relationships with differ? In what ways are they similar?
5. What were your preconceived notions of the American Dream before reading this novel? What is your perception of the American Dream after reading?
6. Lynette does many unconventional, often desperate, things to get the money she needs to purchase the house. Do you think her actions were justified? Why or why not?
7. Lynette and her mother have a very difficult relationship. How do they express love for each other? How do their expressions of familial love differ from your own?
8. This novel takes place in a rapidly gentrifying Portland. What role does gentrification play in the book?
9. During Lynette’s relationship with Jack, she struggles with her mental health, which she refers to as a darkness. How else has Lynette’s depression impacted her relationship with herself and others?
10. Discuss the ending. What do you think of Lynette’s ultimate decision? Were you surprised?