

Miguel Derett
Reader's Report

Title: *Moths* (Original)
New proposed titles: *Severed Threads* / *The Eclipse*

Moths by Jane Hennigan is a fictional dystopian novel about a global virus that only affects men. If infected, the men will either die or turn into a rabid, highly aggressive attacker. Men are kept in facilities that more closely resemble a prison. The story is divided between the past and the present. The past recounts the horrific start of the virus outbreak. The present showcases the new world and a conspiracy concerning a potential vaccine.

Moths is a dystopian novel that can be further subdivided into feminist fiction, gender and social criticism, speculative science-fiction, and the post-apocalyptic genre.

The world of *Moths* is one where women not only have complete control, but the men are also mentally and emotionally subdued. This "ironic" twist of fate is the writer's greatest and clearest argument for the story to be considered a feminist text. The novel attempts to showcase how horrific men have treated women throughout history by reversing the societal roles. These feminist ideas might be considered a bit heavy-handedly and not at all subtle.

In addition, the novel can feel torturous at times. "...she sobbed into my chest... women were coming to the facility now looking for relative... they begged us to look for their sons, their husbands, their fathers, their brothers" (208). As an example, 200 pages into the novel, it felt as though the novel was wrongfully reveling in the sick world it had so painstakingly built.

The characters are also not particularly memorable. However, the character of Olivia and her death is a bit concerning. Olivia is a central character throughout the novel until her death. Because we receive point-of-view chapters from her, her story feels incomplete. One final flashback after her death could have helped. Or perhaps continuing to mention her and have her presence persist in the thoughts and mind of Mary might also have helped.

Regarding the writing, the author often uses the rhetorical question, often to an inappropriate effect that takes the reader out of a scene. "...wasn't that a big enough sacrifice?" (125).

Also, there should be more variation in the descriptions of the moths. Three times throughout the story, the writer describes the moths as "dancing." The ironic use of the word is easily lost.

This book will mostly appeal to those interested in dystopian literature and feminist fiction. However, it should not be considered YA such as *The Hunger Games* or the *Divergent* series. This novel lacks the coming-of-age elements of those series. This novel is closer to *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Femlandia*, and *The Power*. One important difference is that the protagonist is an older woman, which provides the reader with a more ponderous, reflective, somber, and philosophical outlook.

I believe publishing *Moths* as an e-book would be satisfactory. This novel fulfills a niche. However, the novel is not akin to one such as *Brave New World*, which is a dystopian novel that is read by non-dystopian genre readers.

As for publicity, I believe that having a kind of partnership with colleges and allowing the novel to find its way into college curriculums would be beneficial. This is a novel that presents strong ideas, and it would be great to debate those ideas in a college setting.