



Book Club Guide

All the Light We Cannot See

by Anthony Doerr

About the Author

Anthony Doerr was born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio. He is the author of the story collections *The Shell Collector* and *Memory Wall*, the memoir *Four Seasons in Rome*, and the novels *About Grace*, *All the Light We Cannot See*, which was awarded the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for fiction and the 2015 Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction, and *Cloud Cuckoo Land*, which was a finalist for the 2021 National Book Award and is currently a finalist for Novel of the Year in the British Book Awards.

Doerr's short stories and essays have won five O. Henry Prizes and been anthologized in *The Best American Short Stories*, *New American Stories*, *The Best American Essays*, *The Scribner Anthology of Contemporary Fiction*, and many other places. His work has been translated into over forty different languages and won the Barnes & Noble Discover Prize, the Rome Prize, the New York Public Library's Young Lions Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship, an NEA Fellowship, an Alex Award from the American Library Association, the National Magazine Award for Fiction, four Pushcart Prizes, three Pacific Northwest Book Awards, four Ohioana Book Awards, the 2010 Story Prize, which is considered the most prestigious prize in the U.S. for a collection of short stories, and the Sunday Times Audible Short Story Award. *All the Light We Cannot See* was a #1 New York Times bestseller, remained on the New York Times Bestseller List for over 200 weeks, and is being adapted as a limited series by Netflix.

Doerr lives in Boise, Idaho with his wife and two sons. Though he is often asked, as far as he knows he is not related to the late writer Harriet Doerr.

Retrieved from:

<https://www.anthonydoerr.com/author/bio#:~:text=He%20is%20the%20author%20of,Cu%20ckoo%20Land%2C%20which%20was%20a>

About the Book

Marie-Laure lives with her father in Paris within walking distance of the Museum of Natural History where he works as the master of the locks. When she is six, she goes blind, and her father builds her a model of their neighborhood—every house, every sewer drain—so she can memorize it with her fingers and navigate the real streets with her feet and cane. When the Germans occupy Paris in June of 1940, father and daughter flee to Saint-Malo on the Brittany coast, where Marie-Laure’s agoraphobic great uncle lives in a tall, narrow house by the sea wall.

In another world in Germany, an orphan named Werner grows up with his younger sister, Jutta, both enchanted by a crude radio Werner finds. He becomes a master at building and fixing radios, a talent that wins him a place at an elite and brutal military academy and, ultimately, makes him a highly specialized tracker of the Resistance. Werner travels through the heart of Hitler Youth to the far-flung outskirts of Russia, and finally into Saint-Malo, where his path converges with Marie-Laure’s.

Doerr’s gorgeous combination of soaring imagination with observation is electric. Deftly interweaving the lives of multiple characters, Doerr illuminates the ways, against all odds, people try to be good to one another.

Retrieved from: <https://www.anthonydoerr.com/books/all-the-light-we-cannot-see>

Discussion Questions

1. The book opens with two epigraphs. How do these quotes set the scene for the rest of the book? Discuss how the radio plays a major part in the story and the time period. How do you think the impact of the radio back then compares with the impact of the Internet on today's society?
2. The narration moves back and forth both in time and between different characters. How did this affect your reading experience? How do you think the experience would have been different if the story had been told entirely in chronological order?
3. Whose story did you enjoy the most? Was there any character you wanted more insight into?
4. When Werner and Jutta first hear the Frenchman on the radio, he concludes his broadcast by saying "*Open your eyes and see what you can with them before they close forever*" (pages 48–49), and Werner recalls these words throughout the book (pages 86, 264, and 409). How do you think this phrase relates to the overall message of the story? How does it relate to Madame Manec's question: "Don't you want to be alive before you die?" (page 270)?
5. On page 160, Marie-Laure realizes "This...is the basis of his fear, all fear. That a light you are powerless to stop will turn on you and usher a bullet to its mark." How does this image constitute the most general basis of all fear? Do you agree?
6. Reread Madame Manec's boiling frog analogy on page 284. Etienne later asks Marie-Laure, "Who was supposed to be the frog? Her? Or the Germans?" (page 328) Who did you think Madame Manec meant? Could it have been someone other than herself or the Germans? What does it say about Etienne that he doesn't consider himself to be the frog?

7. On page 368, Werner thinks, “That is how things are...with everybody in this unit, in this army, in this world, they do as they’re told, they get scared, they move about with only themselves in mind. *Name me someone who does not.*” But in fact many of the characters show great courage and selflessness throughout the story in some way, big or small. Talk about the different ways they put themselves at risk in order to do what they think is right. What do you think were some shining moments? Who did you admire most?

8. On page 390, the author writes, “To shut your eyes is to guess nothing of blindness.” What did you learn or realize about blindness through Marie-Laure’s perspective? Do you think her being blind gave her any advantages?

9. One of Werner’s bravest moments is when he confronts von Rumpel: “All your life you wait, and then it finally comes, and are you ready?” (page 465) Have you ever had a moment like that? Were you ready? What would you say that moment is for some of the other characters?

10. Why do you think Marie-Laure gave Werner the little iron key? Why might Werner have gone back for the wooden house but left the Sea of Flames?

11. Von Rumpel seemed to believe in the power of the Sea of Flames, but was it truly a supernatural object or was it merely a gemstone at the center of coincidence? Do you think it brought any protection to Marie-Laure and/or bad luck to those she loved?

12. When Werner and Marie-Laure discuss the unknown fate of Captain Nemo at the end of *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, Marie-Laure suggests the open-endedness is intentional and meant to make us wonder (page 472). Are there any unanswered questions from this story that you think are meant to make us wonder?

13. The 1970s image of Jutta is one of a woman deeply guilt-ridden and self-conscious about her identity as a German. Why do you think she feels so much guilt over the

crimes of others? Can you relate to this? Do you think she should feel any shame about her identity?

14. What do you think of the author's decision to flash forward at the end of the book? Did you like getting a peek into the future of some of these characters? Did anything surprise you?

15. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn once wrote that "the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being." *All the Light We Cannot See* is filled with examples of human nature at its best and worst. Discuss the themes of good versus evil throughout the story. How do they drive each other? What do you think are the ultimate lessons that these characters and the resolution of their stories teach us?

Retrieved from: <https://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/fiction/9734-all-light-we-cannot-see-doerr?start=3>

Author Interview

For months before I read it, coworkers would rave during meetings, send me glowing emails, or stop me in the hall to tell me how much they loved *All the Light We Cannot See*. We couldn't keep advance reader copies in the office for more than a few hours. I had long been a fan of Anthony Doerr, for his extraordinary short stories in *The Shell Collector* and *Memory Wall* and his previous novel, *About Grace*. His newest novel, set during World War II, tells the parallel stories of Marie-Laure, a 16-year-old blind girl living in occupied France, and Werner, an 18-year-old German soldier who was conscripted from an orphanage due to his extraordinary mechanical abilities. A missing, possibly cursed jewel known as the Sea of Flames; scale-models of neighborhoods in Paris and Saint-Malo made by Marie's father to teach her how to navigate; a secret ocean cove with snails and mussels — Doerr's remarkable story is filled with gorgeous, almost magical imagery you might not expect in a war novel.

Jess Walter gushes, "*All the Light We Cannot See* is a dazzling, epic work of fiction. Anthony Doerr writes beautifully about the mythic and the intimate, about snails on beaches and armies on the move, about fate and love and history and those breathless, unbearable moments when they all come crashing together." Karen Russell says, simply, "Anthony Doerr can find the universe in a grain of sand and write characters I care about with my whole heart." And in a starred review, *Library Journal* declares, "This novel has the physical and emotional heft of a masterpiece." When our Indiespensible team read it, we were just as impressed, moved, and enthusiastic, so we are very happy to have chosen it as the featured title for Volume 47.

Jill Owens: What was the genesis of this novel?

Anthony Doerr: The easy answer is: It was 2004. I had finished the novel *About Grace*. Back when they didn't email you the covers, I was in Princeton for a year, and they wanted me to come up to New York to see the designs. I had been scratching around for a new idea. I was riding into Penn Station, I think it was, and we were going through the tunnels underground. The guy in the seat right in front of me was on a 2004 cell

phone and lost his call. He got angry, physically angry. He was rapping his phone with his knuckles.

I had my notebook with me. I was writing stuff down about how we've forgotten what a miracle it is to be able to speak with someone. Here I am in Hawaii using light waves to talk to you in Portland. That's a miracle! That was not available to humans for the entire history of our species. That night I started thinking about different ways to remind the reader about how radio was so strange. To hear the voice of a stranger in your house that you couldn't see was a total miracle in the '20s and '30s. I started trying to evoke that.

I had a boy trapped somewhere and a girl reading a story to him. I didn't even know what story it was. I didn't know the circumstances of his entrapment, anything like that. But that was the genesis, I guess. In those early paragraphs, you don't know what you're doing. You're just fumbling along in the dark.

Jill: How did that transform into being set during World War II? How did the boy and girl end up on opposing sides of the war?

Doerr: This is simplifying it a little bit, but it was probably almost a full year later. I was still reaching around for why the boy was trapped. I knew it had to be set in a time when radio was the most powerful technology, the Internet of the time. And I was in France on book tour for the translation of *About Grace*. There was a book festival in Saint-Malo. We got there at night, and we went right to the dinner. There are these interminable dinners when you're on French tour [laughter]. There are journalists, and everybody smokes, and there are tons of different courses. All these chairs are really little. And you're like, I just want to get out and walk around.

So after dinner, I walked around the town. I had never seen it before. It was dark. There were these ramparts along the walls all around Saint-Malo. At night, the sea breeze is divine, especially in May. You're about three stories up, so you can see into the third-story windows of all these old granite mansions around there. The ocean is dark except for a couple of lights on boats.

I was totally enchanted. I felt like I was in a city from Calvino's Invisible Cities. It was almost like something out of somebody's imagination. I've never seen anything like it. The whole city is built as a fortification, and yet it's also this really gorgeous setting. I spent the next day wandering around. There are all these tunnels underneath the city. Lots of corsairs, which were these state-sanctioned pirates, had mansions there. They had fortified cellars where they'd keep all their loot, with these grand old chimneys.

I was talking to my editor. I was like, "This city's so old; it's amazing." He said, "Actually, your country destroyed this city in 1944." They had to rebuild almost the entire thing. I think it was 88 percent destroyed. I'm like, "Sorry about that. Oops."

First of all, that act of erasure, that such an event can be covered over by this painstaking rebuilding of a town, that idiot tourists like me wouldn't even notice that this place had been destroyed. Then, immediately, I had the idea that that boy who I had trapped, this was my circumstance — something that has to do with the siege of American bombers in 1944, in one of these almost impregnable corsair cellars, with big granite walls and timbers overhead, that could withstand that, and he might be trapped inside. That's what I had after that trip.

Then it was another year before I figured out why he might be there and before I got Marie... In my students, I'm always dispelling the notion that characters come like a light bulb over the head in cartoons. For me, it's like a shapeless big lump of clay. You just build it into something and then you step back and go, "That's not right," hack it apart, put out a new arm, and say, "Maybe this will walk around and work." [Laughter]

Jill: Is there any kind of jewel in the real world like the Sea of Flames that inspired that?

Doerr: Yes and no. The closest analog is in the British Natural History Museum. It's a sapphire that people have believed is cursed for a long time. But in my case, I just started reading. So now I had Saint-Malo, and I tried to figure out the circumstance, why the girl and boy might be there, which led me pretty quickly to reading about the invasion of Paris at the beginning of the occupation in 1940, four years earlier.

I've always been drawn to natural history, but first I started reading about the Louvre and all these cultural treasures. When this began, they had very little warning. France was very optimistic that the invasion wasn't going to happen and suddenly they were like, "It is happening." They really only had weeks to get all this stuff out of Paris. Rembrandts and the Mona Lisa were rolled up and moved out of the city. There are some incredible photographs of Rembrandts being crated up and the halls of the Louvre becoming packing yards with straw and twine and crate.

Then I started thinking about the Museum of Natural History of Paris. What kind of treasures were there? They really have incalculable mineral wealth. They have these pearls. They have fossils that are irreplaceable, meteorites. Anything that was light enough to be moved, they were trying to figure out what they were going to do with it. I was mostly just imagining those circumstances.

So, no, there is not, that I know of, an actual diamond in the Museum of Natural History that's considered cursed. That's all invented.

I had a blind girl and I thought, What is so visually compelling to people that a visually impaired person would be immune to? That's when I started thinking sapphire or diamond.

I worried about it being a little too gimmicky. I was trying to write a human story about the war, and I worried that it would come across as too crass of a vehicle to move the novel forward. Eventually, I just bought into it as hard as I could because this was one way to continue narrative momentum, and to give her father a reason to disappear.

What I'm trying to suggest is I didn't want it to be a simple dramatic question for the reader to wonder, What happens to this diamond? Then when it gets resolved, that's the only question the reader is interested in. That could be an important question to a lot of readers, and that's absolutely fine with me. But it's much more important to me to have readers ask themselves, What would I be doing in this situation? Was the war just good versus evil in the way some History Channel reenactments are skewed to portray World War II?

I wanted to try to invest in the singularity of these two children and not have the reader simply preoccupied with, Is the diamond really cursed? Is it real?

Jill: I think it's only one facet of many different questions in the book. And one way that you get beyond that idea of good and evil is that one of the pleasures of the book is partaking in Werner's absorption with mechanics and electricity and radios. It's that complete joy that someone takes when they're becoming an expert in something, and everything else falls away, even though that knowledge is going to be used for negative purposes.

Doerr: Right, I wanted the reader to get to the point where he or she is actually cheering for Werner's first find in Russia when they track down that resistance transmission and Volkheimer goes ahead and kills those people. I wanted that to be a very morally complicated moment for the reader when they're saying, I want Werner to succeed here, but I understand what that success entails, which is murder.

Jill: There's also Werner's friendship with Frederick, which is really moving and heartbreaking. It seems like Frederick — who's such a gentle, sensitive person — in some ways was a part of Werner's conscience, now that his sister is not there to play that role anymore.

Doerr: You got it. Frederick, for me, is maybe a little bit of a version of myself. I feel like that was me in school and definitely my son. One of my sons, Owen, is just a dreamer and maybe not the most socially adept. He's nine, but he's always seeing things that other people aren't. He has a lot of different kinds of gifts, and I worry about him even in this very safe and free environment that we have in the United States.

One of the guiding lines in the whole project of the novel is what the war did to dreamers. I have that at the very end of the book. Werner, of course, but also particularly Frederick. He's a pretty pure soul, but he's in entirely the wrong place and time.

Jill: The protagonist of "The Shell Collector" is blind like Marie in this novel. What interests you about blindness in a narrator?

Doerr: Good question. I get it a lot and I don't have an answer for it. It's really subconscious. Originally, some of the sections of Marie's came from an exercise of trying to rectify my own weaknesses as a writer. I rely very heavily on visual descriptions, and I was trying to see if I could write sentences that relied on other senses and deliver a reality to a reader.

Also, maybe I was drawn to it because she's just so intensely vulnerable. Her situation during the siege — there's nobody with her that week, during those days. What could be a more vulnerable situation? And yet, can you dig deep enough to find some strength inside yourself and not break down? I don't know if I could, but she's certainly a stronger, braver person than me. She figured out a way to stay sane as shells were raining down all around that attic.

Speaking of shells, I knew early on that I wanted her to be interested in shells. I'm standing here at the ocean right now. I've always been so interested in both the visual beauty of mollusks and the tactile feel of them. As a kid, I collected them all the time. That really imbued both "The Shell Collector" and Marie with, Why does the natural world bother to be so beautiful? For me, that's really embodied in seashells. I knew early on that I wanted her to find a path to pursue her interest in shells. I think that fits — I hope that fits — with visual impairment, using your fingers to identify them and admire them.

Jill: I was thinking about your interest in seashells and the ocean and its biology, and I was wondering if *Twenty-Thousand Leagues under the Sea* was as important of a book to you as a child as it was to Marie?

Doerr: Probably not as important. I read it as a kid and I loved it. I didn't mind these huge lists of species and basically catalogues of things that they see underwater. I loved the shark fighting, and hunting for pearls. The idea of just taking something down through these huge kelp forests and floating through there while you're sipping cocktails was fascinating to me.

But in Marie's case, Braille books are so big and so expensive that this becomes one of the few narratives she's allowed to enter, so of course it's much more important to her. But, yes, it was a seminal book for me.

I have always felt that it's a little artificial to divide the sciences and the arts on college campuses. I've looked for ways to unite those two things in all five of my books. I'm doing that with Werner as much as with Marie, but trying to say, "Here's something I'm amazed at by the world," and I'm trying to use narrative to help get other people amazed by those things, too.

Jill: Yes, in a lot of your work, there's a kind of mixture of realism and science with myth or imagination, which I think is related to what you're talking about. What do you find interesting or worth exploring in that intersection or overlap?

Doerr: Everything about it is interesting to me. I don't believe in reincarnation. I feel like we're here for such an appallingly brief period of time. I believe we each get this one trip, and if we're really, really fortunate, maybe we get 70 or 80 years on Earth.

There are so many things to be dazzled by, whether it's the trams in Portland and how they operate or the shelves at Powell's, the fact that you can read about Byzantium, and then go read Calvin and Hobbes one floor away. Or the lives of little shrimp, or the little gnats that were around my book up in the mountains of Hawaii last night that live less than a day. All these things exist, and I want to have time to learn about all of that.

If I'm amazed and I feel a sense of wonder about something, I usually try to give that to a character and have that character share that amazement. That enthusiasm for the world hopefully, in some small way, transfers to the reader.

I'm not interested in cynical work. I think there are some incredible satirists, from Twain to George Saunders, who don't pollute the soul of their work when they write. For me, I'm just maybe a more reverent kind of artist. I can't find soulfulness when I'm being cynical, so I try, at least in my work, to be reverent and come from a place of awe.

Jill: One thing I loved about the book was Werner's notebook, with the questions from his childhood that he wanted answers to, like, "Why did all the fish not get electrocuted

when lightning hit the ocean?” Did you have a notebook? Do you think children today have the equivalent of that or do they just look it up online? I’m wondering where that process of discovery is now.

Doerr: That’s a great question and it’s the kind of question I don’t have an answer for. With my own kids, we try so hard to foster this love for the natural world, but they feel the gravitational pull towards the iPad, too. They love the games on there. When we’re tired and we let them play for an hour, I worry about it, but I think also it’s important to say, “This is the world you’re in and you need to learn those skills as well as how to go fishing or how to snorkel or how to swim.”

I didn’t have a book of questions per se, but I’ve always kept little notebooks. The first book I wrote, when I was like eight, was about mollusks. There was a drawing of a whelk on the front. It was some nerdy little book about shells. [Laughter]

I’ve always been interested in those questions. I still think there is plenty of room for mystery even with ready access to information. There is so much on the Internet that’s incorrect. It in some ways reminds me of all the gaps in our knowledge. I think the best scientists certainly acknowledge that the gulf of blackness of what we don’t know dwarfs what we do know. That’s what makes science great. It’s that you’re always trying to keep slowly pushing the envelope of human knowledge a little further while you’re testing all the knowledge that’s behind it.

That’s where it comes from, asking questions and, “No dumb questions.” That’s what’s great about kids. They do ask tons of questions. All you’ve got to do is take them outside and they’ll be turned on by the things around them.

Jill: The concepts of entropy and of order and disorder come up frequently in the novel. I was wondering if you could expand a little bit on that.

Doerr: I worried a lot about writing a World War II novel. The Holocaust is just there, for all of us. I think by the time you’re 12, or maybe even 10, you’ve got that sense — hopefully, if schools are doing their job — about at least some level of the horror of what was happening during World War II.

You get into this conundrum if you're trying to set a book during World War II, of either telling a Holocaust story but telling it more poorly than any survivor of the Holocaust with any writing skills could tell, or somehow ignoring it to your own detriment. That's not helping people remember what happened.

My one way in the novel is to try to keep hitting on how, at Werner's school at Schulpforta, they're hammering in this theme of, "We're ordering the species. We're winnowing out the chaff." I try not to very often directly use the words "Jewish" or "gypsies" or anything, but I try to always be suggesting to readers that all that racism you know is there is there, and the whole idea of eugenics. It's awful — the idea that we can direct evolution. I think I'm trying to suggest, maybe clumsily, that the more you try to impose order on nature, the more it's like, Screw you. Disorder is what nature is. Even with the great laws of physics underpinning everything, you can't decide which humans can live or die. I think the Holocaust was an attempt to impose this horrific order.

Jill: Did you end up going back and listening to any of the German propaganda plays that Werner and his sister listened to?

Doerr: I read the transcript. I can't speak German. It was killing me! There was a time literally when I was like, I've got to learn French to write this novel, because a lot of the journals from different places all around Brittany and Normandy would have been so useful, and I'm running them through Google Translate, struggling. I read a lot of transcripts, particularly from Goebbels, the propaganda minister. He had these awful speeches. A lot of the things that Werner hears as a child in Children's House are real excerpts from real speeches.

But, yes, those radio plays where they're just using story to make propaganda, they're so powerful. Here's someone with no economic resources, and they're telling stories in which Jews are villains, and you're meant to cheer for the handsome blond policemen to come in and arrest people.

Jill: Von Rumpel's character is a strange and interesting one. He becomes the third voice in addition to the two children's voices. He's pretty much acting on his own after a

point. He wants the Sea of Flames for himself. To me, he became almost a more mythical creature. He even references mythology when he's initially questioning the people at the museum about the jewel.

Doerr: He was the easiest to write because his motivations were clear all along to me. I think he was a narrative force for tension. It's unfair to brand him as singularly evil, but he was my gesture towards the types of Nazis that you're much more used to seeing. I was so nervous about trying to make Werner sympathetic that I had to balance him with a German that contemporary readers are more familiar with. That's how I thought of him.

I get that he feels a little more mythic; he's like a monster coming for Marie, really, in the house. He's just a force of terror for her. That's why he's there.

Jill: What was the process like of physically writing the very short chapters for this book, in alternating stories and moving backwards and forwards in time?

Doerr: Fun and super frustrating all at once. Writing the book was a huge puzzle. I felt like I was building a big model house. I had, I think, 187 chapters, and each one alternates in point of view or time.

Occasionally, I worried I'd be too vested into the symmetry of Marie/Werner, Marie/Werner, and there are times when more is happening in one life than the other. So eventually, I had to give myself permission to break that symmetry, that A-B-A-B back-and-forth oscillation. I had color-coded notecards, where I coded them by which point of view the reader would be in and laying them out, always shuffling them.

Then there's that double oscillation between 1944 and all of the years leading up to it. I did my best to orient the reader, but I also had to trust the reader to know where she was in time and place each time.

There is also something about cessation. When you stop a narrative and go to another one, that narrative lives in the reader's head. That's how giant narratives, from Dickens to Game of Thrones, build their suspense. By leaving a character in suspense and then

going to another character, that character kind of hangs in this fulcrum in your mind until you revisit him or her.

Jill: A friend and I were talking about your book and a couple of other books, about novels with very short chapters. I think that it can allow for more lyricisms and/or experimentation with language in some ways than longer chapters because you get that cessation. You get a lot of breaks to digest a little bit instead of having this relentless push with the forward momentum of plot or information.

Doerr: Good, good! Certainly even though the book looks thick, I think the pages are friendly to readers because there's a lot of white space. I think you can actually turn the pages quickly.

My prose can be dense. I love to pile on detail. I love to describe. I'm much more reluctant to give the reader entrance into a character's feeling than describe what's around him or her and have the reader intuit the internal life of a character. I know that's demanding, so this was a gesture of friendliness, maybe. It's like I'm saying to the reader, "I know this is going to be more lyrical than maybe 70 percent of American readers want to see, but here's a bunch of white space for you to recover from that lyricism." [Laughter]

I think about the classic examples like William Gass or David Foster Wallace. You turn the page and there's a big block of text. I'm up for it until about 11:00 p.m. at night, but then I tire. I'm like, Maybe I'll take this on in the morning.

Jill: Who do you consider some of your influences, and/or who are some of your favorite writers?

Doerr: Anne Carson and Cormac McCarthy are kind of like the bottom of the food pyramid for me. They're who I turn back to if I try to remember why I got interested in this, at least in terms of living writers.

I had this big Hemingway period in my 20s. I fell in love with Fitzgerald. I still can go read Virginia Woolf and almost get discouraged because I'll never be close to that. But at the same time, you're watching wizardry at work. That's an incredible thing.

Joyce. Not just Dubliners. Sometimes I'll find pages in Ulysses, and they'll give me a bunch of ideas even if I'm just reading random pages and have no real remembrance of what's happening. Sometimes those are just mines, places to get inspired by language.

Coetzee, who you guys picked for Indiespensable.

Jill: Yes, just a few volumes ago.

Doerr: I haven't read The Childhood of Jesus, but Life and Times of Michael K, Disgrace, Waiting for the Barbarians — those books are so important to me. He really uses mythology and the contemporary world in such interesting ways. He's also... not to make a comparison at all, but he's writing about this awful thing in history — apartheid — and referencing it in more oblique ways, and also using individuals to tell those stories. So there are some similarities there.

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Links and Other Resources

Author Discussion from Publisher's Weekly:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s9p86LQS1Bc>

Interview with Seth Meyers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFZp62asWo4>

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DATE: _____

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BOOK TITLE: _____

As a group we rated this book:

1	2	3	4	5
Ugh!		It was OK...		Loved it!

Would we recommend this book to other book clubs?

Yes No Undecided

Why/why not?

Our discussion: