



LIFE MAGAZINES

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BOOK REVIEW - *A Week in December* by Sebastian Faulks

Firstly, the title of this book is appropriate in more than one sense. *A Week in December* not only denotes the week in which the twenty plus characters lives intertwine but also the way Faulks takes a slice out of the lives of his modern day protagonists and studies the cross section at random; it could be any week of the year, the time isn't relevant.

Each of the characters is developed in detail and by some means all of their lives are linked at the end of the book; mostly at a dinner party that sets a loose background for the novel.

Faulks' words emit a futile sense of fury, from the cyclists blocking traffic and endangering pedestrians to the falsities of the people around him. We can learn a lot about ourselves and the characters from the internet game 'Parallax' that Jenni is constantly playing. True life or 'TL' as it is referred to in the game, is a million miles away from the lives players create for themselves in Parallax; we always want to be someone or somewhere else.

He also uses less obvious means of exploring the theme of escapism. G Northwood dwells on his broken heart for release from reality. The most terrifying vehicle for this concurrent theme is that of Hassan al Rashid; he delves deep in to religious fanaticism to escape the grief of his brother's death, with devastating effects. Another of Faulks' characters, R Tranter, writes his 'Toad' column for a newspaper simply so he may have a space in which to express an opinion that is not edited or diluted by publishers and political correctness. All Faulks' characters, in some way, are unable to successfully inhabit reality.

There are an ambitious number of themes, metaphors and messages in this book, more so than in his previous work. With humour he manages to pull them together and underline the madness that is our existence.

Joanna Reed