



# Ishmael: An Adventure of the Mind and Spirit

By Daniel Quinn

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**Ishmael: An Adventure of the Mind and Spirit** By Daniel Quinn

One of the most beloved and bestselling novels of spiritual adventure ever published, *Ishmael* has earned a passionate following among readers and critics alike. This special twenty-fifth anniversary edition features a new foreword and afterword by the author, as well as an excerpt from *My Ishmael*.

TEACHER SEEKS PUPIL.

Must have an earnest desire to save the world. Apply in person.

*It was just a three-line ad in the personals section, but it launched the adventure of a lifetime.*

So begins an utterly unique and captivating novel. In *Ishmael*, which received the Turner Tomorrow Fellowship for the best work of fiction offering positive solutions to global problems, Daniel Quinn parses humanity's origins and its relationship with nature, in search of an answer to this challenging question: How can we save the world from ourselves?

## Praise for *Ishmael*

"As suspenseful, inventive, and socially urgent as any fiction or nonfiction you are likely to read this or any other year."—*The Austin Chronicle*

"Before we're halfway through this slim book . . . we're in [Daniel Quinn's] grip, we want *Ishmael* to teach us how to save the planet from ourselves. We want to change our lives."—*The Washington Post*

"Arthur Koestler, in an essay in which he wondered whether mankind would go the way of the dinosaur, formulated what he called the Dinosaur's Prayer: 'Lord, a little more time!' *Ishmael* does its bit to answer that prayer and may just possibly have bought us all a little more time."—*Los Angeles Times*

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## **Ishmael: An Adventure of the Mind and Spirit** By Daniel Quinn Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Quinn ( *Dreamer* ) won the Turner Tomorrow Award's half-million-dollar first prize for this fascinating and odd book--not a novel by any conventional definition--which was written 13 years ago but could not find a publisher. The unnamed narrator is a disillusioned modern writer who answers a personal ad ("Teacher seeks pupil. . . . Apply in person.") and thereby meets a wise, learned gorilla named Ishmael that can communicate telepathically. The bulk of the book consists entirely of philosophical dialogues between gorilla and man, on the model of Plato's *Republic*. Through Ishmael, Quinn offers a wide-ranging if highly general examination of the history of our civilization, illuminating the assumptions and philosophies at the heart of many global problems. Despite some gross oversimplifications, Quinn's ideas are fairly convincing; it's hard not to agree that unrestrained population growth and an obsession with conquest and control of the environment are among the key issues of our times. Quinn also traces these problems back to the agricultural revolution and offers a provocative rereading of the biblical stories of Genesis. Though hardly any plot to speak of lies behind this long dialogue, Quinn's smooth style and his intriguing proposals should hold the attention of readers interested in the daunting dilemmas that beset our planet. 50,000 first printing; major ad/promo. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

Winner of the Turner Tomorrow Fellowship, a literary competition intended to foster works of fiction that present positive solutions to global problems, this book offers proof that good ideas do not necessarily equal good literature. Ishmael, a gorilla rescued from a traveling show who has learned to reason and communicate, uses these skills to educate himself in human history and culture. Through a series of philosophical conversations with the unnamed narrator, a disillusioned Sixties idealist, Ishmael lays out a theory of what has gone wrong with human civilization and how to correct it, a theory based on the tenet that humanity belongs to the planet rather than vice versa. While the message is an important one, Quinn rarely goes beyond a didactic exposition of his argument, never quite succeeding in transforming idea into art. Despite this, heavy publicity should create demand. Previewed in *Prepub Alert*, LJ 10/15/91.  
- *Lawrence Rungren, Bedford Free P.L., Mass.*  
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From Kirkus Reviews

Here's the novel that, out of 2500 submissions, won the ecological-minded Turner Tomorrow Award--and caused a mutiny among the judges when it was awarded the \$500,000 first prize. Is it that good--or bad? No, but it's certainly unusual, even eccentric, enough to place Quinn (the paperback *Dreamer*, 1988) on the cult literary map.

What's most unusual is that this novel scarcely is one: beneath a thin narrative glaze, it's really a series of Socratic dialogues between man and ape, with the ape as Socrates. The nameless man, who narrates, answers a newspaper ad ("TEACHER seeks pupil...") that takes him to a shabby office tenanted by a giant gorilla; lo! the ape begins to talk to him telepathically (Quinn's failure to explain this ability is typical of his approach: idea supersedes story). Over several days, the ape, Ishmael, as gruff as his Greek model, drags the man into a new understanding of humanity's place in the world. In a nutshell, Ishmael argues that humanity has evolved two ways of living: There are the "Leavers," or hunter-gatherers (e.g., Bushmen), who live in harmony with the rest of life; and there are the "Takers" (our civilization), who arose with the agricultural revolution, aim to conquer the rest of life, and are destroying it in the process. Takers, Ishmael says, have woven a "story" to rationalize their conquest; central to this story is the idea that humanity is flawed--e.g., as told in the Bible.

But not so, Ishmael proclaims; only the Taker way is flawed: Leavers offer a method for living well in the world ... A washout as a story, with zero emotional punch; but of substantial intellectual appeal as the extensive Q&A passages (despite their wild generalities and smug self-assurance) invariably challenge and provoke: both Socrates and King Kong might be pleased. -- *Copyright ©1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Elisa Hall:**

Have you spare time to get a day? What do you do when you have much more or little spare time? Sure, you can choose the suitable activity intended for spend your time. Any person spent their very own spare time to take a go walking, shopping, or went to often the Mall. How about open or even read a book allowed Ishmael: An Adventure of the Mind and Spirit? Maybe it is to be best activity for you. You understand beside you can spend your time together with your favorite's book, you can better than before. Do you agree with their opinion or you have different opinion?

#### **Catherine Lyons:**

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#### **Tara Cassell:**

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#### **Ian Bracy:**

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cover that make you consider in regards to the content will not disappoint a person. The inside or content is usually fantastic as the outside or even cover. Your reading 6th sense will directly direct you to pick up this book.

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