

## A Suitable Companion for the End of Your Life

**Robert McGill**

Coach House Books (Jun 14, 2022)

Softcover \$17.95 (220pp)

978-1-55245-444-2

In Robert McGill's speculative novel, complex social problems are met with an innovative, controversial technology that bursts onto the black market scene.

After eighteen-year-old Regan decides to kill herself, she orders a toxic flat-packed person from the dark web. That person developed a parasitic infection in a country on the other side of the world and chose to be compressed to slow the disease's spread. When they're unpacked and inflated, their presence becomes deadly. One country's problem is another's solution: such infected individuals die soon after being inflated, as does the person who desires death. But the day after opening up Ülle, a woman who remembers more of her past than flat-packed people are meant to, Regan is still alive. And then a second flat-pack arrives at her doorstep.

Alternating between Regan's present and Ülle's past, the book weaves through the turmoil of the few days between Regan's inflation of Ülle and her own tragicomic fate. The book examines distressing topics from an absurdist perspective, including suicide, addiction, eating disorders, and parenthood during a pandemic. It bends Regan and Ülle's stories in unforeseen ways, with cliffhangers and loads of dark humor.

Secondary characters, including Regan's father, who's addicted to drugs, and two of her exes, dance on the outskirts of the story, sharing their heartfelt concern for Regan and injecting the novel with an extra dose of personality and humor. Ülle grows into a more rounded character as her amnesia lifts, becoming the perfect sober partner to youthful, troubled Regan, despite the vast differences in their life experiences.

*A Suitable Companion for the End of Your Life* is strange, compelling science fiction about empathy and survival.

AIMÉE JODOIN (May / June 2022)

*Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.*