

Be Here to Love Me at the End of the World

Sasha Fletcher

Melville House (Feb 8, 2022)

Softcover \$17.99 (272pp)

978-1-61219-947-4

Sam and Eleanor are in love. Eleanor cannot sleep. Sam has four outstanding invoices. They live in Brooklyn, where in winter, the snow falls with such ferocity that it creates mountain ranges. The president makes alarming claims about impending disaster. The secret police are everywhere. The world of Sasha Fletcher's apocalyptic novel *Be Here to Love Me at the End of the World* is reality, blown up and zoomed out almost to the point of satire.

Neither Sam nor Eleanor tell their own story. They are being watched, tracked by an unseen presence, the narrator. A character in their own right, the narrator breaks the fourth wall often and with aplomb, sharing witty asides, relationship histories, the comings and goings of the secret police, even glimpses into the future. They can get ahead of themselves or distracted within the confines of the novel, leading to a narrative that, while focused on Sam and Eleanor, jumps through time and drifts into the lives of their friends.

The narrator finds the humor in any situation, and serves it up with deadpan seriousness. Where there is no humor, they rant: about the secret police, the president, and human nature. They are not impartial, no, but they are crucial to keeping the book's tone balanced between cool, distant observation and tense, passionate commentary.

Through it all, Sam and Eleanor go about their lives, on the page and off. Sam makes dinner, gets a regular job. Eleanor pays the rent, convinces Sam that vacations are okay. The end of the world, such as it is, comes and goes. They are in love, fierce and radiant love. *Be Here to Love Me at the End of the World* is an announcement that love neither conquers all nor will it insulate one from the ills of society, though it does make life observable and bearable.

DONTANÁ MCPHERSON-JOSEPH (January / February 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.