

## Bigfoot and the Baby

**Ann Gelder**

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Ann Gelder's debut, *Bigfoot and the Baby*, is a delightful black satire. Playing with themes of belonging and belief, Gelder examines the interplay of capitalism and religion in 1980s America.

Jackie Majesky is on a mission to save her family from eternal damnation, especially because she's sure her new baby, Mollie, is a prophet sent to foretell the coming apocalypse. She's not having much luck between her cop-turned-comedian husband, Kyle, who's recently shot himself in the foot, literally, and her punk rock teenage daughter, Katie. Enter Harry Ricker, the founder and CEO of the Walmartesque CarlsMart. He has a vision for the future and wants Mollie to be the angelic face of his newest venture, Christmastown.

It's these realistic and multi-dimensional characters that bring the story to life. Many small-town Americans will relate to Jackie's "apologetic yet defiant tone all Mortonians used when telling others where they lived." Feeling like his family is being stolen from him by Harry, Kyle muses that "he should fight this guy ... Unfortunately Kyle felt an even strong urge ... to be liked."

Gelder has a flair for language, and her writing is equally peppered with humor: "the radio reminded women to reserve their Thanksgiving turkeys now, lest they disappoint their families and die broken and alone"; beautiful imagery: "The submarine ... had made him different ... At some point he had stepped outside of himself, and when he returned, his body no longer fit him very well"; and poignancy: "You believe that if something is a myth it cannot also be real."

Intriguing parallels, like the animalistic bar owner Hunter and the shadowy Bigfoot character, fill the text. Though told mostly from Jackie's perspective, the narration dips into the heads of several main characters, providing, for example, insight into Jackie and Kyle's first meeting from not only their perspectives, but from their parents, as well. Those disenfranchised with the religion of consumerism will appreciate this tongue-in-cheek novel.

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