

Last Tide

Andy Zuliani

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Andy Zuliani's haunting and compact debut novel weaves the stories of four troubled people into an unsettling view of the future.

The book begins in the close future with Ana and Win, a best friend driver and scrubber pair. Ana, a former subway driver, turned to driving after a tragedy; she became friends with Win on the job. Now, one drives through cities and suburbs taking pictures, while the other "scrubs" the human faces out of the pictures, so that they can be presented to those who want to change and gentrify the areas.

The two accept an assignment on an underdeveloped island off of the Pacific Northwest that boasts a new resort, hoping to treat it like something of a holiday. However, the island community is more than it seems. Its eclectic community includes a longtime resident, Lena, who's an oceanographer and climatologist, and is convinced of an impending catastrophic event, and a millionaire fashion mogul, Kitt, who believes that the island surfers and activists are out to get him and prevent his construction efforts. After a couple of accidents, their lives converge, and island life becomes unsettled for all.

Ana, Lena, Kitt, and Win have complex back stories that impact their decisions in the present, although some of their decisions are not fully addressed. However, the setting, with its powerful waves and unforgiving rocks, becomes like its own character, a kind of force that forces the characters to act, though often in seeming opposition to each other. Within that space, the town council, hippies, old timers, surfers, and moguls all become part of the compelling, finely drawn landscape as well.

With four emotionally complicated characters and a cunning setting, *Last Tide's* detailed story of gentrification and the power of money pales before the stunning power of nature.

CAMILLE-YVETTE WELSCH (September / October 2021)

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