



Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture

Douglas Coupland

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Generation X is Douglas Coupland's acclaimed salute to the generation born in the late 1950s and 1960s--a generation known vaguely up to then as "twentysomething."

Andy, Claire, and Dag, each in their twenties, have quit "pointless jobs done grudgingly to little applause" in their respective hometowns and cut themselves adrift on the California desert. In search of the drastic changes that will lend meaning to their lives, they've mired themselves in the detritus of American cultural memory. Refugees from history, the three develop an ascetic regime of story-telling, boozing, and working McJobs--"low-pay, low-prestige, low-benefit, no-future jobs in the service industry." They create modern fables of love and death among the cosmetic surgery parlors and cocktail bars of Palm Springs, disturbingly funny tales of nuclear waste, historical overdosing, and mall culture.

A dark snapshot of the trio's highly fortified inner world quickly emerges--landscapes peopled with dead TV shows, "Elvis moments," and semi-disposable Swedish furniture. And from these landscapes, deeper portraits emerge, those of fanatically independent individuals, pathologically ambivalent about the future and brimming with unsatisfied longings for permanence, for love, and for their own home. Andy, Dag, and Claire are underemployed, overeducated, intensely private, and unpredictable. Like the group they mirror, they have nowhere to assuage their fears, and no culture to replace their anomie.

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