

Book Report

Brave New World

Aldous Huxley

Fiction, 176 pages; easy

Main Characters:

John the Savage, Linda, Bernard Marx, Helmholtz Watson, Lenina Crowne, The Director, The Controller – Mustapha Mond

Setting:

England, sometime in the future

Plot (The story, or, if non-fiction, what the story is about)

The story takes place in a future world, where the world government has taken away almost all freedom. However, most people are content, if not happy, with the very controlled environment in which they live. There are no families or formal couples; childbirth and child rearing is controlled by the state, and babies are made in factories and raised by the government. Children are “produced” to grow into adults of different status and ability levels. Men and women have relations only for pleasure. A drug called “soma” allows people to escape any unpleasantness and its use is encouraged by the government.

Parts of the world have been left un-modernized, however. These places are called “reservations.” Some years prior to the beginning of the story, a woman gets left behind on a tour of one of these reservations and is unable to return to her modern world. On the reservation, she gives birth to a boy and adjusts to primitive life, though she never forgets her modern home.

The main story begins when Bernard visits the reservation and discovers the woman, Linda, and her son John. He brings them to the modern world as a kind of experiment, and the clash of the old and new worlds create many problems. Eventually, the stress comes to be too much for John, and he commits suicide.

My Opinion

This book was written in the 1930's, and its author thought he was writing about a world 600 years in the future. Thirty years after he wrote the book, he was shocked to see how much sooner many elements of the book might become part of our world. I was impressed by how accurate Huxley's imagination was, and surprised at how similar our world has become to his vision. In some ways the "brave new world" is a wonderful place, but I wonder if anyone could be really happy there. Of course, the reservation was not a good place, either. I wonder what our future world will be like.

Best Parts

I found it very interesting to observe how human beings could so easily be changed. The people of Brave New World accept are all the victims of mind control – and yet, this is true of us today in our world as well. It was very useful for me to try to consider where our information comes from and who controls that information. I think this book is a good warning for us not to give up any of our freedoms without careful consideration.

Worst Parts

The characters are not very well-developed at all. This is more a book about ideas than about people. It's hard to feel any connection with any of the characters, so we don't care very much what happens to them. Also, there were many references to Christian religion, and I'm not sure I could understand what the author was trying to say.

Book Rating:

*** A Good Book