



BOOK DETAILS

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AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Annaleese Jochems was born in 1994 and grew up in Northland. She won the 2016 Adam Prize from the International Institute of Modern Letters and the 2018 Hubert Church Best First Book Award for Fiction for *Baby*, which is her first book.

‘Cynthia can understand how Anahera feels just by looking at her body.’

Cynthia is twenty-one, bored, and desperately waiting for something big to happen. Her striking fitness instructor, Anahera, is ready to throw in the towel on her job and marriage. With stolen money and a dog in tow they run away and buy ‘Baby’, an old boat docked in a beautiful bay, where Cynthia dreams they will live in a state of love. But strange events on an empty island turn their life together in a different direction.

Baby is a sunburnt psychological thriller of obsession and escape by one of the most exciting new voices in New Zealand fiction.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What do you think Cynthia was pursuing in her relationship with Anahera, and do you think in different circumstances she could have had more luck?
2. What do you imagine was in Anahera’s mind during her drive to Cynthia’s house?
3. Can you imagine a happily ever after for Cynthia? If no, why not? And if yes, what does it look like? (What could be her ideal career?)
4. Anahera says she likes Snothead, and feels for him: Is she lying?
5. Would Cynthia have been a fundamentally different person if she’d grown up poor?
6. Do Cynthia and Anahera deserve to be punished for Toby’s death?
7. Cynthia is intensely house-proud, why do you think her junky boat matters so much to her?
8. If Anahera had stuck by her, do you think Cynthia would have lied to save her in court?

REVIEWS

‘Sultry, sinister, hilarious and demented.’

— ELEANOR CATTON, AUTHOR OF MAN BOOKER PRIZE-WINNING *THE LUMINARIES*

‘Thrilling, dangerous, and deliciously funny.’

— CATHERINE CHIDGEY, PRIZE-WINNING AUTHOR OF *THE WISH CHILD* AND *THE BEAT OF THE PENDULUM*

‘Funny, sexy, unnerving.’

— EMILY PERKINS, AUTHOR OF *THE FORRESTS* AND *NOVEL ABOUT MY WIFE*

‘Taut, savvy, biting.’

— TRACEY SLAUGHTER, AUTHOR OF *DELETED SCENES FOR LOVERS*

‘A funny, taut, relentless fever-dream.’

— LOUISE KASZA, *THE SPINOFF*

‘An amazing, fresh voice in New Zealand fiction.’

— JENNA TODD, RNZ

‘Creepy and subversive, *Baby* is a classy debut.’

— LINDA HERRICK, NZ LISTENER

‘Sparse and tantalising in its unfolding, it never quite allows you to get your sea legs.’

— RUTH SPENCER, *NZ HERALD*

9. How much do you think Anahera knows, but doesn't tell Cynthia? Do you see her as having much agency in the story?
10. Where is Anahera during the last page of the book?
11. Do you know anyone like Gordon?
12. The events in *Baby* are very improbable, but do you think they're impossible?

