

108: An Eco-Thriller

by Dheepa R. Maturi



About the Book

Can one woman stop a chemical magnate from destroying life on Earth?

While working the night shift at a San Francisco news agency, Bayla Jeevan has a shocking out-of-body experience. Her consciousness is transported deep into an Indian forest, where she witnesses a noxious liquid spreading through the soil. At the same time, she receives a message from her father, presumed dead for 15 years, warning her of imminent danger. Coincidence? Unlikely.

Halfway around the world, agrochemical corporation ZedChem --- led by billionaire Krakun Zed --- tests its latest innovation, a product heralded as the solution to topsoil erosion. But the data reveals something else entirely.

As Bayla sets out looking for answers, she learns more about her past --- and her family's connections to a secret organization with ancient roots and to Zed himself. Will Bayla be able to stop the corporation from ruining global agriculture and devastating human existence forever?

In this action-packed eco-thriller, the bonds of family --- and the power to save Earth --- are put to the test.

Discussion Guide

1. The story of *108* takes place in the future. Did you find the future environment and descriptions of Bayla's day-to-day life intriguing, frightening or something in between?
2. Though the story of *108* is fictional, environmental pollution is obviously real. How did the environmental theme make you feel --- empowered, educated, frightened, inspired?

3. At the beginning of the novel, Bayla holds certain beliefs that influence her personality and behavior; for example, relationships only cause pain. What other beliefs does she hold? Why does she hold them? Which beliefs, if any, change by the end of the novel?

4. In what ways do they feel trapped by the losses, grief and abandonment they've experienced? How do those traumas impact their ability to function in their day-to-day lives? By the end of the novel, do they overcome their traumas, and if so, to what extent? How does Zed's debilitating medical condition, as well as his emotional pain related to his brother and father, affect his philosophy of life?

5. At the midpoint of the story, Bayla is transported by van to the ZedChem facility --- a pivotal moment for her personal journey. What realizations does she have in that moment, and how do they change her? What more does she need to learn before the end of the novel? Have you had similar moments of lucidity in your life that demarcate a significant change from your past behaviors and/or personality?

6. Bayla fears Zed because he threatens her safety and that of her family, but also because he willfully refuses to consider the long-term consequences of his actions and business policies upon the planet. Why does the latter inspire fear in Bayla?

7. Much of ZedChem's work is designed to drive sales while disregarding the impact of its products upon the environment. Should ZedChem have to consider its impact on human beings or the planet itself? In a capitalist society, is it possible to factor in the needs of the environment? What would conscious capitalism, which takes the needs of people and planet into account, look like?

8. Daksha is a powerful character operating outside typical social structures. Aatmanji has difficulty describing her and the source of her power, stating that she is "of Earth." What does it mean to be so deeply identified with the planet? In what ways does Daksha resemble Bayla, and in what ways do they differ?

9. Motherhood and mothering are complex topics in the novel. Bayla feels mothered by the Tul' School community and, indeed, by the forest itself. On the other hand, she doesn't experience Daksha as a mother while growing up, but she does feel mothering energy when they are reunited. What actions constitute mothering? Can mothering occur outside a one-on-one human relationship? Can one mother a landscape? A community? A planet? What is the source of mothering energy, and what does it represent?

Author Bio

Dheepa R. Maturi is a New York-born, Midwest-raised Indian-American writer who explores the intersection of identity, culture and ecology. She has been nominated twice for the Pushcart Prize, and her essays and poetry have appeared in numerous literary journals and anthologies. *108*, her first novel, was her way of writing through ecological grief and toward hope, optimism, and a renewed connection with Earth and her communities. Dheepa lives with her family in the Indianapolis area.

Critical Praise

?Captivating and conscious. Seamlessly weaving the metaphysical and metaphorical into a story of our current, pressing environmental realities, *108* reminds us of our innate connection to the world around us and opens our eyes to the truth that pulses underneath our everyday existence. A rich and radiant journey of awakening, healing, and empowerment, this eco-thriller vibrates with insight, leading us into a deeper alignment between ourselves and Earth. A new and compelling kind of climate fiction!?

108: An Eco-Thriller

by Dheepa R. Maturi

Publication Date: June 16, 2025

Genres: Fiction, Science Fiction, Suspense, Thriller

Paperback: 411 pages

Publisher: Girl Friday Books

ISBN-10: 1964721776

ISBN-13: 9781964721774