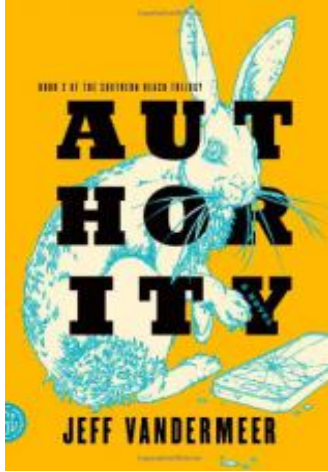


Authority (Southern Reach Trilogy #2)

by Jeff VanderMeer



About the Book

In *ANNIHILATION*, Jeff VanderMeer introduced the mysteries of Area X --- a remote and lush terrain mysteriously sequestered from civilization. It was the first volume of a projected trilogy; well in advance of publication, translation rights had sold all around the world and a major movie deal had been struck.

Just months later, the second volume is here. For 30 years, the only human engagement with Area X has taken the form of a series of expeditions monitored by a secret agency called the Southern Reach. After the disastrous twelfth expedition chronicled in *ANNIHILATION*, the Southern Reach is in disarray, and John Rodriguez (aka "Control") is the team's newly appointed head. From a series of interrogations, a cache of hidden notes, and hours of profoundly troubling video footage, the secrets of Area X begin to reveal themselves --- and what they expose pushes Control to confront disturbing truths about both himself and the agency he's promised to serve. And the consequences will reach much farther than that.

Discussion Guide

1. What motivates Control (John Rodriguez)? How is he transformed by his interviews with the biologist?
2. What makes the Southern Reach so skilled at manipulation? Who are the most fragile team members? Which ones excel at deception?
3. How is Control affected by the legacies of his parents?
4. Discuss the evocative imagery that permeates the novel. How are the threats from the organic world woven with technological threats?

5. What gives the Voice the power to intimidate? What does it take to topple power in Area X?
6. What enables Grace to balance loyalty with wisdom and instinct? What makes her a survivor?
7. As the waves churn in the final scene, where do you think the characters will emerge in the next book?

Author Bio

Jeff VanderMeer is the author of HUMMINGBIRD SALAMANDER, the Borne novels (BORNE, THE STRANGE BIRD and DEAD ASTRONAUTS), and the *Southern Reach* series (ANNIHILATION, AUTHORITY, ACCEPTANCE and ABSOLUTION), the first volume of which won the Nebula Award and the Shirley Jackson Award and was adapted into a movie by Alex Garland. He speaks and writes frequently about issues relating to climate change as well as urban rewilding.

Critical Praise

“AUTHORITY isn’t a book that just picks up where the last one left off. Instead, it’s packed full of new pleasures, not only new characters and settings but whole new kinds of writing. If ANNIHILATION is an expedition novel painted with a thick coat of weird, then AUTHORITY is a spy novel given the same dark lacquer. Which makes me desperate to know what the third book is going to be like --- whether it will be some mixture of the two, *Jurassic Park* meets James Bond, or some third thing entirely.”

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Publication Date: May 6, 2014

Genres: Fantasy, Fiction, Literary Fiction, Science Fiction

Paperback: 352 pages

Publisher: FSG Originals

ISBN-10: 0374104107

ISBN-13: 9780374104108