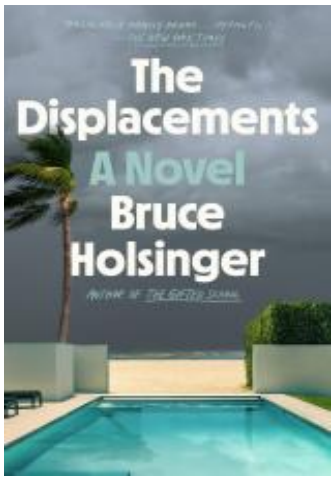
The Displacements

by Bruce Holsinger



About the Book

An adrenaline-fueled story of lives upended and transformed by an unprecedented catastrophe.

To all appearances, the Larsen-Hall family has everything: healthy children, a stable marriage, a lucrative career for Brantley, and the means for Daphne to pursue her art full-time. Their deluxe new Miami life has just clicked into place when Luna --- the world?s first category six hurricane --- upends everything they have taken for granted.

When the storm makes landfall, it triggers a descent of another sort. Their home destroyed, two of its members missing and finances abruptly cut off, the family finds everything they assumed about their lives now up for grabs. Swept into a mass rush of evacuees from across the American South, they are transported hundreds of miles to a FEMA megashelter where their new community includes an insurance-agent-turned-drug dealer, a group of vulnerable children, and a dedicated relief worker trying to keep the peace. Will ?normal? ever return?

A suspenseful read plotted on a vast national tapestry, THE DISPLACEMENTS thrillingly explores what happens when privilege is lost and resilience is tested in a swiftly changing world.

Discussion Guide

1. THE DISPLACEMENTS explores the aftermath of an unprecedented category six hurricane and the lives that are upended and transformed in its wake. From the outside, the Larsen-Hall family seems to have a perfect life, until Hurricane Luna destroys their home and their livelihoods, and they are forced to evacuate to a federal megashelter. What preexisting tensions does the hurricane uncover within the family? What new challenges do they face?

2. Rain Holton is the tough-as-nails former army officer turned disaster assistance administrator for FEMA. What qualities make Rain uniquely positioned to create and run the megashelter? What lessons does she learn, and how does

she grow from the experience? Does being part of the bureaucracy of FEMA help or hamper her efforts?

3. Within the megashelter, certain divisions of race, class and culture from the outside world are replicated. In what ways does the disaster redefine those divisions? Which characters move freely between worlds within the shelter? Which characters use the disaster to cement existing hierarchies?

4. Some characters seem to transform in the megashelter. Consider Tate, Jessamyn, Daphne, Gavin, Mia and Rain. How do they each change in terms of identity, behavior or perspective? How do you think communal living in the megashelter contributes to these shifts? What else contributes?

5. Discuss the relationship between Rain and her daughter, Vanessa, a doctoral student in California. How does it evolve over the course of the book? What does Rain learn from Vanessa by the end, and how does Vanessa challenge Rain?s worldview? How much of their difference in perspective is due to their generational experiences?

6. What role does the digital humanities project ?The Great Displacement: A Digital Chronicle of the Luna Migration? play in the novel? Did it enhance your reading experience? Which graphics and testimonies added to your understanding of how the storm affected different communities?

7. Discuss Range, the large-scale outdoor game children play in the shelter. What opportunities for connection arise because of it? Do the teams reflect the demographic makeup of the megashelter or subvert it? What does the game show about the way children respond to a disaster?

8. Many family structures are upended in the wake of Hurricane Luna. Who benefits from these upheavals, and who suffers? Take, for example, the character of Brantley. Were you surprised by the revelations about him at the end of the novel? How does his disappearance help Daphne reinvent herself? What new possibilities does it bring for Gavin?

9. In many ways, THE DISPLACEMENTS shows us a possible near-future, in which climate change causes widescale catastrophe. Did the novel change your understanding of the social, political and familial dynamics that may occur as climate change accelerates?

10. We hear a lot in the news about how climate change will inordinately affect the world?s poor, but how did this novel make you think about the changes that might come for those who once considered themselves secure?

11. Holsinger structures his storytelling for maximum suspense and propulsion. What surprised you most? What kept you biting your nails? When you think of the story, how do you characterize this novel? Is it about extreme weather and climate change? Or is it about families, relationships and love?

Author Bio

Bruce Holsinger is the author of five novels, including CULPABILITY, THE DISPLACEMENTS and THE GIFTED SCHOOL, as well as many works of nonfiction, most recently ON PARCHMENT: Animals, Archives, and the Making of Culture from Herodotus to the Digital Age.

His books have been recognized with the Colorado Book Award, the John Hurt Fisher Prize, the Philip Brett Award, the John Nicholas Brown Prize, the Modern Language Association's Prize for a First Book, and others. His essays and reviews have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Vanity Fair* and many other publications, and he has been profiled on NPR's "Weekend Edition," "Here & Now" and "Marketplace."

A Guggenheim Fellow and Fellow of the Medieval Academy of America, he teaches in the Department of English at the University of Virginia and serves as editor of the quarterly journal New Literary History. He also teaches craft classes and serves as board chairman for WriterHouse, a nonprofit in Charlottesville.

The Displacements

by Bruce Holsinger

Publication Date: July 4, 2023
Genres: Fiction
Paperback: 448 pages
Publisher: Riverhead Books
ISBN-10: 0593189728
ISBN-13: 9780593189726