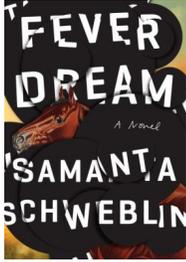


Books by the Stack



Fever Dream by Samanta Schweblin

A young woman named Amanda lies dying in a rural hospital clinic. A boy named David sits beside her. She's not his mother. He's not her child. Together, they tell a haunting story of broken souls, toxins, and the power and desperation of family. *Fever Dream* is a nightmare come to life, a ghost story for the real world, a love story and a cautionary tale.

Why you'll like it: *Psychological suspense. Haunting. Compelling.*

About the Author: Samanta Schweblin was chosen as one of the 22 best writers in Spanish under the age of 35 by *Granta*. She is the author of three story collections that have won numerous awards, including the prestigious Juan Rulfo Story Prize, and been translated into 20 languages. *Fever Dream* is her first novel and is longlisted for the Man Booker International Prize. Originally from Buenos Aires, she lives in Berlin. Megan McDowell has translated books by many contemporary South American and Spanish authors, and her translations have been published in *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *The Paris Review*, *McSweeney's*, *Words Without Borders*, and *Vice*, among other publications. She lives in Chile.

Questions for Discussion

1. 'We'll know the exact moment from a detail, you have to be observant.' How does the theme of perception contribute to the narrative? Why is David so obsessed with details?
2. 'This isn't normal, David. There's only darkness, and you're talking in my ear. I don't even know if this is really happening.' Which of the two parallel narratives do you think is the more real? Is any of what Amanda says grounded in reality?
3. What does 'rescue distance' mean? Why is it important to the story?
4. 'Is it because I did something wrong? Was I a bad mother? Is it something I caused?' How does Schweblin portray motherhood and guilt?
5. Amanda is telling David a story, which contains a story his mother told her. What is the effect produced by these multiple narratives?
6. 'Twelve long blocks separate us from downtown, and as we get closer the houses grow smaller and more humble, fighting each other for space, with tiny yards and fewer trees.' Poverty is part of the landscape of *Fever Dream*. Does the book contain elements of social commentary? Are such details buried beneath the more surreal aspects of the narrative?
7. 'He doesn't see the soy fields, the streams that crisscross the dry plots of land, the miles of open fields empty of livestock, the tenements and the factories as he reaches the city.' Discuss *Fever Dream* as a cautionary tale warning of environmental collapse.
8. What do the 'worms' signify? Why does David keep bringing them up?
9. 'My mother always said something bad would happen.' What is the source of Amanda's anxiety? How does Schweblin create an atmosphere of dread and uncertainty?

10. 'It's different for you, coming from the capital.' How does *Fever Dream* mark the difference between urban and country life?

11. Consider the role of folklore and the supernatural.

12. *Fever Dream's* translator, Megan McDowell, said she found the last line of the book most difficult to translate. How effective did you find the book's ending?

(Questions provided by the publisher)



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