



Lullaby

By Chuck Palahniuk

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Ever heard of a culling song? It's a lullaby sung in Africa to give a painless death to the old or infirm. The lyrics of a culling song kill, whether spoken or even just thought. You can find one on page 27 of **Poems and Rhymes from Around the World**, an anthology that is sitting on the shelves of libraries across the country, waiting to be picked up by unsuspecting readers.

Reporter Carl Streator discovers the song's lethal nature while researching Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, and before he knows it, he's reciting the poem to anyone who bothers him. As the body count rises, Streator glimpses the potential catastrophe if someone truly malicious finds out about the song. The only answer is to find and destroy every copy of the book in the country. Accompanied by a shady real-estate agent, her Wiccan assistant, and the assistant's truly annoying ecoterrorist boyfriend, Streator begins a desperate cross-country quest to put the culling song to rest.

Written with a style and imagination that could only come from Chuck Palahniuk, **Lullaby** is the latest outrage from one of our most exciting writers at work today.

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Lullaby By Chuck Palahniuk Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

The consequences of media saturation are the basis for an urban nightmare in *Lullaby*, Chuck Palahniuk's darkly comic and often dazzling thriller. Assigned to write a series of feature articles investigating SIDS, troubled newspaper reporter Carl Streator begins to notice a pattern among the cases he encounters: each child was read the same poem prior to his or her death. His research and a tip from a necrophilic paramedic lead him to Helen Hoover Boyle, a real estate agent who sells "distressed" (demonized) homes, assured of their instant turnover. Boyle and Streator have both lost children to "crib death," and she confirms Streator's suspicions: the poem is an ancient lullaby or "culling song" that is lethal if spoken--or even thought--in a victim's direction. The misanthropic Streator, now armed with a deadly and uncontrollably catchy tune, goes on a minor killing spree until he recognizes his crimes and the song's devastating potential. *Lullaby* then turns into something of a road trip narrative, with Streator, Boyle, her empty-headed Wiccan secretary Mona, and Mona's vigilante boyfriend Oyster setting out across the U.S. to track down and destroy all copies of the poem.

In his previous works, including the cult favorite *Fight Club*, Palahniuk has demonstrated a fondness for making statements about the condition of humanity, and he uses *Lullaby* like a blunt object to repeatedly overstate his generally dim view. Such dogmatic venom undermines the persuasiveness of his thesis about mass communication and free will, but thankfully, Palahniuk offers some respite here by allowing for sympathy and love, as well as through his razor-sharp humor, such as his mock listings for Helen's possessed properties: "six bedrooms, four baths, pine-paneled entryway, and blood running down the kitchen walls...." At such moments, *Lullaby* casts a powerful spell. --Ross Droll

From Publishers Weekly

"I need to rebel against myself. It's the opposite of following your bliss. I need to do what I most fear." Beleaguered reporter Carl Streator is stuck writing about SIDS and grieving for his dead wife and child; he copes by building perfect model homes and smashing them with a bare foot. But things only get worse: Carl accidentally memorizes an ancient African "culling song" that kills anyone he focuses on while mentally reciting it, until killing "gets to be a bad habit." His only friend, Nash, a creepy necrophiliac coroner, amuses himself with Carl's victims. Salvation of a sort comes in the form of Helen Hoover Boyle, a witch making a tidy living as a real estate broker selling-and quickly reselling--haunted houses. She, too, knows the culling song and finances her diamond addiction by freelancing as a telepathic assassin. Carl and Helen hit the road with Helen's Wiccan assistant, Mona, and her blackmailing boyfriend, Oyster, on a search-and-destroy mission for all outstanding copies of the culling song, as well as an all-powerful master tome of spells, a grimoire. Hilarious satire, both supernatural and scatological, ensues, the subtext of which seems to be Palahniuk's conviction that information has become a weapon ("Imagine a plague you catch through your ears"), and the bizarre love affair between Helen and Carl offers the lone linear thread in a field of narrative flak bursts. But the chief significance of this novel is Palahniuk's decision to commit himself to a genre, and this horror tale of both magic and mundane modernity plants him firmly in a category where previously he existed as a genre of one.

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From Library Journal

Life is hell for people in Palahniuk's fictional world (*Fight Club*; *Choke*). His latest cast of miserable characters includes hack reporter Carl Streator and Helen Hoover Boyle, a real estate agent whose specialty is the sale of distressed homes those haunted by the crimes previously committed in them. Both have lost

children to sudden infant death syndrome, precipitated not by a medical condition but by reading their babies an ancient magic culling song included in a library book of poems from around the world. Once the poem is in one's mind, it's easy to kill anyone one pleases, and the body count is formidable as Carl and Helen take off on a trip to locate and destroy copies of the poem. They are joined in this macabre quest by two witches-in-training, Helen's assistant, Mona, and her boyfriend, Oyster. This is vintage Palahniuk: weird, creepy, twisted, upsetting, and ultimately a great read for anyone who wants to be scared for pleasure. This cult author's novel should be in public libraries everywhere. Andrea Kempf, Johnson Cty. Community Coll. Lib., Overland Park, KS

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Estella Powell:

As people who live in the modest era should be update about what going on or facts even knowledge to make these people keep up with the era that is certainly always change and move ahead. Some of you maybe may update themselves by reading books. It is a good choice for you but the problems coming to anyone is you don't know what type you should start with. This Lullaby is our recommendation so you keep up with the world. Why, as this book serves what you want and wish in this era.

Robert Jones:

Spent a free a chance to be fun activity to try and do! A lot of people spent their leisure time with their family, or their particular friends. Usually they carrying out activity like watching television, planning to beach, or picnic inside the park. They actually doing same task every week. Do you feel it? Do you want to something different to fill your personal free time/ holiday? Might be reading a book could be option to fill your no cost time/ holiday. The first thing that you will ask may be what kinds of publication that you should read. If you want to try look for book, may be the guide untitled Lullaby can be excellent book to read. May be it is usually best activity to you.

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