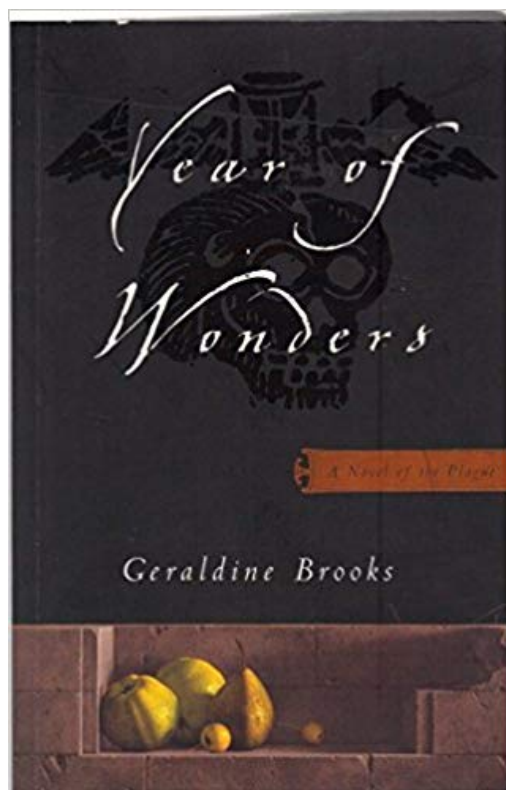


Year of Wonders *by* geraldine-brooks



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When an infected bolt of cloth carries plague from London to an isolated village, a housemaid named Anna Frith emerges as an unlikely heroine and healer. Through Anna's eyes we follow the story of the fateful year of 1666, as she and her fellow villagers confront the spread of disease and superstition. As death reaches into every household and villagers turn from prayers to murderous witch-hunting, Anna must find the strength to confront the disintegration of her community and the lure of illicit love. As she struggles to survive and grow, a year of catastrophe becomes instead annus mirabilis, a "year of wonders." Inspired by the true story of Eyam, a village in the rugged hill country of England, *Year of Wonders* is a richly detailed evocation of a singular moment in history. Written with stunning emotional intelligence and introducing "an inspiring heroine" (*The Wall Street Journal*), Brooks blends love and learning, loss and renewal into a spellbinding and unforgettable read.



Reviews of the *Year of Wonders* *by* geraldine-brooks

Kerry

Like several reviewers, I would also suggest you stop reading the book at the point the Bradfords

return and it is 'apple-picking time' again .

From that point you have my permission to imagine your own ending to the story , hopefully consistent with the main plot and time period. In my opinion a very good story went haywire for reasons unknown and tumbled into odd 'regency-like romance' territory. To be honest, I would have flung a 'book' against the wall, but since I was reading on my Kindle I quickly ruled that out. I do appreciate this author, and have read two other books by her. But I am sorely tempted to ask her "Why?"

iSlate

This was an interesting story about an episode in history I wasn't familiar with—an outbreak of plague in a Derbyshire village in 1665. A young serving woman, Anna Frith, takes in a lodger—a tailor from London—who soon dies of plague, and before long villagers are dying right and left. The village rector and a nearby nobleman decide that the village must be cut off from the wider neighborhood, with the nobleman delivering food and supplies to the sufferers so that they will not leave and risk spreading the contagion to the countryside. A flash-forward at the beginning tells us more than we perhaps needed to know of the outcome; not sure it was wise to frame the story in this fashion. As the disease works its way through the villagers, the vagaries of human nature drive the action, making the experience of the characters both more and less traumatic.

I liked the writing style very much, apart from a bit of awkwardness at the beginning. The author did not make a huge attempt at sounding "period," which was a good choice; the point of view was demarcated by what the first-person narrator was in a position to know and understand about her world, which set us sufficiently in context without the use of self-consciously obsolete phrasings. There was some lovely new vocabulary to learn—always a plus for me! And the descriptions were vivid and lyrical—and occasionally visceral, especially a scene in a mine.

For the most part, I felt the characters were well drawn and their actions made sense in context, though a few seemed to dance too much to the piping of the plot requirements. There were also a few more characters than could be followed with ease, though the number made sense because in a small village setting the heroine would naturally know everybody. The heroine's religious skepticism seemed a little forced to me (and maybe too modern), but the idea that her faith was mostly a facet of her emotional attachments is psychologically plausible. As for the ending, which many reviewers have commented on, the first surprise made sense to me, but the final surprise seemed unnecessary and out of left field.

Year of Wonders took me deep into its world and held me there. But someone needs to solve the conundrum of how to create a heroine who is true to her age but still relatable to modern readers! The independent-spirited young woman has become cliché and no longer holds any mystery for the reader. Perhaps writers need to look for inspiration to the strengths of a Fanny Price or an Anne Elliot.

Forcestalker

This book is of course historical fiction but reads like a novel. It is one woman's (Anna Frith's) horrendous account on experiencing and surviving the Black Plague in the quaint croft of Eyam, England, in 1666. The Plague comes to her home in the form of a tailor traveling from plague-infested London who rents a room in her home (her husband had passed in a mining accident, and Anna needs the extra income). The tailor falls ill and dies a horrendous death, thus beginning the sequence of hundreds of deaths to follow. Panic consumes the croft as people decide to flee the contagion. To prevent the spread of the Plague to neighboring hamlets, the village rector, Michael Pompellion, proposes a self-imposed quarantine for the entire hamlet, and with his steady hand, and the help of his wife Elinor and maid, Anna, the three overcome the horrors of the black death. The novel ends in an entirely unexpected fashion, which I will not reveal here. Suffice to say, the ending is dramatic and heart-rendering. For historical fiction fans, this 2001 novel from the hand of

Geraldine Brooks, will bring enlightenment to a very dark era in history, and also demonstrate the power of love and determination of a single woman. Recommended! kone

Zyangup

Presently on holidays on England, and about to visit the Peak District, setting for this novel, I decided to read this as background. I've read many of Brook's novels, but had missed this, first, one. And it is a great beginning to an illustrious writing career. Based on fact, she has woven an engaging tale of human reaction to adversity. It's instructive to think what our own reaction would have been to such a challenge.

Brazil

Good solid book about The Plague-times based on a real town in England. It really took me back to that horrendous period in history. From time to time, the writer uses a vocabulary that I assume were for objects, places and activities, that are archaic now but which gives the book even more of a sense of authenticity. May not be for everyone as descriptions of plague buboes are quite graphic but I used to work in hospitals so I was fine with it.

Dammy

Predictable today, and preventable today, the plague a few years following the Restoration of Charles II was a vicious killer, striking one person after another, with - to these people - no discernible cause nor connection. So most believed that the plague's affliction was punishment for their own or their neighbor's sins. The exhaustion, depression, and even madness that resulted from months of seeing their family members suffer and die, their neighbors lose heart and minds to the affliction, innocents put to death as witches, the villagers discover their unsuspected weaknesses, some finding strengths they had never thought to have. Anna loses much herself, but discovers a great gift for healing and caring for others that is valued by many, then betrayed by those she admires.

Timberahue

A good read and fascinating story based on an English village that quarantined itself when plague was brought to their town, but not the surrounding villages. The story is told through the voice of a strong young woman. Characterization, especially of the two other main characters, is over drawn and unrealistic, I think. The ending in the Epilogue seems quite unrealistic and far fetched. But no matter, I certainly enjoyed the read and learned a lot about village life in that time period.

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