

Synopsis
“Kill the Dove!” – a tale of the revolutionary 60’s

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Précis

Kill the Dove! is a tale of the tumultuous Sixties, a time rife with radical calls for “Revolution!” It was a time of nationwide student protests. Mass rallies and marches on Washington. Hippies. Free sex. God is Dead. Weathermen bombings. Black Power and Black Muslims. Sisterhood is Powerful. Stonewall gay riots. Draft resistance and raids on draft boards. Attica prison uprising. All these themes thread through the novel. Jared, an anti-war activist who goes to prison, Aaren, a violent Weatherman bomber, and Char, a nonviolent feminist are lovers, enemies, betrayers and, in time, seekers of a radically new spiritual revolution that focuses upon the practices of a sacred intimacy as the foundational revolutionary act. To prevent him from organizing a revolt in prison, the FBI put Jared on the Ride, a circuit to various prisons. At Milan, Marion, and Attica he confronts his greatest fears and gains profound insights about violence, sexuality, spirituality and himself. During visits Aaren seduces and betrays him, vengefully working with the FBI. Char got pregnant but decides not to tell him about their child. Her efforts to send mail or visit are blocked by the feds. Char and Aaren develop as members of The Sisters, a radical feminist commune. Char embraces her lesbianism. Aaren and Jared marry, and all three commit to being family. *Kill the Dove!* is an impassioned, disturbing, and challenging but ultimately hopeful odyssey through the era when folks sang, “All we are saying is give peace a chance!”

Main characters

Jared Jennings, a white, nonviolent anti-war radical, is tall, mid-twenties, a former collegiate basketball star and an ex-Catholic monk. He’s believes that “Resisting illegitimate authority!” requires protesting and nonviolently disobeying both Church and State. His radical spirituality leads him to raid Selective Service draft boards and destroy the 1-A draft files. He’s arrested and sentenced to five years in prison. A series of troubling violent and sexual episodes while in federal prison upend all his beliefs. He is eventually broken in mind, body and spirit. Symbolically, he bears a telltale facial scar, the result of a well-intentioned rape intervention gone awry. To control his organizing a revolt, Jared is put on the Ride. This is a Black Ops mobile prison with numerous short stays at a range of jails and prisons. At one, he functions as a prison guard. During the famed riot at Attica State prison, he, unwittingly, steps forward as a leader and is wounded. Two women, Aaren and Char are his lovers and soul mates.

Aaren Foley’s fiery political passions focus on stopping all male dominated wars, both the Vietnam War and the bedroom War of the Sexes. She’s a violent Weatherman who believes more in bombs than protest. She purges and purifies herself through an orgiastic Weathermen ritual called “Wargasm!” A white, mid-twenties woman, she’s physically ordinary but surges with intellectual and emotional fire. Jared calls her Liquid Fire. She betrays Jared and works with the FBI. Only she gets to regularly visit him on the Ride. She lies about Char faithfulness and effectively seduces and breaks Jared’s spirit. Unexpectedly, she has her own breakdown. She meets Jared after his release from prison. They marry and search for what it means to be a lovers and spouses in an age of new revolutionary human truths.

Char Clark is a white, mid-twenties, female nurse. She shares Jared's Roman Catholic upbringing and commitment to nonviolent civil disobedience. As Jared enters prison Char realizes that she's pregnant and also affirms her lesbianism. During several early pre-Ride prison visits she and Jared go upside down and in and out about having an abortion, moving into The Sister's commune, and devoting her life to radical feminist causes. Char is from a small town farm community. Her sexual identity shift reflects the long-standing, inarticulate feelings and dreams of her mom and a generation of early feminist activists. She and Jared work through the Catholic underpinnings of their common struggles on the sexual politics/sexual violence front.

Plot

The singular life of Jared Jennings is writ large with the idealistic quests, hopes, visions as well as failures, losses, and sufferings of the Sixties: "These times they are a changin'." A "Catholic Radical" anti-war activist, he raids Selective Service draft boards. Aaren Foley, a female Weatherman, is a raider who denounces nonviolence. Jared's fascination with and passion for Aaren throttles him. He can't publicly discuss Aaren with anyone because he's living with Char Clark, another feminist activist but one committed to nonviolence. Ambushed by the FBI during a draft board raid, Jared is sentenced to five years in prison.

Jared is a zealous optimist who reads the "signs of the time" to justify the Resistance Movement. "Peace Now!" is a hope, a belief and the basis for a social-political revolution which Jared initially sees as a revelation of the Christian Holy Spirit. In prison, Jared faces his deepest fears and internal contradictions. He is suspected by other Resisters of being an FBI informant. He experiences his own violence as he pummels a gay inmate, is challenged by Black Muslim prisoners, condemns Char as she considers aborting their unborn child, and, through various dreams, confronts the sexual violence at the core of his faith and his male imagination.

To break him and control his radical activities, Jared is placed on the Ride. This is a continual excursion from one county jail to state prison to federal lock-up. On the Ride no one can locate Jared, unless the FBI allows it. Jared has key encounters where, among other things, he becomes a guard who beats a Black inmate, and confronts a religious visionary chaplain who sees Attica as a holy place. Aaren continually lies and deceives him. All letters from Char are withheld and Jared believes that she's abandoned him. At a safe house in Georgetown, while waiting for an alleged visit from FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover, Jared undergoes a profound transformation. Off the Ride his case gets bungled inside the FBI's bureaucracy. For a year, Jared encounters the core of his own violence, in its political, personal, religious and sexual dimensions. Before ever visiting, Hoover dies and in the ensuing bureaucratic bedlam, Jared becomes invisible. Eventually found, like other Hoover Black Ops, the Ride is shut down and Jared is unceremoniously dropped off in Los Angeles, to begin anew.

Out of prison, Char reveals that he has a son. She loves Jared but chooses to raise their son within her lesbian commune. Jared supports her choice, and commits to fathering in this non-traditional manner. Aaren and Jared seek to breakthrough to a new realization of what it means to be fully male and female in a coupled relationship. The novel ends with a series of intimate encounters where Jared and Aaren confront the imagery and spirituality of the Old Way and tap into a practice called "dreamslipping." Embraced as beloveds, they evoke the fire with which to forge a revolutionary vision and practice of sensual holiness. An epilogue brings the story up to 1981 as Jared and Aaren—married and with children—respond to the revolutionary vision of Ronald Reagan set against that of John Lennon.