
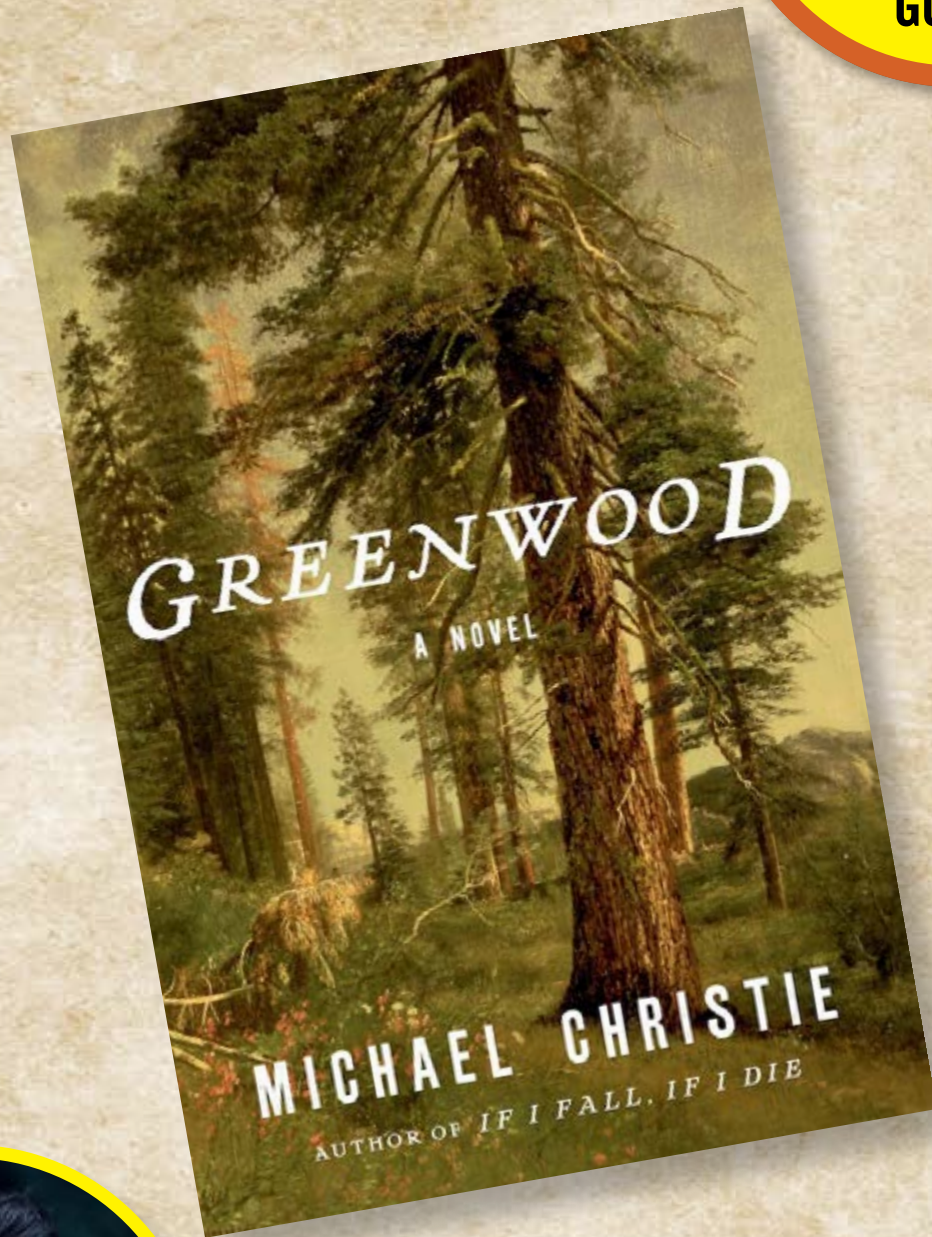


MARCH/APRIL 2022

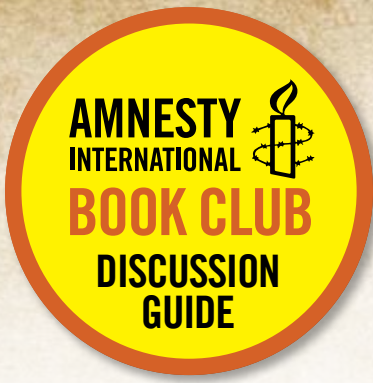
DISCUSSION GUIDE

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL 
BOOK CLUB
DISCUSSION
GUIDE



GREENWOOD

BY MICHAEL CHRISTIE



MARCH/APRIL 2022 DISCUSSION GUIDE

WELCOME AMNESTY BOOK CLUB MEMBERS

We're pleased to announce our March/April selection for 2022, *Greenwood* by Michael Christie! From the award-winning author of *If I Fall, If I Die* comes a propulsive, multigenerational family story, in which the unexpected legacies of a remote island off the coast of British Columbia will link the fates of five people over a hundred years. *Cloud Atlas* meets *Barkskins* in this ingenious nested-ring epic set against the devastation of the natural world.

In 2038, scientist Jake Greenwood is working as an overqualified tour guide to ultra-rich eco-tourists in one of the world's last remaining forests. As the rest of humanity chokes on the dust storms that follow the environmental collapse known as the Great Withering, Jake finds temporary refuge on Greenwood Island, a place whose connection to her own family name she had thought just a coincidence—until someone from her past reappears with a journal that might give Jake the family story she's long craved. As we move backward in time from the Great Withering to the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, and then forward into the future again, we meet an injured carpenter facing the possibility of his own death, an eco-warrior trying to atone for the sins of her father's rapacious timber empire, a blind tycoon with a secret he will pay a terrible price to protect, and a Depression-era drifter who saves an abandoned infant from certain death, only to find himself the subject of a country-wide manhunt. At the very centre of the book is a tragedy that will bind the fates of two boys together, setting in

motion events whose reverberations will be felt for over a century.

A magnificent novel of inheritance, sacrifice, nature, and love that takes its structure from the nested growth rings of a tree, *Greenwood* spans generations to tell the story of a family living and dying in the shadows cast by its own secrets. With this breathtaking feat of storytelling, Michael Christie masterfully reveals the tangled knot of lies, omissions, and half-truths that exists at the root of every family's origin story.

Source: <http://www.michaelchristie.net/>

About Amnesty International

Amnesty International is a global movement of more than ten million supporters, members and activists in over 150 countries and territories who campaign to end grave abuses of human rights.

Our vision is for all people to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.

We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion, and are funded mainly by our membership.

Until everyone can enjoy all of their rights, we will continue our efforts. We will not stop until everyone can live in dignity; until every person's voice can be heard; until no one is tortured or executed.

Our members are the cornerstone of these efforts. They take up human rights issues through letter-writing, online and off line campaigning, demonstrations, vigils and direct lobbying of those with power and influence.

Locally, nationally and globally, we join together to mobilize public pressure and show international solidarity.

Together, we make a difference.

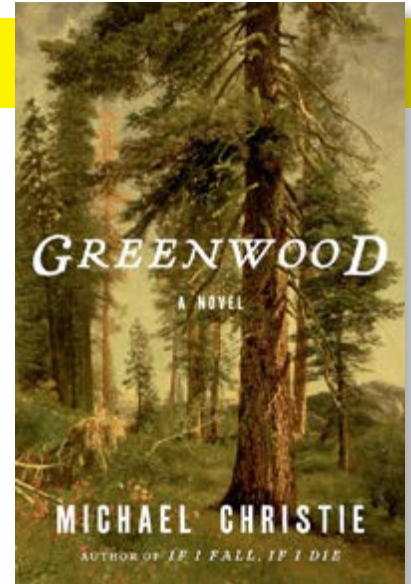
For more information about Amnesty International visit www.amnesty.ca or write to us at: Amnesty International, 312 Laurier Ave. E., Ottawa, ON K1N 1H9.

March/April 2022: *Greenwood*

ABOUT THIS MONTH'S AUTHOR, MICHAEL CHRISTIE



MICHAEL CHRISTIE is the author of the novel *If I Fall, If I Die*, which was longlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize, the Kirkus Prize, was selected as a New York Times Editors' Choice Pick, and was on numerous best-of 2015 lists. His linked collection of stories, *The Beggar's Garden*, was longlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize, shortlisted for the Writers' Trust Prize for Fiction, and won the Vancouver Book Award. His essays and book reviews have appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Globe & Mail*.



Greenwood, his most recent novel, was also longlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize. Rights to the novel have been sold in seven countries.

A former carpenter and homeless shelter worker, Christie divides his time between Victoria, British Columbia, and Galiano Island, where he lives with his wife and two sons in a timber frame house that he built himself.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FROM AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL BOOK CLUB

1. Within the book, each character's relationship with nature or perhaps trees specifically, might be seen to ultimately reflect the essence of the character and how they experience and understand the world around them. For example, Everett finds solitude and security among the trees, whilst Harris experiences resentment. Describe each character that we encounter throughout the book and their relationship to nature. How did this affect how they spoke, acted, experienced, and ultimately informed decisions?
 - a. What is your relationship to nature? Did you relate to any of the ways the characters in the books felt? If so, which ones and why?
2. Willow tells Liam that the only teaching she's ever wanted was for Liam to look to nature with reverence. When is a time that you had a powerful moment where you found yourself finding respect for nature, forest, trees, etc.?
3. On page 250, readers receive insight into life before the Great Withering and the attempt to slow its impact. Temple explains the various tricks that farmers tried but ultimately states, "The dust blew in anyway. Little did those old fools know: green things are all that keeps the land and sky from trading places." What did you take this to mean?
4. If the hit movie *Don't Look Up* taught us anything, it is that organizing ourselves and not leaving it solely to the self-interested and powerful, is humanity's best chance for survival. This can be seen when Jake tries to alert Davidoff to the issues with trees within 'the Cathedral'. Discuss with your group the similarities between the ways the Mainland government speaks of, and then deals with, The Great Withering within

the book, in relation to the how governments address (or fail to address) climate change and the climate crisis today?

5. The climate crisis is a manifestation of deep-rooted injustices. It disproportionately affects people already made vulnerable by intersecting forms of discrimination and structural inequalities. For example, the right to adequate housing has been violated through deforestation, and/or the right to health is threatened by failure to tackle air pollution. Within the book, Greenwood expresses, “If it’s true that the United States was born of slavery and revolutionary justice...then surely her own country was born of a cruel, grasping indifference to its Indigenous peoples and the natural world. We who rip out the Earth’s most irreplaceable resources, sell them cheaply to anyone with a nickel in their pocket, then wake up and do it all over again...”

In the post-Withering era, this wealth inequality is further perpetuated by those who get to enjoy nature and the remaining forest within Canada and those left to destitution. Discuss the ways this state of affairs parallels our relationship to nature within Canada today, due to colonization and capitalism.

- a. Another good representation of this could be seen in the race to seek energy transition

minerals to power EV cars or electronics. How do we reconcile the desire for these consumer goods (which is being spun as ‘green and clean’) with the impacts we know are caused by the extraction of raw materials?

6. What did you think of Jake’s ultimate decision in the end? What would you have done? Would you do anything differently?
 - a. The books weaves in interesting themes of generational impacts, pulling together a story of how Jake came to be where she is, through the lives and experiences of many before her. Do you believe the stories that got readers to this point, ultimately informed Jake’s decision?
7. A powerful Chinese proverb in the book encapsulates the ever-present need to make small, yet imperative individual decisions to properly protect our Earth by stating, “The best time to plant a tree is always twenty years ago. And the second-best time is always now.”

What are some things that you might do now and, in the future, to better treat and properly protect our planet from climate change? What are some changes you’d like to see instituted in your schools, workplaces, places of worship, etc. that can further protect the planet?



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BACKGROUND



Student climate strike 15 March 2019, London, England.

IT'S TIME TO RECOGNIZE THE RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

There is no doubt that humanity is facing an environmental crisis of unprecedented proportions. Climate change, biodiversity loss, ecosystems degradation and toxic pollution of air, water and soil are dramatic and interconnected processes that severely impact the enjoyment of human rights for billions of people, and particularly of those marginalized and facing discrimination.

The crisis affects many human rights; including the right to life, health, food, water, housing, and security. While all of us are affected by climate change, poorer countries and disadvantaged communities will be hit the hardest. Climate change compounds and magnifies existing inequalities, and its effects will continue to grow and worsen over time, creating ruin for current and future generations.

In the light of this emergency, it is imperative that the human right of all to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment is globally recognized. The continued failure of governments to act on climate change in the face of overwhelming scientific evidence

may well be the biggest inter-generational human rights violation in history.

Momentum for the global recognition of the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment is growing. In 2021, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a resolution recognizing the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. In doing so, it acknowledged that the enjoyment of human rights depends on the environment we live in. If the planet suffers, so do we. Governments that fail to protect the planet and continue to support environmentally destructive industries - like fossil fuels, coal, and other large-scale climate-disrupting projects - are leading what amounts to an assault on human rights on a massive scale.

We need Canada to now recognize in policy and practice the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. We need it to end fossil fuel subsidies and transition quickly to radical investment in clean public transit, retraining and good jobs for oil and gas workers, and financially helping towns, cities and agricultural belts implement climate adaptation strategies.

This is why Amnesty International will continue to work with a variety of coalitions and groups in key countries to mount pressure against governments and corporations which are obstructing progress. This includes supporting young people, Indigenous peoples, trade unions and affected communities, to demand a rapid and just transition to a zero-carbon economy that leaves no one behind.

Amnesty International has built on its work supporting environmental defenders to facilitate the work of those protecting land, food, communities and people against climate impacts, extraction and expansion of fossil fuels and deforestation. Defending the civic space for information, participation and mobilization also contributes towards promoting more progressive climate policies. We draw inspiration from the courageous climate defenders of the Americas, like Bernardo Caal Xol, Jani Silva, the Guapinol Water Defenders, Berta Caceres and Chile's Mujeres Modatima.

Climate change will continue to harm all of us unless governments take action.

TAKE ACTION

AS PART OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S CAMPAIGN **#NoMoreKillings** launched in October 2019, the talented street artist from Mexico City Sego created a mural in honor of the brave environmental rights defenders who fight to protect our natural heritage. The piece entitled "The Power of Roots", pays special tribute to people like Julián Carrillo, a Rarámuri Indigenous rights defender from the Sierra Tarahumara, in Chihuahua, killed on 24 October 2018, whose case is also included in the BRAVE campaign.



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SOLIDARITY WITH THREATENED CLIMATE PROTESTORS IS NEEDED NOW MORE THAN EVER!

More than a thousand environmental and land defenders have been killed since the Paris Agreement was signed, many of them Indigenous defenders. Thousands more defenders have been threatened with death, attacked, or unjustly thrown in jail to silence them. Nowhere is the situation more dangerous than in countries of Latin America, with Indigenous, racialized and women defenders at particular risk.

“Solidarity is important. When Canadians speak out, it carries a lot of weight...”

— BERTHA ZÚNIGA CÁCERES, coordinator of Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH)

Check out the climate protectors Activism Guide to learn how you can get more involved in working in solidarity with climate activists doing essential, yet often dangerous, work around the world.

Solidarity action is vital to support those whose efforts protect us all.



Click here to view the climate protectors Activism Guide.

Look to your values and change the world with a gift in your Will



“I invite you all to look to your values... make sure they are expressed through future generations. The opportunity to add my voice to millions of others working for justice and dignity for all humanity is what makes me feel good about supporting Amnesty’s work for generations to come.”

You have the power to contribute towards a future world that reflects your personal values through your will.

If you would like more information about how to remember Amnesty International in your will, please contact Hala Al-Madi at **613-744-7667 ext 223**, or at halmadi@amnesty.ca or you can also visit us at: www.amnesty.ca/legacy

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