



Our Endless Numbered Days: A Novel

By Claire Fuller

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Part fairy-tale, part magic, yet always savagely realistic Claire Fuller's **haunting and powerful debut** **Our Endless Numbered Days** **will appeal to fans of Eowyn Ivey's The Snow Child and Christian Baker Kline's Orphan Train .**

Peggy Hillcoat is eight years old when her survivalist father, James, takes her from their home in London to a remote hut in the woods and tells her that the rest of the world has been destroyed. Deep in the wilderness, Peggy and James make a life for themselves. They repair the hut, bathe in water from the river, hunt and gather food in the summers and almost starve in the harsh winters. They mark their days only by the sun and the seasons. When Peggy finds a pair of boots in the forest and begins a search for their owner, she unwittingly begins to unravel the series of events that brought her to the woods and, in doing so, discovers the strength she needs to go back to the home and mother she thought she'd lost. After Peggy's return to civilization, her mother learns the truth of her escape, of what happened to James on the last night out in the woods, and of the secret that Peggy has carried with her ever since.

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Our Endless Numbered Days: A Novel By Claire Fuller Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 9 Up—In 1970s London, eight-year-old Peggy Hillcoat lives somewhat contentedly with her survivalist father and her concert pianist mother. When her mother goes on tour, her father abruptly kidnaps Peggy, taking her to a German forest. He claims that the world has ended and that her mother, along with every other human on Earth, has died. She resigns herself to a life in the cold, remote woods with her mentally unstable father, little food, and no medical care, not resurfacing until 1985. This is a dark but poignant coming-of-age story reminiscent of Geraldine McCaughrean's *The White Darkness* (HarperCollins, 2007). Told from the perspective of now 17-year-old Peggy, the narrative is lyrical and, aside from a slow start, well paced. British author Fuller's debut novel is solid and sets her firmly among her young adult author peers. **VERDICT** This gripping tale will be well received by fans of survivalist fiction and psychological thrillers.—Pilar Okeson, Allen-Stevenson School Library, New York City

Review

"...the book is almost impossible to put down. Fuller weaves a hypnotic intensity of detail into her narrative that gives every lie the feel of truth, like the soundless piano with weighted keys that Peggy's father painstakingly crafts out of a plank pried loose from the cabin wall. She and her father sing the notes as she plays the silent instrument, reading from a piece of Ute's old sheet music. It's an elegant metaphor for the book's heartbreakingly central question: What's worse — a mother's absence or a father's lies?"

—*The Chicago Tribune*

"Like Emma Donoghue's *Room*, Fuller's thoroughly immersive debut takes child kidnapping to a whole new level of disturbing. . . . Fuller alternates Peggy's time in the forest with chapters that take place [nine years later] in 1985 after she reunites with her mother—building **an ever-present sense of foreboding and allowing readers to piece together well-placed clues.**"

—*Publishers Weekly*

"Fuller's **compelling coming-of-age story**, narrated from the perspective of Peggy's return to civilization, is delivered in translucent prose. [...] this is **memorable first work from a talent to watch.**"

—*Kirkus*

"The saga of Peggy's struggle in the face of prolonged trauma is vividly told, while **Fuller's careful pacing gradually reveals the mystery of a life that is as sympathetic as it is haunting.**"

—*Booklist*

"Standout debut [...] Don't let this gripping story pass you by."

—*Library Journal*

"A dark but poignant coming-of-age story."

—*School Library Journal, Starred Review*

"A post-apocalyptic debut with a twist. An obsessive survivalist abducts his daughter in this **gripping family drama.**"

—*The Guardian*

"Our Endless Numbered Days is inspired by fairytales; the story's menace is more *Hansel and Gretel* than that of a parent's real-life horror story. Peggy, a young girl, is stolen away by her survivalist father to "die Hütte", a ramshackle cottage in a European forest, and tells her that the end of the world has come, that her mother has died and they are the only survivors. [...] Fuller handles the tension masterfully in this **grown-up thriller of a fairytale, full of clues, questions and intrigue.**"

—*The Times*

"Fuller evokes the natural world's beauty and brutality as her characters endure nine torrid years in the forest and the novel reaches a sinister conclusion."

—*The Independent*

Claire Fuller's bewitching debut takes us from the cosy confines of a London home to the dark heart of the forest, following the breadcrumb trail of eight-year-old Peggy Hillcoat. [...] Like all good fairy tales, this is a book **filled with suspense and revelation**, light and shadow and the overwhelming feeling that nothing is quite as it seems in the Hillcoats' lives. **It's spellbinding, scary stuff.**"

—*The Sunday Express*

"It's simplicity is deceptive—the story is compelling and is driven with themes of control and endurance.

And its ending's a jolter. A thoroughly brilliant and disturbing debut."

—*The Sunday Sport*

"[R]ealistic, harrowing, immersive and poetic. . . . *Our Endless Numbered Days* is an absorbing debut from a talented writer. Its ever-present sense of dread and compelling — but not always reliable — narrator make for a fast-paced, satisfying, **page-turning read...**"

—*Minneapolis Star Tribune*

"In this astonishing debut novel, Fuller succeeds on every level, from the aching, gorgeous sentences that make you stop, reread, repeat, to the plot twist that makes *Gone Girl* look like a plot-by-number stock formula. Peggy's journey is an epic you'll be replaying like a favorite song in your mind for weeks, and the ending deserves an extra hour blocked out for book club. **An ovation-worthy triumph that is un-missable, inescapable, and unforgettable.**"

—*Bustle*

"...haunting, suspenseful and deftly written warning of the dangers of being led into the forest—and a **memorably chilling first novel.**"

—*Metro*

"You don't really know what's going on in this **surreal psychological thriller** until the OMG-worthy denouement. [...] **Prepare yourself.**"

—*Flare*

"Compulsive, charming, sinister...**could well become a classic.**"

—*Stylist Magazine*

"As disturbing as it is at times delightful, and as beautiful as it is brutal, *Our Endless Numbered Days* should do for Claire Fuller what *Room* did for Emma Donoghue. **It's a darkly fantastic first novel I recommend you read immediately.**"

—*Tor.com*

"An astonishing debut. A beautifully crafted and intriguing story."

—Litro

"An auspicious debut, an unforgettable psychological thriller with one of the most haunting unreliable narrators I have ever encountered."

—Largehearted Boy

"This powerful debut novel explores the strength and resourcefulness of the human spirit when faced with unimaginable circumstances. . . . The descriptions transport the reader straight to the wilderness, from which they may never return. **This novel will stay with the reader long after the last page is finished.**"

—VOYA

"Once I picked up the book, I couldn't put it down."

—Rosemary and Reading Glasses

"It is only when Fuller, like a master magician, sweeps the cloak away in the final pages that we see how deftly she has rearranged the objects of Peggy's life. And **like any spellbound audience, we are left shocked and surprised.**"

—Gilmore Guide to Books

"Our Endless Numbered Days by Claire Fuller is **an illuminating, devastating and completely unforgettable début novel.** Highly recommended."

—Pamreader

"Flitting between Peggy's past and present, **Fuller's denouement is perfectly planned, parting the curtains with mathematical precision until the suspicious reader's jaw drops in horror.**"

—We Love This Book

"So much of the initial press on this book uses words like 'haunting,' 'beautiful,' 'breathtaking,' and normally that kind of hype makes me cringe. But it's all true. *Our Endless Numbered Days* is all of those things, and more. You'll ache for Peggy, and the way she's been deluded, especially when everything is revealed at the end of the story. **All I'll say is: plot twist. You won't be disappointed.**"

—Keysmash

"Our Endless Numbered Days is a dark novel of the most enjoyable kind and, at the time of writing, the best book I've read this year."

—Shiny New Books

"Claire Fuller is a truly exceptional writer, and this book is quite unforgettable."

—Being Anne

"Graciously written and capriciously imagined, *Our Endless Numbered Days* holds up a magnifying lens to the human spirit and deftly captures both its fragility and its resilience. The **brilliant ending**, like the best endings do, casts new light on all that comes before it."

—Cathy Marie Buchanan, author of *The Painted Girls*

"I finished this book and turned right back to the first page to start it again. Like the wilderness into which Claire Fuller's characters disappear, *Our Endless Numbered Days* is rigged with barbs and poisons, tricks and tragedies. **It's weird and wild and sometimes terrifying, but it's also beautiful and heartbreakin**

and breathlessly alive."

—Amy Stewart, author of *New York Times* Bestseller *The Drunken Botanist*

"This young girl's harrowing experience growing up in the wilderness and living only with her father establishes that what's more terrifying than the perils of nature is being made captive by the ideals of one's parents. The lasting impression of *Our Endless Numbered Days*, which gracefully seesaws back and forth between two different time periods, however, is not one of how horrid an experience can be, but how resourceful and resilient the human psyche can become in order to survive. Fuller eschews the conventional means of providing labored explanations of emotions, and in its place deftly relies on the power of description to invoke genuine feeling. **The result is beautiful. It will keep you turning the pages, and long afterwards it will keep you turning over in your mind the events in this haunting story.**"

—Yannick Murphy, author of *The Call* and *This Is the Water*

"Our Endless Numbered Days is suspenseful, utterly riveting, and as dark as midnight in the forest."

—Rebecca Hunt, author of *Everland* and *Mr. Chartwell*

"[*Our Endless Numbered Days*] is indeed a **remarkable first novel**, I was much impressed by the conviction of the child's eye view, the vivid climate and the power of the narrative."

—Penelope Lively, author of *Dancing Fish and Ammonites*

"Disturbing, poignant, compelling, beautiful — these are just a few words that come to mind when describing Claire Fuller's debut novel, *Our Endless Numbered Days*. In 1970s London, eight-year-old Peggy Hillcoat lives with her concert pianist mother, Ute, and her father, James, an obsessive survivalist. After months of training and drills, James takes Peggy away to live alone with him in the forest, telling her that the rest of the world has been destroyed. **Fuller's striking prose and description of Peggy's ordeal and resilience results in a page-turner that is hard to put down. Rarely has a novel captured our attention so fully and immediately..."**

—Powell's Books

About the Author

Claire Fuller's debut novel, *Our Endless Numbered Days*, was published by Tin House in 2015 and went on to win the Desmond Elliott prize in the UK and was a finalist in the ABA Indies Choice Award, an IndieNext pick, and chosen as a Goodreads Debut Spotlight.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Martha Williams:

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Tom Tucker:

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