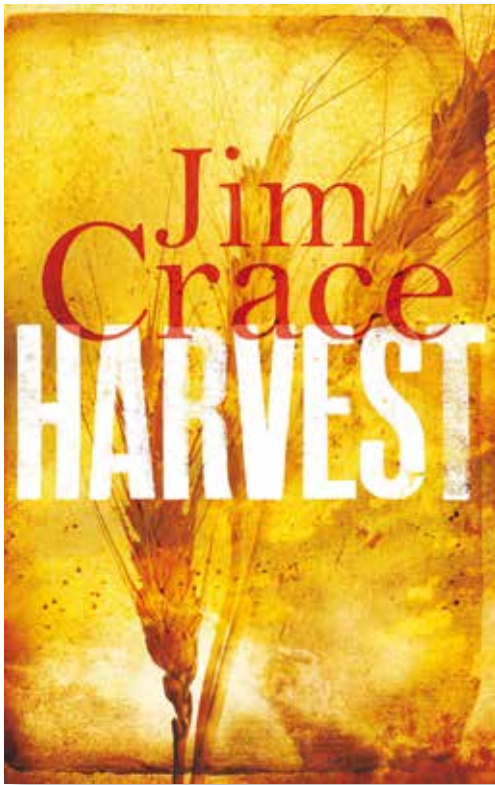


The Man
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2013

Reader's Guide



Other novels by Jim Crace

All That Follows (2010)

On Heat (2008)

The Pesthouse (2007)

Six (2003)

The Devil's Larder (2001)

Being Dead (1999)

Quarantine (1997)

The Slow Digestions of the Night (1995)

Signals of Distress (1994)

Arcadia (1992)

The Gift of Stones (1988)

Continent (1986)

Harvest Jim Crace

Picador

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About the author

Jim Crace was born in Hertfordshire in 1946. He read English Literature at London University and worked for VSO in Sudan as an assistant in Sudanese educational television.

He began writing fiction in 1974 and his first story, *Annie, California Plates*, was published by the *New Review*. He became Writer in Residence at the Midlands Arts Centre and in 1983 he directed the first Birmingham Festival of Readers and Writers.

His first book, *Continent* (1986), won the Whitbread First Novel Award, the *Guardian* Fiction Prize and the David Higham Prize for Fiction. His fourth novel, *Signals of Distress* (1994) won the Winifred Holtby Memorial Prize. *Quarantine* (1997) was shortlisted for the Booker Prize for Fiction, won the Whitbread Novel Award and was shortlisted for the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award. *Being Dead* (1999), won the National Book Critics' Circle Fiction Award (USA). He was awarded the E. M. Forster Award by the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1992 and became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1999.

Harvest

As late summer steals in and the final pearls of barley are gleaned, a village comes under threat. A trio of outsiders – two men and a dangerously magnetic woman – arrives on the woodland borders and puts up a make-shift camp. That same night, the local manor house is set on fire.

Over the course of seven days, Walter Thirsk sees his hamlet unmade: the harvest blackened by smoke and fear, the new arrivals cruelly punished, and his neighbours held captive on suspicion of witchcraft. But something even darker is at the heart of his story, and he will be the only man left to tell it...

Discussion points

Walter Thirsk is absent from all the key scenes in *Harvest*. What does this say about him and his connection with the community?

Although *Harvest* is unmistakably set in England, sometime in the 16th century, why do you think that Jim Crace is careful to avoid giveaway place names and dates?

How and in what ways do the rhythms of the novel follow the rhythms of the agricultural seasons: planting in the spring and reaping at the end of summer, and keeping stores to survive the winter months?

How does the absence of the female stranger, who manages to escape from the village before being raped, become a powerful presence in the rest of the novel?

Walter Thirsk is a complex creation; he has been described as self-examining, self-admonishing, powerless, and unreliable. What was your impression of Walter, did your view of him change as the novel progresses?

Themed reading

JM Coetzee *Waiting for the Barbarians*
WG Hoskins *The Making of the English Landscape*

Useful links

[Interview with Jim Crace](#)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/14/entertainment-us-books-authors-crace-idUSBRE91DOLA2013O214>

[The Paris Review interview](#)

<http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/122/the-art-of-fiction-no-179-jim-crace>