

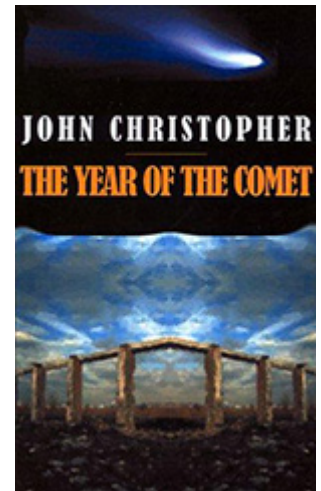
Darryl's Library – Book Reviews

Over 200 book reviews by Darryl Sloan

JANUARY 16, 2015 by DARRYL

The Year of the Comet by John Christopher

This is the first novel by science fiction author John Christopher (although he did publish a short story collection before this), who is most famous for *The Death of Grass* (<https://darrylslibrary.wordpress.com/2006/12/18/the-death-of-grass-by-john-christopher/>) and *The Tripods* (<https://darrylslibrary.wordpress.com/2006/12/18/the-tripods-by-john-christopher/>). He wrote a number of disaster novels, and the title of the book under review would lead you to believe that this is one of them. But it's not. The story is set in a post-capitalist future where countries have been replaced by huge corporations known as "managerials." They have names like Telecom, Atomics, etc. Each managerial provides an essential role in the running of the world. The life of a seemingly average scientist called Charles (our protagonist) is thrown into chaos when he finds that his research into diamonds is being very closely monitored. He is soon tossed into a confusing world of kidnapping, murder, and conspiracy. His seemingly unimportant research appears to be of immense value to the various managerials, for reasons that prove to be world transforming. In the background of the story we have the Cometeers, a curious religious cult who are focused on the slow approach of a comet to earth.



For a novel written in the 1950s, the story is quite prophetic in its prediction of the rise of television into a forum of banal entertainment that people consume in a zombie-like fashion. It could also be argued that the replacement of countries by corporations is a legitimate possibility. We already have vast multi-national corporations that are free to operate outside of any one particular country's laws.

As entertainment, the novel was average. It definitely had its moments of tension and mystery, but there was a distinct lack of conflict going on for much of the story and I felt my attention waning. It looks as if Christopher had some political ideas he wanted to express, and he used a fictional narrative as a vehicle for that.

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