

***When She Woke* by Hillary Jordan 2011, Algonquin Books 341 pages**

Hannah Payne is a devoted daughter and a faithful member of her church. She has built her life around service to her family, her church and the needy in her community. She is also a red, guilty of murder.

In Hannah's America, convicted felons are not imprisoned, they are chromed. Chromes' skin color is genetically altered to match the class of their crime. Petty criminals are yellow, pedophiles are blue and murderers are red. Chromes are released into society, where they struggle to survive in a hostile and prejudiced world for the duration of their sentence.

Hannah has been convicted of the murder of her unborn child, and firmly believes that she deserves her sentence. The pregnancy was the result of an affair with her pastor, a powerful religious leader. Determined to protect his good name, Hannah arranged to have an illegal abortion. Once caught, she continued to refuse to reveal her lover's name, despite the additional years on her sentence.

For the first 30 days of her sentence, Hannah is imprisoned in solitary confinement, her every movement broadcast to millions of viewers in a sinister form of reality television. As awful as confinement is, though, the true implications of her status as a red don't sink in until Hannah is released.

Hannah's mother has disowned her. Her sister's husband has forbidden contact. She has no job and no home. Her brokenhearted father is doing the best he can to find a safe place for his daughter to live out her sentence. The man she loves is the newly-appointed U.S. Secretary of Faith and out of her reach forever. A chip embedded in her flesh allows anyone with access to a computer to track her location at all times.

At first, the Straight Path Center, a halfway house for newly-released chromes, seems to be the perfect sanctuary. Her stay there will give her father the time he needs to make arrangements for Hannah. The Center even promises to help Hannah find her way back to God through hard work and penance.

Things at the Center are not as they seem, however, and Hannah soon finds herself on the streets again. Desperate, she turns to her sister for help, unaware that her brother-in-law is a new member of The Fist, a violent organization that hunts and kills chromes for sport.

Rescued by a revolutionary organization that smuggles reds to Canada, Hannah finds herself on a dangerous path of self-discovery. Along the way, she must question everything she believes to be true in order to find herself.

This fast-paced, powerful and moving fable drew me in immediately and kept me turning the pages! I read it in one afternoon, because I couldn't put it down!

When She Woke is a deeply disturbing and creative re-imagining of Nathaniel Hawthorn's *The Scarlet Letter*. Author Hillary Jordan has penned an all-too-believable portrait of a dystopian society in the not-too-distant future, where the line between church and state has been eradicated, and personal freedom is non-existent.

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