

The Beach

By Alex Garland

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The Beach By Alex Garland

The irresistible novel that was adapted into a major motion picture starring Leonardo DiCaprio.

The Khao San Road, Bangkok -- first stop for the hordes of rootless young Westerners traveling in Southeast Asia. On Richard's first night there, in a low-budget guest house, a fellow traveler slashes his wrists, bequeathing to Richard a meticulously drawn map to "the Beach."

The Beach, as Richard has come to learn, is the subject of a legend among young travelers in Asia: a lagoon hidden from the sea, with white sand and coral gardens, freshwater falls surrounded by jungle, plants untouched for a thousand years. There, it is rumored, a carefully selected international few have settled in a communal Eden.

Haunted by the figure of Mr. Duck -- the name by which the Thai police have identified the dead man -- and his own obsession with Vietnam movies, Richard sets off with a young French couple to an island hidden away in an archipelago forbidden to tourists. They discover the Beach, and it is as beautiful and idyllic as it is reputed to be. Yet over time it becomes clear that Beach culture, as Richard calls it, has troubling, even deadly, undercurrents.

Spellbinding and hallucinogenic, *The Beach* by Alex Garland -- both a national bestseller and his debut -- is a highly accomplished and suspenseful novel that fixates on a generation in their twenties, who, burdened with the legacy of the preceding generation and saturated by popular culture, long for an unruined landscape, but find it difficult to experience the world firsthand.

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The Beach By Alex Garland Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review
In our ever-shrinking world, where popular Western culture seems to have infected every nation on the planet, it is hard to find even a small niche of unspoiled land--forget searching for pristine islands or continents. This is the situation in Alex Garland's debut novel, *The Beach*. Human progress has reduced Eden to a secret little beach near Thailand. In the tradition of grand adventure novels, Richard, a rootless traveler rambling around Thailand on his way somewhere else, is given a hand-drawn map by a madman who calls himself Daffy Duck. He and two French travelers set out on a journey to find this paradise.

What makes this a truly satisfying novel is the number of levels on which it operates. On the surface it's a fast-paced adventure novel; at another level it explores why we search for these utopias, be they mysterious lost continents or small island communes. Garland weaves a gripping and thought-provoking narrative that suggests we are, in fact, such products of our Western culture that we cannot help but pollute and ultimately destroy the very sanctuary we seek

From Publishers Weekly
Garland's amphetamine-paced first novel plunks some young European expats down on a remote island in the Gulf of Thailand. There, tired of the prepackaged experience available to them in the West, they try to create their own paradise. The narrator is an Englishman named Richard. Born in 1974, he has grown up on popular culture and is a fan of video games and Vietnam War movies. While staying at a creaky Bangkok guest house, he finds a carefully drawn map left by his angry, doped-up neighbor, a suicide who called himself Mr. Daffy Duck. The map points the way to a legendary beach where, it's rumored, a few favored international wanderers have settled. Richard's new friends, Etienne and Francoise, convince him to help them find the island. But Richard, inspired by sudden anxiety about Etienne, gives a copy of the map to two American backpackers-an act that later haunts him as keenly as the ghost of Mr. Duck. Richard and his French companions find the island: half is covered by a marijuana plantation patrolled by well-armed guards; the other half consists of a gorgeous beach and forest where a small band of wandering souls live a communal life dominated by a gently despotic woman named Sal. At times, Garland seems to be trying to say something powerful about the perils of desiring a history-less Eden. But his evocations of Vietnam, Richard's hallucinatory chats with the dead Mr. Duck and various other feints in the direction of thematic gravity don't add up to much. Garland is a good storyteller, though, and Richard's nicotine-fueled narrative of how the denizens of the beach see their comity shatter and break into factions is taut with suspense, even if the bloody conclusion offers few surprises. 150,000 first printing; $150,000 ad/promo; foreign rights sold in the U.K., Germany, Holland, Italy.
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From Booklist
Garland, a British writer in his twenties, captures all the cynicism and disjuncture of his generation in his gripping first novel. Richard, his narrator, is a chain-smoking wanderer who has discovered that "escape through travel works," especially travel in Asia. Not alone in his feeling of alienation from the orderly world of family and work, he quickly makes the acquaintance of fellow disaffected travelers in Bangkok, including a guy who goes by the name of Daffy Duck. Mister Duck (as Richard calls him) bequeaths a carefully drawn map to our hero just before committing suicide, and soon Richard and a young French couple he haphazardly befriends are on their way to the Beach, a forbidden island paradise. Bold and naive, they barely survive their journey, or the shock of discovering that the island highlands are covered with fields of marijuana guarded by vicious Thai commandos and that the Beach is home to a motley collection of pot-smoking Euronomads

enmeshed in their own sinister society. Garland is a wonder; he's able to write unrelentingly suspenseful, downright hallucinatory action scenes, then balance them with passages of chillingly accurate psychology. His intensely imagined tale is, on one level, a brilliant update of *Lord of the Flies*, and on another, a wholly original and unsettling depiction of psyches shaped by the bewildering messages of Loony Tunes, *Apocalypse Now*, Nintendo, and the age-old cult of oblivion. *The Beach* has cult status scrawled all over it. *Donna Seaman*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mike Hendrix:

Nowadays reading books become more than want or need but also get a life style. This reading addiction give you lot of advantages. The benefits you got of course the knowledge even the information inside the book that improve your knowledge and information. The details you get based on what kind of reserve you read, if you want drive more knowledge just go with education books but if you want sense happy read one together with theme for entertaining for instance comic or novel. Typically the The Beach is kind of e-book which is giving the reader capricious experience.

Iris Robertson:

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