

BREATHLESS

The Oxygen Apocalypse

Reader's Guide

Breathless is my first sci-fi novel, which discusses the opposite side of the coin to global warming — the decrease of oxygen. It has been a labor of love for 16 years. Though the science may be real (the Earth has actually run out of oxygen in the past) and the glimpse into a possible future frightening, the heart of the story is one of inspiration. ~ Scott Stoll

If you are curious about why I wrote the book and how I structured the book, I suggest you start by reading the preface. You don't have to read it. Actually, most people don't, and modern writing advice tells the author not to put any such walls in front of the reader. If I had taken their advice, the story would have started with chapter 17 — Doomsday. But I fell in love with the background story. The Earth has run out of oxygen in the past, and I really do think it may happen again. Anyway, if you got this far, you'll probably enjoy reading the preface and thinking about the questions below.

Below are some questions that you might enjoy asking yourself or discussing in book club:

- Did you think the science made the story more scary?
- What do the mother and father symbolize? Think big.
- Who do you think is the hero of the story?
- What motifs did you find?
- The story has many layers. As I mention in the preface, on one level, you have what appears to be happening, and on another, you have what's actually happening. What appears to be happening is the characters in this book are struggling to survive in a world without air. What do you think is actually happening? Another way to phrase this is the action story and the heart of the story. What do you think is the heart of the story?
- Most modern stories are simply action stories, but Breathless also has a premise, a driving question that is being explored. What do you think that question is?
- You probably know the golden rule: Do unto others as you would have done unto yourself. Arguably, the Platinum Rule is better: Do unto others as they would want to be done to them. Breathless attempts to come up with an even better rule to govern society. Do no harm. And by extension of that: Contribute more than you take. Do you think this rule would work?
- I included lots of tributes to some of my favorite science fiction books and movies. Did you find any?

Your Questions:

Fun quick questions:

- What one word do I never use in the main text of the book except for one long drawn-out time that had a double entendre?
- What is the boy on the cover looking at?
- What was the shooting star in chapter 49?
- Name the prominent constellation on the front cover?
- Scott had many influences for this book and there are direct and vague references to about 50 classic apocalypse books, movies and TV shows.

More resources online

Visit the Breathless bonus page for some fun bonus material, to learn how I made the book, more about the science of oxygen depletion. And, I hope to run a contest. If you answered all the questions, you already have a head start.

- <https://scottstoll.com/breathless/bonus/>

A friendly reminder

If you enjoyed this book, or even if you didn't, please leave a review online. It helps people find a book they might love. And it helps me write more and better books. Visit Amazon:

- <https://www.amazon.com/review/create-review?asin=B0CL921TS8>

Thanks again!

I hope you enjoyed the book. If you have any questions or comments, I love to hear from my fans. Visit my website to contact me. And, if you want updates on new books and adventures, please join my newsletter.

- <https://scottstoll.com/subscribe-to-my-newsletter/>

Thanks for riding alongside me,
Scott

