



The Red Hourglass: Lives of the Predators

Gordon Grice

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Snake venom that digests human flesh. A building cleared of every living thing by a band of tiny spiders. An infant insect eating its living prey from within, saving the vital organs for last. These are among the deadly feats of natural engineering you'll witness in *The Red Hourglass*, prize-winning author Gordon Grice's masterful, poetic, often dryly funny exploration of predators he has encountered around his rural Oklahoma home.

Grice is a witty and intrepid guide through a world where mating ends in cannibalism, where killers possess toxins so lethal as to defy our ideas of a benevolent God, where spider remains, scattered like "the cast-off coats of untidy children," tell a quiet story of violent self-extermination. It's a world you'll recognize despite its exotic strangeness--the world in which we live. Unabashedly stepping into the mix, Grice abandons his role as objective observer with beguiling dark humor--collecting spiders and other vermin, decorating a tarantula's terrarium with dollhouse furniture, or forcing a battle between captive insects because he deems one "too stupid to live."

Kill. Eat. Mate. Die. Charting the simple brutality of the lives of these predators, Grice's starkly graceful essays guide us toward startling truths about our own predatory nature. *The Red Hourglass* brings us face to fanged face with the inadequacy of our distinctions between normal and abnormal, dead and alive, innocent and evil.

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