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**Monday's Reviews Today: Millet's Sixth & Hayes' 'Anatomy'**

In Lydia Millet's "brilliant" sixth novel, *How the Dead Dream*, the author focuses on a wealthy, but lonely, L.A. real estate developer haunted by old family ties who develops an unfortunate predilection for breaking into zoos to free caged animals. The hero's journey into the wild that follows "while redolent of *Heart of Darkness* and *Don Quixote*, takes readers to a place entirely Millet's own, leavened by very funny asides."

**\*How the Dead Dream**

Lydia Millet. Counterpoint, \$24 (256p) ISBN 978-1-59376-184-4

Millet proves no less lyrical, haunting or deliciously absurd in her brilliant sixth novel than in her fifth, the acclaimed *Oh Pure & Radiant Heart*. As a boy, T. keeps his distance from others, including his loving but vacant parents, preferring to explore his knack for turning a dollar. Before long, he's a wealthy but lonely young real estate developer in L.A. Just after he adopts, on impulse, a dog from the pound, his mother shows up and announces that T.'s father has left her. His mother, increasingly erratic, moves in; meanwhile, T. finally meets and falls in love with Beth, a nice girl who understands him, but a cruel twist of fate soon leaves him alone again. As his mother continues to unravel, T. finds unexpected consolation in endangered animals at the zoo, and he starts breaking into pens after hours to be closer to them. The jungle quest that results, while redolent of *Heart of Darkness* and *Don Quixote*, takes readers to a place entirely Millet's own, leavened by very funny asides. At once an involving character study and a stunning meditation on loss—planetary and otherwise—Millet's latest unfolds like a beautiful, disturbing dream. (*Jan.*)

**BOOKLIST**

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T. is so devoted to earning money as a Los Angeles-based real-estate developer that he is content with his antiseptically solitary life until he is unmoored by a cascade of disasters. His mother loses her grip on reality after his father's abrupt defection. T.'s luxury desert subdivision has hastened the demise of an endangered species, and when T. finally falls in love, she, too, is lost. T.'s grief blasts open the doors of perception, and he becomes cosmically attuned to the suffering of animals. Strategizing like a solo commando, he breaks into zoos in the dead of night to sit with the animals, many the last in their line. In a work just as startling, powerful, and significant as her brilliantly inventive *Oh Pure and Radiant Heart* (2005), Millet, a writer of encompassing empathy and imaginative lyricism, and a satirist of great wit and heart, takes readers on an intelligently conceived and devastating journey into the heart of extinction. Millet's extraordinary leap of a novel warns us that as the splendor and mystery of the natural world is replaced by the human-made, our species faces a lonely and spiritually impoverished future.