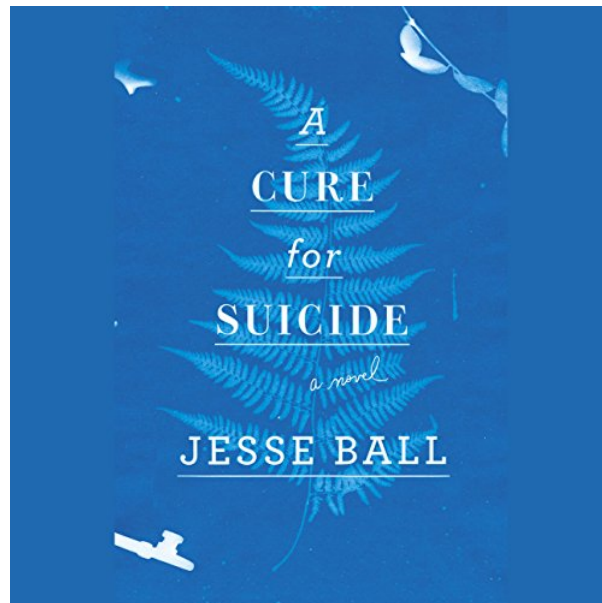
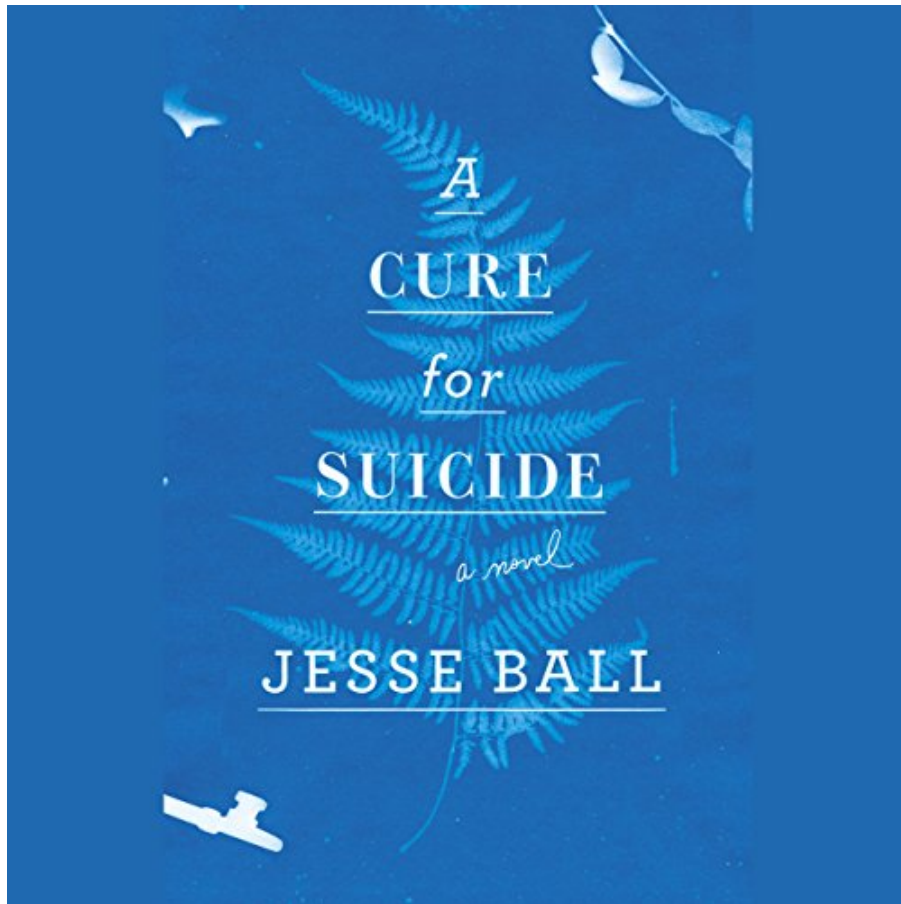


# A CURE FOR SUICIDE: A NOVEL BY JESSE BALL



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# A CURE FOR SUICIDE: A NOVEL BY JESSE BALL PDF

Long-Listed for the National Book Award

From the author of *Silence Once Begun*, a beguiling new novel about a man starting over at the most basic level and the strange woman who insinuates herself into his life and memory.

A man and a woman have moved into a small house in a small village. The woman is an "examiner", the man her "claimant". The examiner is both doctor and guide, charged with teaching the claimant a series of simple functions: This is a chair, this is a fork, this is how you meet people. She makes notes in her journal about his progress: He is showing improvement, yet his dreams are troubling. One day the examiner brings the claimant to a party, where he meets Hilda, a charismatic but volatile woman whose surprising assertions throw everything the claimant has learned into question. What is this village? Why is he here? And who is Hilda?

A fascinating novel of love, illness, despair, and betrayal, *A Cure for Suicide* is the most captivating novel yet from one of our most audacious and original young writers.

- Sales Rank: #109020 in Audible
- Published on: 2015-11-17
- Released on: 2015-11-17
- Format: Unabridged
- Original language: English
- Running time: 467 minutes

Most helpful customer reviews

18 of 19 people found the following review helpful.

"We can provide you with an unspecific life."

By Jill I. Shtulman

About halfway through Jesse Ball's latest work of experimental fiction, his character says this: "You must listen to stories not to understand, but merely to be human."

Indeed, it's difficult to totally understand what's going on in this peculiar yet strangely enticing novel with its Orwellian undertones. We do know this: an unnamed man – called Claimant – awakes in a place called "Gentlest Village", where he is isolated with a woman called "Examiner", whose sole mission is to teach him about the fundamentals of living. Eventually, both take on false names as he learns to "engage with the cacophony of objects." They then move on to the next village in the chain, a village that's remarkably similar yet just a bit different...and the process begins again.

The prose itself mimics the progression of the story. For the first 158 pages, the content is deceptively spare and very exacting, with ample white space. Then everything changes suddenly in the chapter entitled "A Place You Go Last" – 50 pages of dense, unbroken type in a breathless and heady style, reaching a

crescendo. It almost reads like a musical composition-of-sorts.

So what is it all about? Certainly, it's about the nature of self and identity and our place in the flow of life. It's also about memory: "We think of memory as a redeeming thing. We built monuments that appear to be monuments to this person or that person or this struggle or that, but really, do you know what they are? They are monuments to memory itself." Who are we, indeed, when memories are stolen from us or recreated...or entirely erased? What happens when free-will and individuality are taken from us to save us from ourselves? When the Claimant says, "...I think we are all alike," the Examiner answers, "We may be. But feeling we might be – that is what is most important."

Does it all succeed? My answer is "yes." And "no." By using the criterion from my first paragraph, it DOES succeed. The book is thoughtfully written and downright haunting; it does help us readers "to be human". The dense type section does not bring with it the payoff I was hoping for, which was simply this: who was the Claimant before (hints are given, but not nearly enough to satisfy me as a reader). I recommend the book for readers who enjoy a challenging read from a writer in command of his material.

12 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

Twilight Zone- Special Service or The Truman Show quality but dark, very dark

By Miss Barbara

Silence Once Begun by Jesse Ball is a book that has resonated with me since I read it almost a year ago. I looked forward to this new offering and, like the former, it left me exhausted after reading it. Jesse requires a lot from his readers. They're not going to get a story that falls in their laps. A cure for suicide opens with a man known only as the "claimant" waking in a room with the "examiner" pointing out to him the most rudimentary objects around him: a chair, a fork.

The claimant observes and dreams with most everything spoon-fed to him by the examiner who seems to be nourishing his mind as well as his body. He is in a town called the Gentlest Village where all seems perfect but is it? The reader gets the first hint that all is not as posed when the examiner writes in her report journal: "The integration seems to be working. He speaks to me of his memories as I have invoked them". To this scenario a woman named Hilda is added who fans the flame making him question the mystery at hand.

The first part of the book is allocated to the awakening and learning. The format is loose with lots of empty space between sentences and paragraphs. In the final 20% of the book the claimant meets the Interlocutor and the reader learns the history and background; the reasoning for his being in this jarring situation. In this section there are no paragraph breaks and in some cases no punctuation giving this section a claustrophobic and suffocating feel.

There is a Twilight Zone-Special Service and The Truman Show quality to this story but it is dark. This is not a book for the casual reader as one must invest in the reading. I like Jesse Ball's edgy writing style and give this 4-stars.

12 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

Most of the Book is Suspenseful but Slow. The Final One-Third is a Jumbled Mess.

By RicoTX

This is a unique book in the sense that it tells a story very slowly, revealing a little information at a time. We meet the claimant and the examiner, and there days together unfold in a slow and methodical way. A few things change and we have a new examiner, with the same claimant but he now has a different name (you will understand why in the book). The first 2/3 of the books is easy to read and somewhat suspenseful. It is slow, but there is just enough dialogue to make you want to know what is going to happen.

The final 1/3 of the book is where the train runs off the track. It is completely jumbled, hard to read, and even harder to keep reading enough to care about the dialogue that is taking place - even though it is important to the story. It is almost like someone else wrote the final 1/3 of the book and just filled in some history with whatever they felt was appropriate.

I enjoyed the first 2/3, but the final 1/3 really dragged on and I had to struggle to finish the book because I honestly didn't care about the characters anymore by this point. So, because I enjoyed most of the book, I will give it 3 stars. The final part barely rates 1 star to me.

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