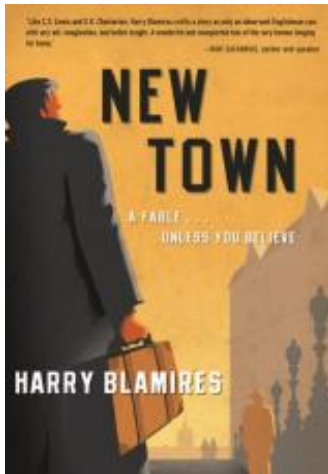


New Town: A Fable

by Harry Blamires



About the Book

Can a man caught between dream and reality choose between the familiar and the unknown? Or is there more to this mission of destiny?

When Bernard Dayman is unexpectedly deposited on the streets of Old Town, he hasn't a clue how he got there or why he's come to this decaying city. But as he learns more about his surroundings, Bernard catches a glimpse of what his life could be--and immediately sets out to achieve his heart's desire.

Soon he encounters an old friend, a long-lost love, and a new flame, all of whom point Bernard in the direction of his quest--to obtain residence in the pristine and undamaged city of New Town. But he's not alone. He's surrounded by dozens of other people wanting to get out of the terrible Old Town. Can they surmount the obstacles that may keep them from a life in a better place? Follow Bernard on his journey of self-discovery and discover for yourself the difference between the dream of heaven and the stuff of earth.

Discussion Guide

1. What basic gap in thinking between Bernard and Dr. Fisher makes their first meeting awkward?
2. In their second meeting, what is it in Bernard's attitude that draws out Dr. Fisher's sympathetic help?
3. What aspects of the collapsing fabric of Old Hertham or Old Town (OT) seem most like aspects of earthly life?
4. What real-life attitudes does Blamires mock in the representation of the conservationists, Professor Simpkins, Len Bolling and the meeting of the Old Hertham Preservation Trust?

5. What additional meaning is conveyed in the author's choice of names such as Old Town (OT) and New Town (NT), Eve, Paradise Green, the Adamases' garden, Habel's farmyard, Eden Fall, the Snake's Head, and by the way Eve wounds her heel?
6. What events and narratives from the New Testament are ridiculed in Len Bollinge's attack on the agencies? How can such mockery appropriately be included in a Christianly based book?
7. Harry Blamires believes strongly that seriousness and humor can be combined. What do you think? Are there points of the story where that can't be so? What are your favorite bits of humor or what moments of seriousness stirred you most?
8. When you draw together the various things said of Christopher Godfrey and the Godfrey Bequest, what picture of him emerges?
9. How do you think the author intends readers to interpret the story told by the agents about the way Old Hertham came to be undermined by the "Old Enemy"?
10. What is conveyed by calling Dr. Fisher's guidebook the work of "Peterstone and Rockcliff"?
11. Marie says: "You can't legislate for an area subject to subsidence as though all the ground were firm." What lesson is in this remark?
12. Eve has a dream that turns her past thinking upside down. To what extent does it constitute a conversion experience?
13. What is the most crucial lesson conveyed to readers by the way Eve acts following her dream and finally obtains a new home?

Author Bio

Harry Blamires is the former dean of arts and sciences at King Alfred's College in Winchester. Tutored in storytelling by C.S. Lewis, Blamires is known for more than thirty theological and English literature books, including WHERE DO WE STAND? and the bestselling THE CHRISTIAN MIND. Blamires lives in the United Kingdom.

Critical Praise

Eighty-nine-year-old Blamires, who has written extensively on English literature and theology, offers an offbeat allegory of heaven and earth. It begins as Bernard Dayman, lying on his deathbed, drifts off into what he imagines is his final sleep, only to enter a protracted dream state in which he encounters a purgatory-like place in the guise of an English village called Old Hertham. During his week in Old Hertham, he encounters an old flame named Eve (whom he once courted at a place called Eden Falls) and her virtuous daughter, Marie. Old Hertham is dominated by the estate agency Godfrey and Son, where the deceased people who "live" in Old Hertham can apply for residency in New Town. Blamires uses these conceits to hammer home the Christian truism that this world is not our home and the more compelling notion that entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven is deceptively simple, provided one's heart is in the right place . . . this book is likely to draw an appreciative audience who will enjoy the challenge of decoding its message.

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