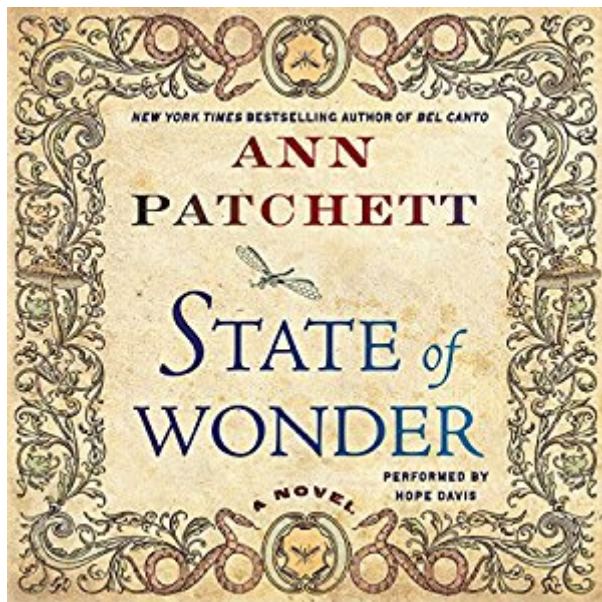


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# State Of Wonder: A Novel



## Synopsis

Ann Patchett raises the bar with *State of Wonder*, a provocative and ambitious novel set deep in the jungle. Research scientist Dr. Marina Singh is sent to Brazil to track down her former mentor, Dr. Annick Swenson, who seems to have disappeared in the while working on an extremely valuable new drug. The last person who was sent to find her died before he could complete his mission. Plagued by trepidation, Marina embarks on an odyssey into the insect-infested jungle in hopes of finding answers to the questions about her friend's death, her company's future, and her own past. Once found, Dr. Swenson is as imperious and uncompromising as ever. But while she is as threatening as anything the jungle has to offer, the greatest sacrifices to be made are the ones Dr. Swenson asks of herself, and will ultimately ask of Marina. *State of Wonder* is a world unto itself, where unlikely beauty stands beside unimaginable loss. It is a tale that leads the listener into the very heart of darkness, and then shows us what lies on the other side.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I found the story engrossing and the characters and setting fascinating. It is the kind of story I expect from Ann Patchett (of whom I am a huge fan) -- it is engrossing and full of unusual but believable characters, the setting is rare but believable, and ethical questions abound. The prose, of course, is beautiful. I could feel the jungle, the river, bugs, plants, snakes -- almost smell it all. I am left not 100% certain of what Dr. Singh chose to do next with her life, but that's OK. One reviewer is certain she went back to the jungle, but I'm not certain -- I can't imagine spending one's entire life in

a place like that, no matter the importance of the work. Ann Patchett has once again told an entirely unique story in a strange setting with unforgettable characters. Highly recommended!!

It's fiction. Don't always look for ration. It's a fascinating adventure near the . There's science, romance and horror in small measures. Did I like this one or *Bel Canto* best? I loved them both.

About halfway through the book I started racing. I am bad this way. If the story is a good one, I consume it like when you get home from work, starving, and there's a bag of potato chips and a glass of wine available. I mean, I snorted it. So I had to go back about halfway and reread it, and without being a spoiler I will say this: It was SO well done, and such a satisfying ending. To read the words of someone who can write that well is a treat, a vacation. Ann Patchett is like a drummer with perfect rhythm, a dancer whose feet never seem to touch the floor. How does she know the pacing and rhythm and exactly what words to say, to effect that kind of an ending without telegraphing, underdoing, or overdoing it? And yet with so much power. Way beyond expertise, it's artistry, and I am grateful to her for the experience.

This novel kept me on my toes. I didn't know what to expect but it kept me so engrossed. I don't want to go into the plot and spoil anything, but this book does exactly what a great book should do. It entertains, provokes, and helps you question some of our core belief systems. One of the best.

I have heard nothing but raves about Ann Patchett's new book *State of Wonder*, and I ordered it expecting it to be one of the best books that I've read all year. I wanted to like this book, and at times, I did enjoy it. But there were also times when I hated it or found it downright tedious. In any case, I'm not sure why so many people loved it so. Emotionally scarred Marina Singh, M.D., Ph.D. is a Minnesota native and pharmaceutical researcher. She is in a secret relationship with her widower-boss, Mr. Fox, CEO of Vogel Pharmaceuticals. Vogel is investing big money in the development of a fertility drug being researched by Dr. Annick Swenson, who has been living among the Lakashi Tribe in the . Swenson was also one of Singh's professors in medical school. When Swenson stops communication with Vogel, Mr. Fox sends Singh's friend and co-worker, Dr. Anders Eckman, to the to investigate. But after a number of months, Swenson sends word back to Vogel that Eckman has died. So Dr. Singh reluctantly agrees to travel to the to find out what really happened to Eckman and also, to spy for Vogel on the work of Dr. Swenson. I found the plot slow in many spots, and unbelievable in others. The women of the Lakashi are able to get pregnant and

have babies into their 60s and 70s. According to Dr. Eckman, "Their eggs aren't aging, do you get that? The rest of the body goes along its path to destruction while the reproductive system stays daisy fresh. This is the end of IVF. No more expense, no more shots that don't end up working, no more donor eggs and surrogates. This is ovum in perpetuity, menstruation everlasting." But how this happens is just plain bizarre. Dr. Singh finds many surprises in store for her when she arrives in Brazil--about the , about the Lakashi people, and about herself. This trip will make her challenge her entire belief system. In the end, there are quite a few questions left unanswered. To what extent should researchers and doctors be allowed to play God? Should women really have children late in life? Is it ethical to hold back on producing one drug for the development of another? What is a better environment to raise native children--the or the United States? And is it possible to return to a "normal" life in the United States after experiencing life in the ? Of course, Patchett doesn't answer these questions. Either she leaves us to our own assumptions or she's setting us up for a sequel. While I was glad that I read State of Wonders, it wasn't the book that I was expecting.

This is the second book I've read by Ann Patchett and I'm already on to my third. It's basically a story about human relationships but it reads like a thriller. Patchett has the uncanny ability to draw you into a story by degrees, giving you time to get to know the main character, who is a Dr. Marina Singh, a 42-year-old research scientist working for a pharmaceutical company in Minnesota. We learn that Marina is a gentle, kind person who lives a routine, quiet life. Everything is turned into turmoil when a letter arrives from the jungle announcing the sudden death of her friend and colleague, who was sent to find and bring back Dr. Annick Swenson, a fearsome character who had been Marina's teacher in medical school. Marina is sent on her own to find out what happened and she feels she is being sent to her death. Despite, her fears of the horrors that await her, she still goes. Patchett's descriptions of the heat, humidity, flora and fauna with the constant fear of infection adds an underlying tension to the story which grabs you and takes you on a whirlwind coaster ride to the surprising end. I couldn't put it down and I still can't stop thinking about it. Highly recommended.

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