



## **Borne Summary**

Survival amidst a city of mutated wonders.

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## About the book

In the dystopian landscape of *Borne*, Jeff VanderMeer crafts a haunting and surreal tale that explores the boundaries of love, survival, and the nature of existence itself. Set in a crumbling city overrun by a mysterious, monstrous entity known as the Magician, the story follows Rachel, a scavenger who discovers a peculiar, amorphous creature named Borne. As Rachel navigates a world filled with danger, shifting allegiances, and the trials of her own past, her intricate bond with Borne serves as both a lifeline and a catalyst for touching revelations about identity and freedom. VanderMeer's mesmerizing prose and atmospheric world-building invite readers to delve into a thought-provoking journey that challenges the definitions of humanity and the lengths one will go to protect what they love.

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## About the author

Jeff VanderMeer is an acclaimed American author known for his distinctive and imaginative storytelling that often intertwines elements of fantasy, science fiction, and horror. Born on July 7, 1968, in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, VanderMeer has garnered international recognition for his contributions to the genre, particularly for his work in the Southern Reach Trilogy, which includes the best-seller "Annihilation." His writing is characterized by its lush prose, ecological themes, and the exploration of the unknown, reflecting his keen interest in the complexities of the natural world and our relationship with it. As a pivotal figure in contemporary speculative fiction, VanderMeer continues to push the boundaries of narrative and genre, earning accolades for his innovative approach and thought-provoking stories.

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# Summary Content List

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# Chapter 1 Summary: 1

## Part One: Summary of "What I Found and How I Found It"

In this section, the protagonist discovers a strange creature they name Borne while scavenging in a decaying city dominated by a colossal bear named Mord. Initially, Borne appears as an inconspicuous organism clinging to Mord's fur, but it exudes a nostalgic scent reminiscent of the protagonist's lost childhood by the sea. The protagonist's search for food and survival amidst the grim backdrop of their dystopian environment leads them to Mord, an engineered behemoth created by a powerful entity known as the Company.

Mord is a colossal figure whose destructive tendencies have transformed him from a mere guardian into a looming threat to the remnants of civilization. As the protagonist observes him, they are struck by memories of a life before the city's ruin, evoking a longing for the familiar comforts of home. The wasteland they inhabit is infused with despair, and the scent of decay serves as a constant reminder of the dangers that lurk within it.

After finding Borne, the protagonist brings it back to their refuge, known as the Balcony Cliffs, where they live with Wick, their partner and lover. Wick is a drug dealer who creates unique memory-altering beetles, representing

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both hope and danger in a world grappling with proximity to its own annihilation. Together, they rely on one another for survival amidst the threats posed by scavengers and the remnants of the Company.

The relationship between the protagonist and Wick unfolds against the backdrop of resource scarcity and an ever-looming danger from their surroundings. Despite their bond, tension simmers as the protagonist grows increasingly attached to Borne, whom Wick views with skepticism. This tension illuminates contrasting desires for knowledge, safety, and emotional connection in a harsh world.

Amidst their evolving dynamics, the protagonist shares memories of their past and the harrowing journey of loss that brought them to this cursed city. These memories demonstrate the resilience needed to survive, underscoring the psychological scars left behind. The protagonist's attachment to Borne deepens, encapsulating a fragile hope amidst a bleak reality.

In this tumultuous landscape, the fragility of human connections juxtaposes the burgeoning bond with Borne, symbolizing both potential salvation and the dangers of reliance on something unknown.

**Transition to "Who I Brought Borne To"**

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As the story unfolds, the protagonist grapples with increasing questions about Borne's origins and significance, while interactions with Wick reveal deep-seated emotions and complicating factors in their partnership. The protagonist seeks answers about Borne, pointing toward a potential unraveling of both relationships as the weight of the past intertwines with the precarious future ahead.

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## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** The potential for hope and connection in chaotic environments

**Critical Interpretation:** In the midst of a decaying, dystopian world, the protagonist's discovery of Borne symbolizes the enduring possibility of hope and connection even in the darkest of times. This reminder speaks to your own life, urging you to seek out moments of joy and companionship, no matter how bleak your surroundings may be. It inspires you to nurture relationships and embrace new beginnings, understanding that even the fragility of these bonds can illuminate your path through despair, encouraging resilience and the courage to forge ahead.

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## Chapter 2 Summary: 2

### PART TWO: HOW IT HAD BEEN, AND WHAT CAME NEXT

In the twilight six years prior to finding Borne, the narrator recalls their first encounter with Mord, a formidable and awe-inducing creature. The day had started with the unsettling discovery of autonomous meat in a ditch, emblematic of the city's decay. Exhausted and filthy, the narrator took to an old deck chair, allowing themselves a rare moment of vulnerability when they were confronted by Mord. Initially obscured by dusk, Mord transformed from a shadowy figure into an incredible beast, his golden-brown fur and gentle curiosity igniting a mix of fear and fascination in the narrator. In that fleeting moment, they grappled with conflicting feelings of reverence and dread while contemplating the creature that seemed divine yet had a dark, predatory essence.

As dusk deepened, the narrator's thoughts drifted to Borne—the unusual being who had since shared their life. They had witnessed Borne's growing complexity and potential, despite Wick's reservations about him. Wick, another survivor in this desolate city, provided stability but also shot down the narrator's attempts at acceptance towards Borne, creating a tension between them. Although the narrator attempted to instill goodness in Borne, they kept shying away from the difficult questions that surfaced about his

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origin and purpose. Each interaction left the narrator drained, and the complexities of their evolving relationship with Borne weighed heavily on their heart.

In the weeks that followed, there was a turning point when Borne boldly declared his identity, prodding the narrator with philosophical inquiries. Questions about existence, identity, and purpose spiraled into confused revelations about life itself, pushing the boundaries of how the narrator viewed themselves and their relationship with Borne. As Borne changed size and shape in attempts to fit into the human world, the narrator struggled to fully grasp their dynamic, their conversations revealing a growth that sparked both hope and fear within the narrator. They equally shared thoughts of purpose and belonging while grappling with the ever-looming threat of the external world.

A shift occurred when the narrator sensed a growing danger; Wick was irritated by Borne's evolving complexity and worried about his integration into their lives. The Magician, a burgeoning force in the city, began creating a rift between Wick and the narrator, amplifying tensions and prompting a host of disenfranchised beings to rise up. The Magician's dominion paralleled Mord's nightmare, both pressuring the narrator and influencing Borne's existential crises. As a growing relationship sprouted between them and Borne, the narrator felt an impending confrontation looming just beyond the horizon.

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With each scavenging expedition, Borne's resilience and capacity for growth delighted and astounded the narrator. Yet, their guilt over trying to shelter and protect him remained embedded in their hearts. A confrontation was inevitable: Borne's spirits soared into the night, departing from the confines of the Balcony Cliffs, pushed by the fears of isolation and his intrinsic desire to learn.

The disquiet grew in the storyline when the Magician's ultimatum descended on the community as an ominous shadow. The narrator's growing fears began to swirl, foreshadowing internal discord between allies. A deepening complexity in their interrelations fueled mistrust, especially when Wick's hidden struggles surfaced, revealing unexpected depths of vulnerability in his personality that clashed with the narrator's need for unwavering support.

Confronted with existential doubts and choices impacted by the encroaching threats of the Magician and Mord, the narrator and Borne's bond faced strain. As Borne grappled with his identity amid Borne-existential musings, the narrator fought for a semblance of normalcy, while simultaneously despairing for Wick's emotional state.

Eventually, the tension reached a tipping point that led to Borne's impulsive act of impersonation, which fractured the delicate balance of trust in their

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triad. The narrator was forced to confront their fears and species' innate flaws, as grappling with the folly of fragmentation led to choices that burdened their conscience. In a dramatic showdown, where emotions collided, the narrator made a heart-wrenching decision to send Borne away—a choice burdened by pain, love, and the agonizing acceptance of Borne's potential for darkness.

Ultimately, the narrator wrestled with the consequences of their decisions as both Wick and Borne redeployed their respective masks, becoming agents of survival in a world where boundaries blurred and identities entwined. The threads of tragedy, uncertainty, and hope wove endlessly together, propelling forward narratives of truth and reflection that would ultimately define their intertwined fates in the forgotten cityscape.

Section	Summary
Part Two: Introduction	The narrator reflects on their past, revealing their first encounter with Mord, a formidable creature, amidst the city's decay.
Encounter with Mord	During a vulnerable moment, the narrator realizes the awe-inspiring and terrifying nature of Mord, igniting feelings of reverence and dread.
Relationship with Borne	The narrator contemplates their complex relationship with Borne, facing conflicts with Wick, who is protective yet skeptical of Borne's growth.
Philosophical Growth	Borne challenges the narrator with existential questions, leading to growth in their relationship but also confusion and fear.
Tension with	The narrator senses danger as Wick becomes increasingly irritated by

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Section	Summary
Wick	Borne, creating conflict amidst external threats from the Magician.
Scavenging and Resilience	Borne's resilience astounds the narrator, yet guilt over their protective instincts grows, leading to Borne's desire for independence.
The Magician's Ultimatum	Tensions escalate as the Magician's ominous presence complicates the community's dynamics, revealing vulnerabilities in Wick.
Strain in Relationships	The bond between the narrator and Borne is strained by the external threats and internal conflicts, particularly concerning Wick's emotional struggles.
Borne's Impulsive Act	A confrontation culminates in Borne's impulsive act of impersonation, fracturing trust and pushing the narrator to make a painful decision.
Consequences of Decisions	The narrator reflects on the fallout of their choices, with both Borne and Wick adapting and masking their struggles in a blurred reality.

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## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** The struggle for identity and acceptance

**Critical Interpretation:** In 'Borne', the evolving relationship between the narrator and Borne encapsulates a profound exploration of identity and acceptance in a world fraught with chaos. This struggle resonates deeply with our own lives, reminding us that the quest for self-discovery often requires confronting discomfort and vulnerability. Just like Borne's attempts to understand his place in the world, we too grapple with our inner conflicts and the fear of rejection, pushing us to seek not just acceptance but also the courage to embrace our complexities. This chapter inspires you to reflect on your own identity, encouraging you to navigate through uncertainties and embrace change, ultimately fostering deeper connections with others and yourself.

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## Chapter 3 Summary: 3

### Part Three: What They Took From Mord and From Us - Summary

In the aftermath of casting Borne out, Mord loses his ability to fly—a significant change that sends ripples of chaos through the cults that once revered him. Instead of falling to his demise, Mord awakens grounded, his fury and confusion palpable as he attempts, futilely, to regain the powers he has lost. His condition shatters the illusion of divine control, leaving him to walk the earth like any other being. His proxies, once loyal, are left grappling with the reality of their weakened god, leading to disintegration among their ranks. A surreal calm descends upon the city as a lost hum, the sound of Mord's flight, vanishes.

Rumors of the Magician's return circulate around Wick, generating anxiety and raising the stakes of survival in the transformed landscape they inhabit. Wick reveals he believes the Magician has regained her influence, hinting at potential threats lurking within their scavenged world.

Hoping to distract myself from the absence of Borne, I venture outside, confronting a bizarre sight—three dead astronauts buried with placards bearing names, a chilling message left by the Magician. A mysterious fox, reminiscent of Borne, appears, yet its intentions remain ambiguous.

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The chaotic environment demands my attention, and a deep sense of loss pervades my thoughts. I trick myself into normalcy by burying the astronauts, creating a private act of closure while grappling with isolation in the now-quiet Balcony Cliffs. Wick and I craft silly passwords to affirm our bond, navigating the paranoia left by Borne's unpredictability, even trading our innermost fears via humor.

As Wick's determination hardens against giving in to the Magician's demands, we turn inward, focusing on our tasks and trapping Mord while scavenging to make the Balcony Cliffs more defensible. Existence hinges on borrowed resources, as we ration the last remnants of food and remain vigilant against lurking dangers.

In an act driven by longing and desperation, I begin to wander the nocturnal city, driven by the desire to find Borne. Backdrops of violence and fear breathe life into rumors of dark machinations at work, with unsettling disappearances and a reemergence of the Magician hinting at a deeper threat.

Despite Wick's insistence I remain safe within the Balcony Cliffs, I persist, untethered and seeking connection to Borne. My movements echo the tumult of the city; the weight of my guilt, the question of identity—it twists and turns against my will.

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The struggle culminates as I come across the Magician, enshrined in the depths of the Company, presenting all that I both long for and abhor. A conversation ensues, layered with implications that tests my resolve. Until, in a moment both final and visceral, I strike her down, severing her ties to the madness of the city forever.

The confrontation with my past and the perils of the present leads me inevitably to the depths of Wick's letter, unearthing truths about our intertwined fates and the significance of self-identity amid the wreckage left behind by the Company.

Despite the pain of relinquishing the past, I commit to the present. Together, Wick and I foster new life in the Balcony Cliffs, piecing together our future while confronting the ghosts of our successes and failures. My heart holds space for the complexities of love—beneath the weight of guilt, apology, and forgiveness lies the determination to rebuild a world worth living in, free from the tyranny of our former selves.

In the verdant aftermath of our struggles, the Balcony Cliffs become a sanctuary, renewed with hope by the children of tomorrow and remade by the bonds of friendship and love. In those reclaimed spaces, I find peace amidst loss, joy amidst sorrow, and clarity amidst storms—all while tracing a way forward, not driven by the shadows of what has been, but renewed in

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the promise of what might be.

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