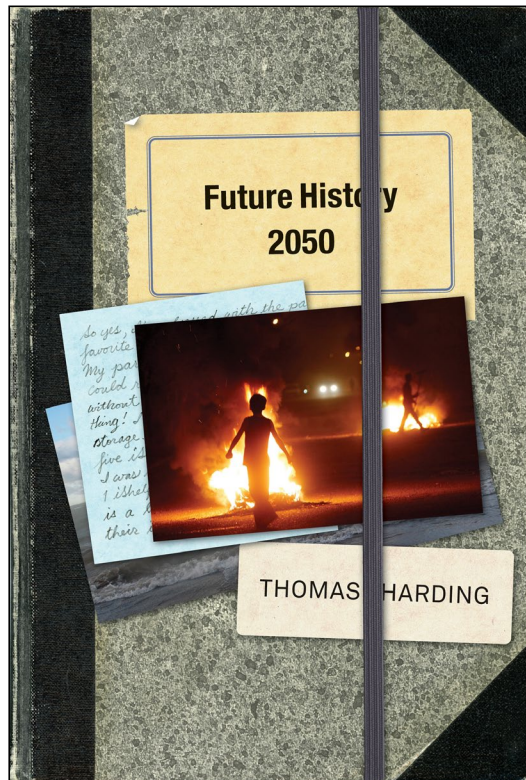




GROUNDWOOD STUDY GUIDES

Future History 2050

Written by Thomas Harding



This future history of the next thirty years, imagined by bestselling author Thomas Harding, is a compelling and startling call to action.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Ages 13 to 17 / Grades 8 to 12

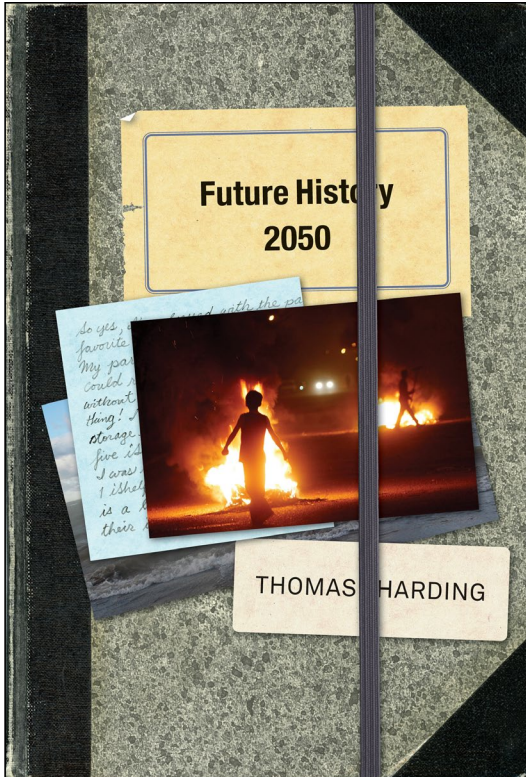
YOUNG ADULT FICTION / Dystopian / Science Fiction / Time Travel / Epistolary (Letters & Diaries)

12 full-color mixed-media illustrations / 5.5 x 8.25 / 200 pages

Hardcover with jacket / \$18.99 / 978-1-77306-803-9

ebook / 978-1-77306-804-6

groundwoodbooks.com



BOOK DESCRIPTION

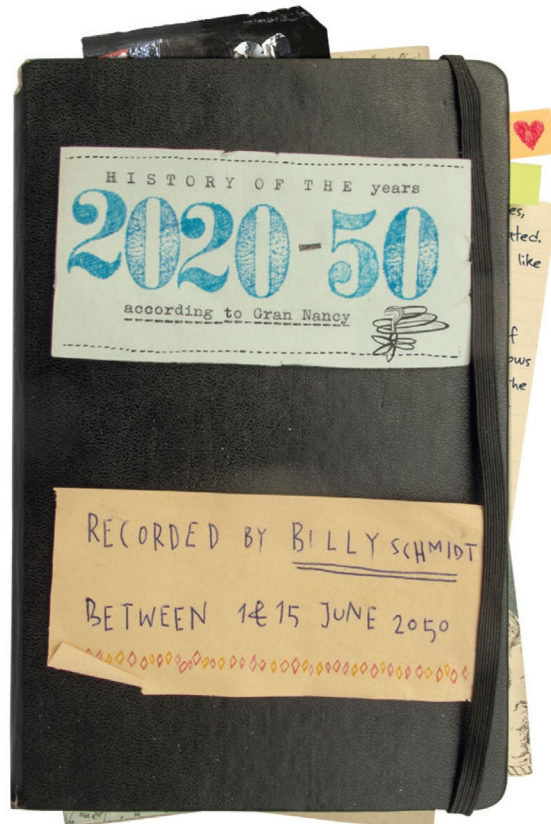
In 2020, a researcher is shocked to find a set of notebooks detailing the history of the next thirty years. Is this a hoax? Or could it be real?

The notebooks, written in the year 2050, contain interview transcripts between teenage Billy and Gran Nancy. We learn about the great climate SHOCK, when global temperatures rise much faster than anticipated, resulting in catastrophic consequences for humanity. We learn about a shift away from democracy, toward unelected “Ethnarchs” — heads of corporations who use their access to our personal data to competently run the world. We learn about the giant city towers where most people live, work and play inside — where it’s safe from natural disasters and viral outbreaks.

And between these interviews, we learn more about Billy, whose interest in the history that has been erased from the official record is causing trouble in 2050. Is it too late to change the past to save the future?

BEFORE READING

- Think about the title *Future History 2050*. Discuss the terms *future* and *history*. What do they mean? Why do you think the author made this the title? What do you predict this book will be about?
- Read the synopsis on the front flap of the book. What intrigues you the most and motivates you to read this text?
- According to the synopsis, how does the author define the great climate SHOCK?
- What do you know about climate change and its effects on the planet, people, the economy?
- What do you want to know about climate change?
- Write a working definition of climate change. Add to and change this definition as you read *Future History 2050*.
- Write a working definition of democracy. Add to and change this definition as you read *Future History 2050*.



AFTER READING

REFLECT AND REVIEW

- When does this story happen?
- How did the author organize this book?
- The most likely reason the author wrote this book was to _____.
- How would you describe Billy?
- Compare Billy's life to your life today. How are they alike? How are they different?
- Gran Nancy describes what it was like in the year 2020. How accurate was her description of some of the events that happened in 2020? Discuss what life was like in 2020.
- What was the purpose of the technology Mega Data in 2021? Do you see any similarities with how Gran Nancy described how data was gathered and used to how it is used today?
- How did Gran Nancy feel about the Ethnarchs knowing all about her personal preferences? Do you agree with her? Why or why not?
- Discuss the significance of the *Guardian* article.
- In what way is climate change important in the text?
- Discuss life changes that Gran Nancy had to make over the years. What are some of the examples? Would you make some of the same sacrifices? Why or why not?
- What time period in the story resonated with you the most? Why?
- What do you believe can be learned from reading this book?
- What did this story reveal about how ordinary people can either be active participants or passive witnesses to changes in the world?
- If you could ask Gran Nancy anything, what would you ask her?
- Reflect back on the title of this book. What do you think it means now?

SETTING

- Where does the book take place?
- Could it have taken place anywhere else? Why or why not?
- How accurately are you able to see the place when the story occurs in your mind? Explain.
- How does the time play a major role in each chapter?
- Could this story really happen?
- Explain the unity of time, events and characters across the chapters.

CHARACTERS

- Who were the main characters? Were they believable? Why or why not?
- Were Gran Nancy or Quentin driven by events they could not control? Why?
- Does the author justify actions of any of the characters that you feel are wrong?
- Do the characters always act in ways that you think are appropriate for them?

PLOT

- How well are the events tied together in the story?
- Name at least two conflicts in the book. What were the author's solutions? How would you categorize the conflicts? i.e. human vs. human, human vs. nature, human vs. society, human vs. themselves?
- Is the book believable?

MOOD

- Does the author communicate a feeling that goes with the story?
- What words characterize the story?
- How did your feeling change as you read the story?
- Was there an undercurrent or hidden mood in the story?
- Was there a tension in the story that made you want to finish it?
- How real is the mood?

THEME OR MORAL

- Does the title state the theme?
- What are you going to remember about this book?
- What is the purpose of the story?
- What is the subject of the book?
- What is the general truth that the author seems to be stating about human nature?
- What things does the reader have to know to understand the story?
- What attitudes does the author assume the reader has?
- What devices does the author use to deliver the message?

OPTIONS FOR WRITTEN RESPONSE

Choose one or two of the following categories to write a written response about the story.

Respond personally to the text

- How do you feel about the text and why?
- How has the text changed your life in some way?

Respond to Theme and/or Author's Purpose

- What is the author trying to teach you?
- What is the author's purpose or message of the text?
- Why do you think the author wrote this text?

Offer Opinion of Text

- Do you like or dislike the text and why?
- Who is your favorite or least favorite character and why?
- Will you read this book again? Why or why not?
- Will you recommend this book to a friend?

Respond to the Writing Style

- How does the author use language to create sensory images?
- How does the author's language deepen your understanding?

Respond to Traits and/or Actions of the Character

- Which characters do you like, dislike, admire, and why?
- Choose a character. Would you act or react differently, and why?

Share Connections

- Does any part of the book remind you of the world and what is occurring now or has happened in the past?
- How have your own experiences deepened your understanding?
- How are this text's events similar to other events?
- Do you connect in any way with a character in the text?

Critique the Text

- Did the author do a good job organizing the text? Crafting the text?
- Did the author follow the text structures for the genre? Explain.

A CLOSE LOOK AT IDENTITY

Essential Question: How do your values and beliefs shape who you are and influence your behavior?

Character Connection:

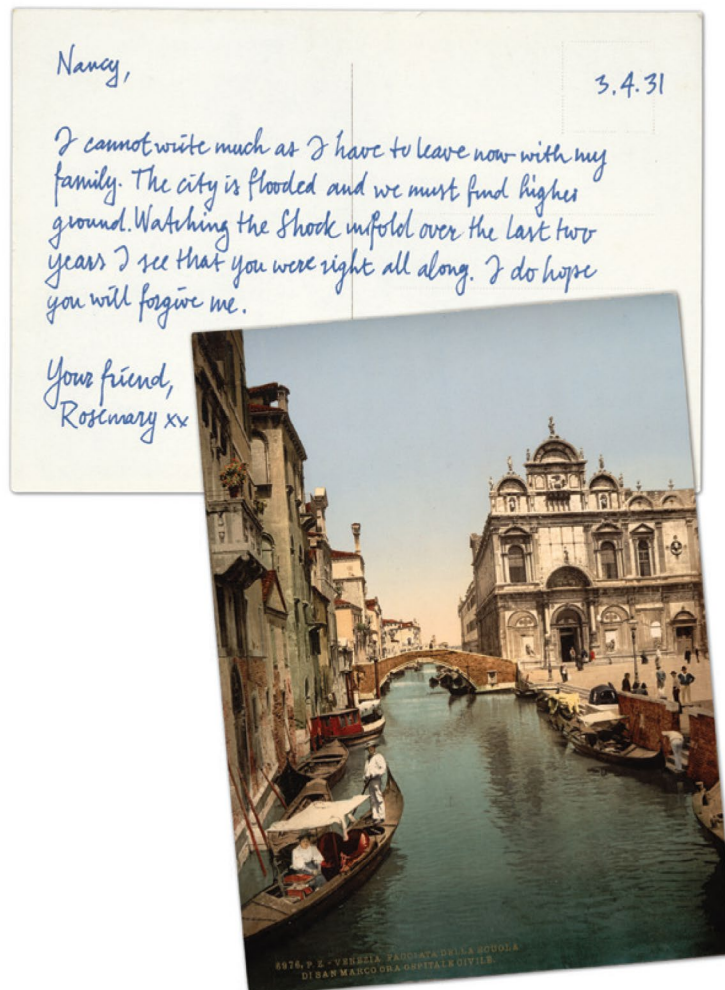
- Who was Gran Nancy? Billy? How would you describe them?
- How did the characters view life? Did Gran Nancy and Billy view life the same way? Why do you think this?
- Did either Gran Nancy's or Billy's view of their identity change over time? Why or why not?
- Did society and events shape their identity? Explain.

Self Connection:

- What makes you who you are?
- What is identity?
- What is unique about you?
- What ideas, values and attitudes have you learned from the culture around you?
- How do you make decisions for yourself?
- Can your identity affect the world we live in? How?

Extension:

- **Identity Map:** Create an identity map of either Gran Nancy, Billy or Quentin. Include all of the characteristics that you feel make up the person that they are.
- **Identity Map of Yourself:** Next create an identity map of yourself.



A CLOSE LOOK AT JUSTICE

Essential Question: When should an individual take a stand against what they believe to be an injustice to the world or others? What are the most effective ways to do this?

Text Connection

- What effect did the SHOCK have on the world, communities, families, Gran Nancy, Quentin, Benji?
- What were some of the other injustices described in the book? Do you agree? Why or why not?
- How did the characters advocate and fight against injustices?
- What did Gran Nancy mean when she said, on page 179, “What’s done is done. We can’t change the past, but we can change the future”?
- Who were the Ethnarchs? How did they live compared to regular people? How were the people treated by the Ethnarchs? Do you think people like the Ethnarchs exist today? Do you think a group of people should have so much power and say over other people’s lives?
- How did Gran Nancy describe DI or Dignified Income? How do you feel about that? What are the pros and the cons of a system like that?
- What is the “transition” that Gran Nancy talks about? What were some of the ways that the Ethnarchs transitioned people over to accepting an automated way of life that they controlled?
- How and why were injustices progressing over the years? What were some of the injustices? How do you feel about them? Are there any similarities to injustices today?

Self Connection

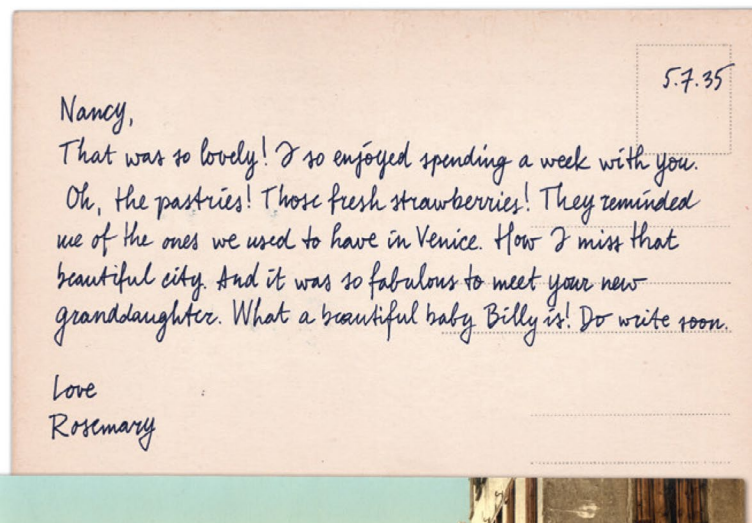
- What is your role in society?
- What is your responsibility in regard to issues of social justice?

World Connection

- What effect does injustice have on people?
- Why do people sometimes think they have no power over a situation? What can influence this thinking?
- What does power have to do with fairness and justice?

Extension:

Timeline: Create a timeline that depicts the major events that impacted Gran Nancy's life.



AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



THOMAS HARDING is a bestselling author whose books have been translated into more than sixteen languages. His books include *Hanns and Rudolf*, which won the JQ-Wingate Prize for Non-Fiction; *The House by the Lake*, which was shortlisted for the Costa Biography Award, and which was adapted into a picture book; and *Blood on the Page*, which won the Crime Writers' Association Golden Dagger Award for Non-Fiction. He lives in Hampshire, England.