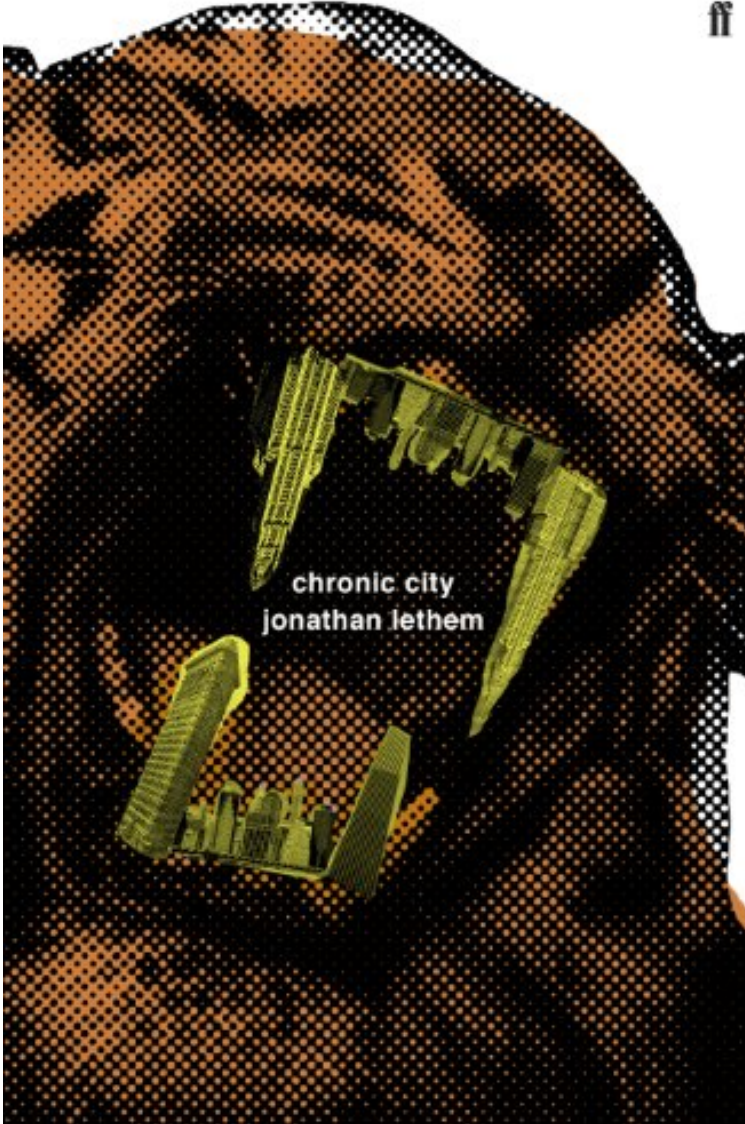


(Download) File size: 52.Mb

# Chronic City (English Edition)

ff



*Par Jonathan Lethem*  
*ePub | \*DOC | audiobook | ebooks |*  
*Download PDF*

Dtails sur le produit Rang parmi les ventes : #379881 dans eBooksPubli le: 2010-03-04Sorti le: 2010-03-04Format: Ebook Kindle

(Download) Chronic City (English Edition)

**Par Jonathan Lethem : Chronic City (English Edition)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Chronic City (English Edition):

 Download

 Read Online

## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurChase Insteadman is a handsome, inoffensive fixture on Manhattan's social scene, living off his earnings as a child star. Chase owes his current social status to an ongoing tragedy much covered in the tabloids: His teenage sweetheart and fiance, Janice Trumbull, is trapped by a layer of low-orbit mines on the International Space Station, from which she sends him rapturous and heartbreaking love letters. Like Janice, Chase is adrift, and trapped in a vague routine punctuated only by Upper Eastside dinner parties and engagements.Into Chase's life enters Perkus Tooth, a wall-eyed free-range pop-critic, whose soaring conspiratorial riffs are fueled by high-grade marijuana, mammoth cheeseburgers and a desperate ache for meaning. Perkus' countercultural savvy and voracious paranoia draw Chase into another Manhattan,

where questions of what is real, what is fake and who is complicit take on a life-shattering urgency. Together Chase and Perkus attempt to unearth the Truth - that rarest of artifacts on an island where everything can be bought. Beautiful and tawdry, tragic and forgiving, Lethem's new novel is as always, utterly unique.

I first met Perkus Tooth in an office. Not an office where he worked, though I was confused about this at the time. (Which is itself hardly an uncommon situation, for me.) He was in the headquarters of the Criterion Collection, on Fifty-second Street and Third Avenue, on a weekday afternoon at the end of summer. I'd gone there to record a series of voice-overs for one of Criterion's high-end DVD reissues, a "lost" 1950s film noir called *The City Is a Maze*. My role was to play the voice of that film's director, the late migrant auteur Von Tropic Zollner. I would read a series of statements culled from Zollner's interviews and articles, as part of a supplemental documentary being prepared by the curatorial geniuses at Criterion, a couple of whom I'd met at a dinner party. In drawing me into the project they'd supplied me with a batch of research materials, which I'd browsed unsystematically, as well as a working version of their reconstruction of the film, in order for me to glean what the excitement was about. It was the first I'd heard of Zollner, so this was hardly a labor of passion. But the enthusiasm of buffs is infectious, and I liked the movie. I no longer considered myself a working actor. This was the only sort of stuff I did anymore, riding the exhaust of my former and vanishing celebrity, the smoky half-life of a child star. An eccentric favor, really. And I was curious to see the inside of Criterion's operation. This was the first week of September, the city's back-to-school mood always inspired me to find something to do with my idle hands. In those days, with Janice far away, I lived too much on the surface of things, parties, gossip, assignations in which I was the go-between or vicarious friend. Workplaces fascinated me, the zones where Manhattan's veneer gave way to the practical world. I recorded Zollner's words in a sound chamber in the technical wing of Criterion's crowded, ramshackle offices. In the room outside the chamber, where the soundman sat giving me cues through a headset, a restorer also sat peering at a screen and guiding a cursor with a mouse, diligently erasing celluloid scratches and blots, frame by digital frame, from the bare bodies of hippies cavorting in a mud puddle. I was told he was restoring *I Am Curious (Yellow)*. Afterward I was retrieved by the producer who'd enlisted me, Susan Eldred. It had been Susan and her colleague I'd met at the dinner party, unguarded, embracing people with a passion for a world of cinematic minutiae, for whom I'd felt an instantaneous affection. Susan led me to her office, a cavern with one paltry window and shelves stacked with VHS tapes, more lost films petitioning for Criterion's rescue. Susan shared her office, it appeared. Not with the colleague from the party, but another person. He sat beneath the straining shelves, notebook in hand, gaze distant. It seemed too small an office to share. The glamour of Criterion's brand wasn't matched by these scenes of thrift and improvisation I'd gathered in my behind-the-scenes glimpse, but why should it have been? No sooner did Susan introduce me to Perkus Tooth and give me an invoice to sign than she was called away for some consultation elsewhere. He was, that first time, lapsed into what I would soon learn to call one of his "ellipsistic" moods. Perkus Tooth himself later supplied that descriptive word: ellipsistic, derived from ellipsis. A species of blank interval, a nod or fugue in which he was neither depressed nor undepressed, not struggling to finish a thought nor to begin one. Merely between. Pause button pushed. I certainly stared. With Tooth's turtle posture and the utter slackness of his being, his receding hairline and antique manner of dress - tapered suit, ferociously wrinkled silk with the shine worn off, moldering tennis shoes - I could have taken him for elderly. When he stirred, his hand brushing the open notebook page as if taking dictation with an invisible pen, and I read his pale, adolescent features, I guessed he was in his fifties, still a decade wrong, though Perkus Tooth had been out of the sunlight for a while. He was in his early forties, barely older than me. I'd mistaken him for old because I'd taken him for important. He now looked up and I saw one undisciplined hazel eye wander, under its calf lid, toward his nose. That eye wanted to cross, to discredit Perkus Tooth's whole sober aura with a comic jape. His other eye ignored the gambit, trained on me. "You're the actor." "Yes," I said. "So, I'm doing the liner notes. For *The City Is a Maze*, I mean." "Oh, good." "I do a lot of them. *Prelude to a Certain Midnight* . . . *Recalcitrant Women* . . . *The Unholy City* . . . *Echolalia* . . ." "All film noir?" "Oh, gosh, no. You've never seen Herzog's *Echolalia*?" "No." "Well, I wrote the liner notes, but it isn't exactly released yet. I'm still trying to convince Eldred." Perkus Tooth, I'd learn, called everyone by their last name. As though famous, or arrested. His mind's landscape was epic, dotted with towering figures like Easter Island heads. At that moment Eldred/Susan returned to the office. "So," he said to her, "have you got that tape of *Echolalia* around here somewhere?" He cast his eyes, the good left and the meandering right, at her shelves, the cacophony of titles scribbled on labels there. "I want him to see it." Susan raised her eyebrows and he shrank. "I don't know where it is," she said. "Never mind." "Have you been harassing my

guest, Perkus?" "What do you mean?" Susan Eldred turned to me and collected the signed release, then we made our farewell. Then, as I got to the elevator, Perkus Tooth hurried through the sliding door to join me, crushing his antique felt hat onto his crown as he did. The elevator, like so many others behind midtown edifices, was tiny and rattletrap, little more than a glorified dumbwaiter there was no margin for pretending we hadn't just been in that office together. Bad eye migrating slightly, Perkus Tooth gave me a lunar look, neither unfriendly nor apologetic. Despite the vintage costume, he wasn't some dapper retro-fetishist. His shirt collar was grubby and crumpled. The green-gray sneakers like mummified sponges glimpsed within a janitor's bucket. "So," he said again. This "so" of Perkus's habit of introducing any subject as if in resumption of earlier talk wasn't in any sense coercive. Rather, it was as if Perkus had startled himself from a daydream, heard an egging voice in his head and mistaken it for yours. "So, I'll lend you my own copy of Echolalia, even though I never lend anything. Because I think you ought to see it." "Sure." "It's a sort of essay film. Herzog shot it on the set of Morrison Groom's *Nowhere Near*. Groom's movie was never finished, you know. Echolalia documents Herzog's attempts to interview Marlon Brando on Groom's set. Brando doesn't want to give the interview, and whenever Herzog corners him Brando just parrots whatever Herzog's said . . . you know, echolalia . . ." "Yes," I said, flummoxed, as I would so often later find myself, by Tooth's torrential specifics. "But it's also the only way you can see any of *Nowhere Near*. Morrison Groom destroyed the footage, so the scenes reproduced in Echolalia are, ironically, all that remains of the film" Why "ironically"? I doubted my hopes of inserting the question. "It sounds incredible," I said. "Of course you know Morrison Groom's suicide was probably faked. My nod was a lie. The doors opened, and we stumbled together out to the pavement, tangling at every threshold: "You first" "Oops" "After you" "Sorry." We faced each other, mid-Wednesday Manhattan throngs islanding us in their stream. Perkus grew formally clipped, perhaps belatedly eager to show he wasn't harassing me. "So, I'm off." "Very good to see you." I'd quit using the word meet long ago, replacing it with this foggy equivocation, chastened after the thousandth time someone explained to me that we'd actually met before. "So" He ground to a halt, expectant. "Yes?" "If you want to come by for the tape . . ." "I might have been failing some test, I wasn't sure. Perkus Tooth dealt in occult knowledge, and measured with secret calipers. I'd never know when I'd crossed an invisible frontier, visible to Perkus in the air between us. "Do you want to give me a card?" He scowled. "Eldred knows where to find me." His pride intervened, and he was gone. For a phone call so life-altering as mine to Susan Eldred, I ought to have had some fine reason. Yet here I was, dialing Criterion's receptionist later that afternoon, asking first for Perkus Tooth and then, when she claimed no familiarity with that name, for Susan Eldred, spurred by nothing better than a cocktail of two parts whim and one part guilt. Manhattan's volunteer, that's me, I may as well admit it. Was I curious about Echolalia, or Morrison Groom's faked suicide, or Perkus Tooth's intensities and lulls, or the slippage in his right eye's gaze? All of it and none of it, that's the only answer. Perhaps I already adored Perkus Tooth, and already sensed that it was his friendship I required to usher me into the strange next phase of my being. To unmoor me from the curious eddy into which I'd drifted. How very soon after our first encounter I'd come to adore and need Perkus makes it awfully hard to know to what extent such feelings were inexplicably under way in Susan Eldred's office or that elevator. "Your office mate," I said. "They didn't recognize his name at the front desk. Maybe I heard it wrong." "Perkus?" Susan laughed. "He doesn't work here." "He said he wrote your liner notes." "He's written a couple, sure. But he doesn't work here. He just comes up and occupies space sometimes. I'm sort of Perkus's babysitter. I don't even always notice him . . . Revue de presse" Astonishing . . . Knowing and exuberant, with beautiful drunken sentences that somehow manage to walk a straight line . . . Turbocharged . . . Intricate and seamless . . . A dancing showgirl of a novel, yet beneath the gaudy makeup it's also the girl next door: a traditional bildungsroman with a strong moral compass . . ." New York Times Book "Chronic City is a feverish portrait of the anxiety and isolation of modern Manhattan, full of dark humor and dazzling writing . . . proves both funny and frightening." --Entertainment Weekly "Exuberant literary revving . . . Lethem's vision of New York can approach the Swiftian. It is impressively observant in its detail and scourging in its mocking satire. There are any number of wicked portraits . . . His comments on New York life are often achingly exact . . . So pungent and imaginative" --The Boston Globe "Ingenious and unsettling . . . Lethem pulls everything together in a stunning critique of our perceptions of reality and our preconceptions of the function of literature." --San Francisco Chronicle "Exquisitely written . . . Funny and mystifying, eminently quotable, resolutely difficult, even heartbreaking, "Chronic City" demonstrates an imaginative breadth not quite of this world." --Cleveland Plain Dealer "A fluid sense of reality pervades these pages, which explore high society, urban politics, avant-garde art, celebrity mania and the dangers of

information overload in an age where context is devalued or ignored....the quality of Lethem's prose and the exuberance of his imagination are reasons enough to read it.....When it comes to style, Lethem has few equals."--Miami Herald"The novel functions much like Manhattan used to a mad scramble of connections made and, more often, missedmake(s) a reader ache for a city long gone." Esquire"Entertaining....a prosopographical investigation of New York City by way of a handful of strange, unclassifiable characters (and some remarkable writing)....splendidly observed"--Wall Street Journal"Brilliant....exquisite wit and dazzling intricacy of every single paragraph.....roves he's one of the most elegant stylists in the country, and he's capable of spinning surreal scenes that are equal parts noir and comedy....evocative and engaging....As a reflection on modern alienation and the chronic loneliness that afflicts us in our faux world, this is beautifully, often powerfully done."--The Washington Post"A sprawling book about pop culture and outer spacerealistic and fantastic, serious and funny, warm and clear eyed. One of the new generation's most ambitious writers, Lethem again offers a novel that deals with nothing less important than the difference between truth and lies. And some stories about good cheeseburgers." - The Daily Beast"A stellar, multi-layered novel." GQ"Lethem has often sought to interweave the realistic and the fantastic; in Chronic City the result is nearly seamless." - New York Magazine"[Lethem is] a writer who resists pigeonholing....it's hard to remain unsusceptible to his euphoria"--Los Angeles Times"Friction, charisma, unpleasantness, and threat are key to this tale of scintillating misfits.....dizzily brilliant urban enigma"--O Magazine"One of America's finest novelists explores the disconnections among art, government, space travel and parallel realities, as his characters hunger for elusive meaning All truths and realities are open to interpretation, even negotiation, in this brilliantly rich novel.Lethem's most ambitious work to date."Kirkus s, starred "Pow! Letham has done it again. When it comes to brainy adventures full of laughter and heart this master has few equals. What a joy from the first page to the last."Gary Shteyngart, author of Absurdistan and The Russian Debutante's Handbook"I'm reminded of the well-rubbed Kafka line re: A book must be the axe to break the frozen sea within us. Lethem's book, with incredible fury, aspires to do little less. It's almost certainly his best novel. It's genuinely great."David Shields, author of The Thing About Life Is That One Day You'll Be Dead