

# SMOKE SEASON

A NOVEL BY CARRIE-EDMUND LABEN

Twenty-something Justin Erasmus doesn't know how he ended up in the mountains of Missoula, Montana on a commune with Adrian, his hookup from the other night. What he does know is that Adrian might help him find his estranged sister, Helen, since he and the other members of the group are devoted followers of her from afar, by way of her podcast and certain mysterious other communications. Justin himself only has hazy memories of Helen from when they were kids; he remembers her locked in a dog cage in his family's living room and how, as though she were made of smoke, she reached her arms out to him through the bars before being sent away. A voice is telling him he needs to find her again.

But as his feelings for Adrian grow and the commune starts to feel more like home, Justin discovers he's not the only person trying to find Helen. A shadowy government organization called The Aversion Project with a mysterious magic of their own are bent on eradicating Helen: her magic, her free thinking, her free-love community and free-living movement in favor of a more rigid, orderly, heteronormative world—and soon they're knocking on their door... and invading their dreams. If Justin is going to find his sister and remain with his beloved new community, he'll first have to deal with the ominous figures haunting his sister and found family.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CARRIE-EDMUND LABEN grew up in western New York. They earned their BS at Cornell and later their MFA at the University of Montana. They now live in Queens, where they spend a lot of time staring at birds.

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