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**RICHARD FLANAGAN'S *TOXIC: THE ROTTING UNDERBELLY OF THE TASMANIAN SALMON INDUSTRY***  
(A Book Review By)

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**Is Tasmanian salmon one big lie?**

In a triumph of marketing, the Tasmanian salmon farming companies have for decades succeeded in presenting their industry as world's best practice and their product as healthy and clean, grown in environmentally pristine conditions. What could be more appealing than the idea of Atlantic salmon sustainably harvested in some of the world's most pure waters?

**But what are we eating when we eat Tasmanian salmon?**

Richard Flanagan's exposé into the salmon farming industry in Tasmania is chilling. In the way that Rachel Carson took on the pesticide industry in her ground-breaking book, *Silent Spring*, Flanagan busts open an industry that is as secretive as its practices are destructive and disturbing. If you care about what you eat, if you care about the environment, this is a book you need to read. *Toxic* is set to become a landmark book of the twenty-first century.



penguin.com.au

**TOXIC**  
RICHARD FLANAGAN

**TOXIC**

The Rotting Underbelly of the  
Tasmanian Salmon Industry

**RICHARD FLANAGAN**

Richard Flanagan's book *Toxic: The Rotting Underbelly of the Tasmanian Salmon Industry* is a scorcher and it is in bookstores now. As Penguin says, "Flanagan busts open an industry that is as secretive as its practices are destructive and disturbing. If you care about what you eat, if you care about the environment, this is a book you need to read. *Toxic* is set to become a landmark book of the twenty-first century." He is the great Australian writer next only to Sir Patrick White (Nobel-Prize winner) and Peter Carey (twice Booker Prize winner). Flanagan got recognition with his Booker Prize winning novel "The Narrow Road to Deep North" published in 2014. He hails from Tasmania that



was a former part of Australia. Tasmanians (like India) became a free country in 1947. He is the first promising author who has published *Death of River Guide* (1994), *Sound of one Hand Clapping* (1997), *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001), *The Unknown Terrorist Wanting* (2006) and *Narrow Road to Deep North* (2014). The present review deals with his recent two novels *The Living Sea of Waking Dreams* 2020 and *Toxic* 2021 in general and *Toxic: The Rotting Underbelly of the Tasmanian Salmon Industry* in the particular. Apart from his novels year *Death of River Guide* 1994 and Gould's book of fish 2001 are related to life in and underwater (*Rivers and Sea*) to some extent *Narrow Road* deals with the boat voyages of POW'S (*Prisoners of War*). In every novel Flanagan uses the different themes as well as techniques the hopping in the present world has been the themes of Flanagan's novel's viz; The 09/11 attack, The Unknown Terrorist 2006 and a span of half century-twenty five years before and twenty-five after second world war in his *Narrow Road to Deep North* 2014. The main problem of pollution is the theme of Flanagan's most recent novel *Toxic* 2021. Similarly, his novel *The Living Sea of Waking Dreams* was published before only one year in 2020.

In the *Death of River Guide* Aljaz Cosini, the Cockroach and Derek are all *River Guide's* the tragic story is that they all die underwater. Flanagan points out that at the time of death of Aljaz stuck under a rock a helicopter hovers above to shoot " How a man dies underwater" seahorse, Kelpy, Porcupine, Serpent Cel Stargaze Leather Jacket Saw tooth shark, stripped Cowfish, crested weed fish, freshwater Crayfish, silver dory weedy sea-dragon. Twelve types of fish that represent twelve character Gould, Capt Pinch back, Dr. B. Sharpe, Jorgenson Jorgen, Matt Brady, Pobjoy, Lampriere, Two-penny sal, Tom weaver, Mrs Gottliebsen, Mush Pug Conga Hung, Gould respectively. The entire novel has a hilarious and comic tone. In novel one the commonwealth prize in *Narrow Road* the hero Diago Evans in the end knows that the POW'S named Parky Gardiner has been his own Father.

*Toxic* deals with the major problems of water pollution in general and Salmon fish in the particular. Flanagan's theme is related to the Australian care of Salmon by the Tasmanian Salmon industry that uses a new system:



There are hundreds of fishing Neil to cater to Salmon and the industry provides the best type of Salmon flesh. In an interview, Seven News Australia, he points out that the Amazon forest fire and the synthetics flesh with false red and pink colour and the petrochemicals are going the many problems before flesh -eater of the world. He has given many interviews such as interviews on 01-10-2008, 06-09-2014, and 20-09-2020 in the last three interviews on 28-04-2021, 20-07-2021, and 23-07-2021 he concentrates on the theme of the pollution of the water and poisoning of Salmon. The cover of the novel *Toxic* has cut half part of Salmon which is fourth red coloured and one forth ( due to poisoning of muddy greenish. Flanagan points out the great future problem regarding fish eaters and wants that the companies must be brought on land instead of working in the establishment in the sea the cutting burning trees species of animals and birds and the sense of chatting such as ant ethic flesh and artificial colours. The wood creates danger and horrifying concern before the young



generation in the coming two or three decades. He gives the example of the production of Tasmanian Salmon Industry that provides and succeeds in the best practice and produced as and neatly and fish grew it in the proper environmental condition. Through *Toxic* he wants to save the Salmon in the Atlantic ocean he Rachael Caresen patricide industry and the like are disturbing the silent spring of Tasmania. He Fears that the Salmon will be pushed to extinction he thinks the synthetic dye of the flesh is a sort of seal Bomb. A critic named James Boyce says, "Toxic happens to be novel dealing with a very great problem of water pollution. it might be harmful to the mankind as a whole." Flanagan *Toxic* is thought of as a land mark book of twenty first century that brings to light the horrors behind they closed doors insight the underwater feed regarding his former book the living sea of waking dreams 2020 the author points out that the truth of diminishment is not of nature but of ourselves. Flanagan once said, "I have not eaten red meat for 30 years, but consume a lot of fish. I love Salmon, whether fresh, smoked or hot smoked." This is going to put me off eating Salmon for life, A Reader Says, I declared when the bookseller I purchased it from, told me this was the sixth copy had sold in a matter of hours. he just laughed and said, Come back and let me know is the reader's great response to the book it show the popularity and favour to the writing of Richard Flanagan. He points out that the beautiful spot destroyed by industries who think of nothing but profit this novel is an " Eye-opening' stomach-churning and anger-inducing the problems of interrelated for the diet of Salman is palmed the proposition of falls is also changing. It is a tragedy that there is illegal deforest station specially in South America and the Amazon fires are destroying the number and quality are Flanagan in these two books points out regarding the fish and fisherman, harrow after created by expansionist tendency .These two novels show that life underwater is an extreme concern for the national as well as an international concern.

Flanagan wants two show a mirror to human selfishness and tells that if these Sea things Vanished, nature also will vanished. It is like a woman in the process of dying when her kind is in trouble and doctors trying to "Keep her alive" Tasmania was formerly called "Van Diemen's Land" the natural resources of Tasmania had been exhausted by the former rulers before the freedom. He points out that the orange belly parrots are also vanishing. There are hundreds of reptiles and birds to nose differ are also dangerous due to the pollution on earth as well as in the water. The Novel *Toxic* deals with the problems of Salmon with help of dedicated journalists and rulers inquires it is in fact a tragedy not of the fish but also mankind as a whole. At present even and animals are suffocating to death and so are Salmon too. The petrol and diesel compressor creates problems for the lives underwater the basic question is "How is this legal? He appeals to the good conscience of the readers the world over." He wants some documentary must be made on the problem of pollution regarding the problems of Salmon he spent in 20 years' study. We wanted the beauty and happiness of our worlds to continue. In that time he watched marine life vanish and algae and jellyfish take over his beloved waterways. He writes that this book was borne of shame, that he "had failed to see what apparent." He shows what efforts he has taken to bring the problem to the forefront the feed the fish are given is poised by the



Amazon, deforestation of the fire. Flanagan writes about three types of corporations- Tassal, Huon Aquaculture, and petunia and points out shortcomings of the drawback and corporations. Flanagan Toxic is both providing on information and chronology the writing is both emotive and born barding he thinks “The cages are a grotesque sonic hell” Flanagan Toxic is not only an imaginative work of fiction but a strong indicator to warn the corporation on the one hand, and the world and the people on the other. He tells a dark story anchored to his beloved shack on the beachfront on Bruny Island, a Tasmanian treasure. Here his elegant much-awarded novels were crafted in deep tranquility for a quarter century before the noise of Tassal’s feedlots, generators, air pumps, and vessels, huge and small, drove him away. The writing is bombastic and emotive. Flanagan's talent for a pithy phrase is evident: the cage is a “grotesque sonic hell”, Salmon cutlets “a pink fish-finger for the 21st century.” It is effective but I fear it will resonate with few who don’t already accept that the industry is a problem. Toxic is set to become a landmark book of the twenty-first century.

I would recommend this book and everyone must read for every Tasmanian or indeed, anyone who values the environment and who despairs at the rapacity and greed of large corporations who put profit ahead of sustainable practices. I gave up eating Tasmanian salmon, a fish I used to love, some years ago, as evidence started coming out about the malpractices of the salmon farming industry. Flanagan’s book brings the threads together in an intensely personal way.



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