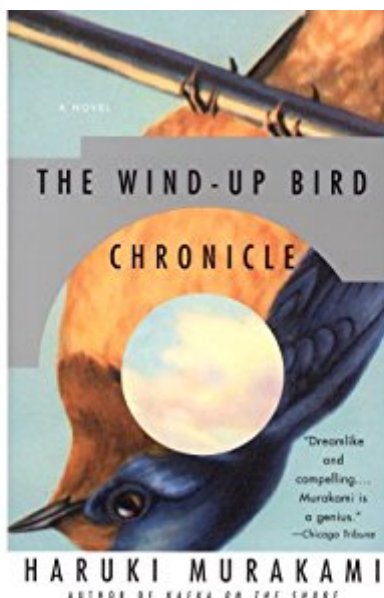


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The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle: A Novel



Synopsis

Japan's most highly regarded novelist now vaults into the first ranks of international fiction writers with this heroically imaginative novel, which is at once a detective story, an account of a disintegrating marriage, and an excavation of the buried secrets of World War II. In a Tokyo suburb a young man named Toru Okada searches for his wife's missing cat.... Soon he finds himself looking for his wife as well in a netherworld that lies beneath the placid surface of Tokyo. As these searches intersect, Okada encounters a bizarre group of allies and antagonists: a psychic prostitute; a malevolent yet mediagenic politician; a cheerfully morbid 16-year-old-girl; and an aging war veteran who has been permanently changed by the hideous things he witnessed during Japan's forgotten campaign in Manchuria. Gripping, prophetic, suffused with comedy and menace, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* is a tour de force equal in scope to the masterpieces of Mishima and Pynchon.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 26 hours and 16 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Random House Audio

Audible.com Release Date: September 3, 2013

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

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Best Sellers Rank: #56 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fantasy > Contemporary #90

in Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Magical Realism #688 in Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Paranormal & Urban

Customer Reviews

Whoa! Amazingly written story that defies a specific genre. It's a historical fiction-psychological suspense- paranormal story of astounding depth and intrigue. Many taboo or strange subjects are dealt with so openly that it was shocking and yet necessarily apropos of the storylines. Being from the U.S. the historical anecdotes related to WW2 from a Japanese/Chinese/Russian aspect made the story even more interesting. The psychological and paranormal, somewhat psychic, aspects were mind boggling at times and yet acceptable as a part of daily life as presented. A fabulous tale.

I've rated it four instead of five though because of the long winded and what seemed unnecessary narratives at times. I found myself just speeding through some of these just to move the story along. I will, however, read more from Murakami in the near future.

First, if you're not open to the supernatural/inexplicable, then this probably isn't the book for you. Murakami is a master at creating atmosphere. I found myself searching & listening to the songs mentioned throughout the story while reading those parts. I never thought the story was too slow. It actually just added to the feel and made me want to keep reading. Even when he brought in other characters' war stories, it wasn't an issue because they all tied in to the main story. The only thing that kept me from giving this 5 stars is reading about the liberties the translator took. I would love to read a proper, unaltered version.

First book by Murakami I endeavored to read, after being nagged for years by my friends to check him out. Superb. Will not go into the content or narrative of this novel out of respect for potential readership (no one likes spoilers, after all) but his style and the quality of translation are top-notch. Like Palahniuk, Murakami toys with the conventions (and adheres to the parameters) of twentieth century "pop lit," being at once accessible and challenging when at his (their) best. And much like the perfect pop song, it is an art form fantastically hard and both commercially and artistically a triumph when handled with talent and care. Fantastic and memorable imagery and characters, colorful and clever use of language. Much like a Lynch film, Murakami peels back the layer of normalcy we project onto our world and its situations to tease the reader into seeing just how eerie, intimidating and discomfiting the seemingly banal might really be when we stop taking it for granted, stop seeing it with our filters on. But when Murakami wants to move from scratching the ugly itch of reality to spiraling into the surreal, you find yourself dropped somewhere between French art house (e.g. "The Strange Color of Your Body's Tears") and a fever dream you want to keep chasing. If the first chapter grabs your attention, you will devour this book.

This book is quite long -- even by Murakami's standards, and I understand that this was abridged by the publisher when translating it into English -- but it is a beautiful book and certainly one of my favourites. It has, in any case, been translated very well, keeping its poeticism, and not missing much from the narrative as far as I could tell; had I not read the notes at the front of the book, I would never have known it had been abridged. Not that it matters hugely, but the edition itself is also quite nice and I'll probably look into purchasing more Murakami books from this publisher

rather than another.

Long stretches of seemingly unrelated histories extend this beyond what it should have been. Far more interesting when following the primary story of the Mr. Okada and his wife. The surreal elements in an otherwise straightforward story were interesting, with the slightly off-kilter tone of a David Lynch movie or Pynchon novel.

It is very hard to rate this book and I see the reasons why everyone gave it 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 stars. On many levels the book is brilliant. It is brilliant what Murakami can do with his prose, all the alleys of reality and supra-reality that he is taking or breaking. Also, his style and his insights about life are brilliant. Where he fails short, here and in other works (1Q85) is tying together all the intriguing story threads that he is creating and then abandoning. I was also a little bored by the story within the story tactic. A few times maybe, if it adds to the plot and main theme, but most of these stories were simple detours, and I skipped pages. This being said, I highly recommend this book. Even imperfect, or rather, like someone else said here, a cross between *Smoke and Mirrors* and staggering genius, he is one of the most interesting contemporary writers. What he wants to say though seems unclear or maybe not as important to him as it is for his readers. With him, it's more about taking an interesting journey, not about the destination. Grab this book asap, if you haven't read it!

A surrealistic novel of the indistinguishable mingling of the natural and the supernatural by Japan's leading novelist. A well-written but weird story about an out-of-work anti-hero who, after his wife leaves him, spends a lot of time in a nearby dry well, having erotic hallucinatory dreams, having experiences that seem like hallucinatory dreams, and fixating on his brother-in-law (a magnetic but malevolent rising politician on whom he blames everything). The roster of bizarre characters encountered by the anti-hero includes a 16 year old girl who has dropped out of school, an aging veteran of the Japanese occupation of Manchuria, a psychic prostitute and her equally psychic sister whom he engaged to find his missing cat, a beautiful woman who gives him money for exorcising the spirits within wealthy female clients, etc. Some interesting vignettes on the Japanese military experience in Manchuria and the subsequent slave labor of the defeated Japanese in Siberian labor camps. It is testimony to the author's literary skill that anyone would read the entire 600+ pages, which I did.

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