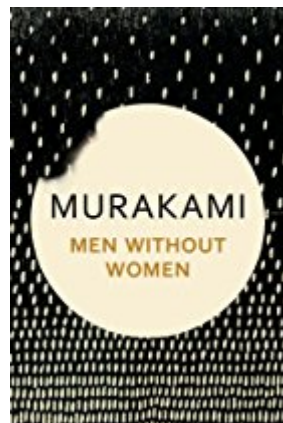


Reading Book Men Without Women By HARUKI MURAKAMI



A dazzling new collection of short stories--the first major new work of fiction from the beloved, internationally acclaimed, Haruki Murakami since his #1 best-selling *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*. Across seven tales, Haruki Murakami brings his powers of observation to bear on the lives of men who, in their own ways, find themselves alone. Here are vanishing cats and smoky bars, lonely hearts and mysterious women, baseball and the Beatles, woven together to tell stories that speak to us all. Marked by the same wry humor that has defined his entire body of work, in this collection Murakami has crafted another contemporary classic.

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Review “[A] beguilingly irresistible book. Like a lost lover, it holds on tight long after the affair is over. . . . Part allegory, part myth, part magic realism, part Philip Marlowe, private eye. . . . Murakami puts the performance in performance art.” —The New York Times Book Review “Time and again in these seven stories, Murakami displays his singular genius. . . . The stories in this collection find their power within the confines of common but momentous disturbances that linger on in memory.” —Los Angeles Times “Mesmerizing tales of profound alienation. . . . Murakami is a master of the open-ended mystery.” —The Washington Post “Beautifully rendered. . . . Murakami at his whimsical, romantic best. . . . [He] writes of complex things with his usual beguiling simplicity—the same seeming naivety found in the Beatles songs that are so often his reference points. The stories read like dirges for ‘all the lonely people’ but they are strangely invigorating to read.” —Financial Times “Classic Murakami. . . . [His] voice—cool, poised, witty, characterized by a peculiar blend of whimsy and poignancy, wit and profundity—hasn’t lost its power to unsettle even

as it amuses.” —The Boston Globe “A whimsical delight. . . . The seven stories in his fourth story collection present another captivating treasure hunt of familiar Murakami motifs—including cats, jazz, whiskey, certain cigarettes, the moon, baseball, never-named characters, and—of course—the many men without women. . . . Murakami always manages to entertain, surprise, and satisfy. . . . Sanity might be overrated, but Murakami is surely not.” —The Christian Science Monitor “Wise stories. . . . Moody and melancholic as [they] can be, some of them offer comparable hope that these men without women might emerge from their long and isolating loneliness, acknowledging the hurt, pain and even rage they feel rather than folding in on themselves and ceasing to fully live.” —Milwaukee Journal Sentinel “Men Without Women has the familiar signposts and well-worn barstools that will reconnect with longtime readers of Murakami: magical realism, Beatles tracks and glasses of whiskey. Yet, except for a few tales, the magic is watered down and it’s reality that is now poured stiff. . . . This collection is a sober, clear-eyed attempt to observe the evasion and confrontation of suffering and loss, and to hope for something better.” —New York Daily News “It’s been a few years since we’ve gotten something new from Japan’s master of magical realism, but this new seven-story collection draws us right back into his signature realm—one of lonely men with wandering imaginations, mysterious cats, and subtle-yet-surreal narratives that reveal the supernatural layer operating beneath our everyday lives.” —W Magazine “Vintage Murakami. . . . Compellingly odd. . . . A glimpse into the strange worlds people invent by the always inventive [author]. . . . Elegant.” —Kirkus Reviews “Thought-provoking.” —Pittsburgh Post-Gazette “Superb.” —SF Weekly “A new Haruki Murakami book is always cause for celebration. . . . These stories are filled with all of the luminous, magical elements that make Murakami’s writing so fascinating.” —Bustle “Funny and surreal.” —io9 “A funny, lovely, unmistakably Murakami collection.” —BuzzFeed

About the Author Haruki Murakami was born in Kyoto in 1949 and now lives near Tokyo. His work has been translated into more than fifty languages, and the most recent of his many international honors is the Hans Christian Andersen Literature Award, whose previous recipients include J. K. Rowling, Isabel Allende, and Salman Rushdie. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. The call came in after one a.m. and woke me up. Phones ringing in the middle of the night always sound harsh and grating, like some savage metal tool out to destroy the world. I felt it was my duty, as a member of the human race, to put a stop to it, so I got out of bed, padded over to the living room, and picked up the receiver. A man’s low voice informed me that a woman had vanished from this world forever. The voice belonged to the woman’s husband. At least that’s what he said. And he went on. My wife committed suicide last Wednesday, he said. In any case, I thought I should let you know. In any case. As far as I could make out, there was not a drop of emotion in his voice. It was like he was reading lines meant for a telegram, with barely any space at all between each word. An announcement, pure and simple. Unadorned reality. Period. What did I say in response? I must have said something, but I can’t recall. At any rate, there was a prolonged period of silence. Like a deep hole in the middle of the road that the two of us were staring into from opposite sides. Then, without a word, as if he were gently placing a fragile piece of artwork on the floor, the man hung up. I stood there, in a white T-shirt and blue boxers, pointlessly clutching the phone. How did he know about me? I have no idea. Had she mentioned my name to her husband, as an old boyfriend? But why? And how did he know my phone number (which was unlisted)? In the first place, why me? Why would her husband go to the trouble of calling me to let me know his wife had died? I couldn’t imagine she’d left a request like that in a farewell note. We’d broken up years earlier. And we’d never seen each other since—not even once. We had never even talked on the phone. That’s neither here nor there. The bigger problem was that he didn’t explain a single thing to me. He thought he needed to let me know his wife had killed herself. And somehow he’d gotten hold of my phone number. Beyond that, though—nothing. It seemed his intention was to leave me stuck somewhere in the middle, dangling between knowledge and ignorance. But why? To get me thinking about something? Like what?

Customer Reviews Most helpful customer reviews 19 of 19 people found the following review

helpful. I've thoroughly enjoyed his short stories By Christopher Barrett I've been a huge Murakami fan for years. I've thoroughly enjoyed his short stories, especially those from "Blind willow, sleeping woman". This is a short to medium length collecting of stories that are decidedly uneven. 'Drive my car' begins the collection in a good way. It's simple, easy Murakami, a great way to get into the groove. This eases the reader into 'Yesterday', arguably the second best story of the collection. But of course this story was published in the New Yorker, so I've read it a couple of times. It's still available free online. Next we have a couple of rather ordinary stories (by Murakami standards): 'sheherazade' and 'an independent organ '. Both are written in the Murakami style, but neither really serves to grab the reader's attention. Following these is 'Kino', which is certainly the best story in this collection and arguably rates among the author's best short stories, in my humble opinion. This story alone pushes my rating to four stars instead of three. I pondered this story for days. It really sticks with you. Finishing the collecting are two stories that are good, but really pale after reading 'Kino'. 'Gregor Samsa in love' is a fun twist on the old Kafka story. It's a nice tribute to one of Murakami's biggest influences. And finishing the collection is the title story, little more than a few pages of musings by a vague protagonist. All in all average compared to previous collections by Murakami. I'd say read this if you're a fan, otherwise start out with earlier collections. But as a Murakami fan, it's worth the purchase just for Kino. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Murakami's latest a Masterful Homerun By D. Crowell LOVED this collection. I am a HUGE Murakami fan and have read all his fiction. Wasn't expecting much from these short stories so was pleasantly surprised. Murakami's wisdom and understanding of human nature is so profound that these stories are memorable. Fans and non-fans of Murakami will enjoy. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Murakami's stories are the best. This collection in particular struck me as touching By Toby's mom As expected, Murakami's stories are the best. This collection in particular struck me as touching, nothing left unsaid. I know I will read and reread it. See all 57 customer reviews...

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