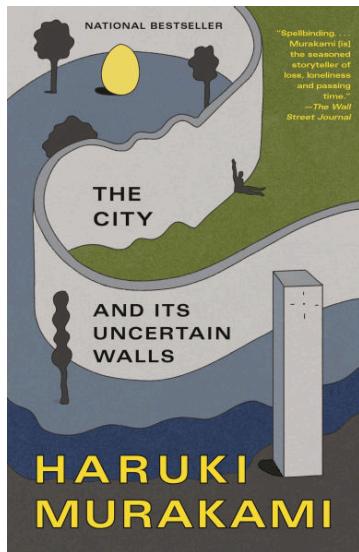


The City And Its Uncertain Walls

By Haruki Marakami

1.15.26 - From my kitchen table



A couple quotes that stuck with me from the book:

“That’s right. Your heart is seeking, and needing, a new direction. Though your mind has yet to fully grasp that. People’s hearts are not that easy to grasp.”

“That’s right,” the boy said, reading my mind. “Like a young rabbit in a spring meadow, it eludes the slow-moving hands of one’s consciousness.”

“Truth is not found in fixed stillness, but in ceaseless change and movement. Isn’t this the quintessential core of what stories are all about? At least that’s how I see it.”

First thing I want to say is I do not feel like I am worthy of like “reviewing” this book cause it was an absolute trip, packed with meaning, and had my head spinning and kinda all over the place as to what the message / deeper meaning was. I just wanted to start with that and say that in general when I write about any form of book/media on here I’m just expressing my thoughts. I don’t know shit and anyone who is able to put out a piece of personal work that is worthy of discussion is infinitely smarter then me lol. My dad suggested this book to me and I read it in about 2 weeks. I think this book stands alone from any other book I’ve ever read in how it was written and the content within the book. I really liked it, but upon finishing it I still feel like I’m grasping to understand all the contents in the book from broader themes to final details. Now I’ll get into the nitty gritty, this whole thing will probably be nonsense if you haven’t read the book too btw. Shit it might even be nonsense if you have read the book.

I want to start by talking about how this book made me feel throughout. Until the end of the book, like the very end when the narrator talks to the boy in the depths of his own consciousness and decides to leave the timeless “town” and head back to the real world, I didn’t

get a lot of emotion or feeling out of this book. The narrator is so deadpan and matter of fact throughout the book, even when describing his own feelings, that while I was enjoying reading the book and interested in the story I wasn't necessarily emotionally sucked in. Once I reached the end of the book though and the narrator talks to the yellow submarine boy in his consciousness and decides to leave the town, trusting that his shadow will catch him on the "other side/real world" (whatever u wanna call it) I almost had like a complete release of emotion. I felt so happy, sad, and everything in between for the narrator. While he wasn't emotional in his accounts of his life, following along with his story and reaching a point where he felt he could continue onward in the real world and be "whole" again, was emotional for me. To me this was really cool, and almost more meaningful, as it wasn't super emotional writing in the sense the narrator went into immense detail about his feelings so I didn't feel it that way, it just happened naturally from me following his POV and his progression throughout the book.

This emotional journey I had with the book I think is really cool and almost the book's intention, because it reflects the emotional journey the narrator himself goes on. He is essentially a shell of himself for the entire book after the girl leaves him and disappears from his life at age 17, and you can feel through his accounts of his life / outlook that he is almost devoid of deeper feeling and emotion, it doesn't register fully with him and for that reason the reader doesn't feel it. Like in the book, it's like he has a wall around that part of him that was injured/hurt/impacted by the girl disappearing from his life as a 17 year old boy. He walks the earth as a shell or "shadow" of a human, going about his day to day activities, but never fully buying into or living them 100%, his mind is always preoccupied by that girl, or the "town with uncertain walls." The part of him that goes to that town on account of that girl goes there because instead of processing and moving forward as a whole, hurt person, the narrator compartmentalizes his grief, storing part of his consciousness (holy run on sentence im typing but fuck it) in that nameless town where he gets to interact with a shell of the girl he loved and time stays still so he doesn't have to really process/work thru his feelings about it. This is all just my interpretation about it, I'm not saying that this is what it is about at all I could be smoking dick rn and Murakami would probably read this and laugh lol. But to circle back to the point I was trying to make about my emotional release at the end after a lack of emotion thru the book. I feel like my emotional state mimicked the characters in that at the end of the book, he is finally able to shed/release the emotional grip this girl had on his consciousness (holy fuck this word is hard to spell lol) that kept him holed up in the town, while his shell (or shadow) wandered in the real world never feeling like it was all there (which it wasn't).

Now this is my theory as to why he was finally called by his heart to leave the town behind and "fall" back to his shadow in the real world. While his consciousness was split, his heart transcends the boundary of the wall, which is why he was called back to the real world. When his shadow in the real world met the woman from the coffee shop and began to get to know her, his heart began to call out to his consciousness and tell him (*much like the first quote I put up above below the title image*) it was time to come back to the real world as his heart wanted to be able to give all of himself to this new woman. It's not that he will return to his

shadow in the real world and be a happy go lucky guy and not still feel the effects/emotions from that girl leaving him when he was young, but he is at least deciding to move forward with his grief and continue on with life instead of hanging in purgatory in both worlds. This transcendence over both versions of the narrator also happens when the boy bites his ear in his dream. He sports the injury from the bite in the town, but feels the pain of the bite in the real world. Now I'm not sure how this connects to his heart transcending the boundary, but it's another instance of his shadow and real self in the town being interconnected with each other despite the physical distance (if it is physical distance? I guess maybe distance in consciousness? This is where its kinda a mindfuck?).

I have a million other questions to be honest to ask and this is a book I wish I could have a sit down with the author and just hit him with all of them. There was so much meaning packed in these pages I would love to interview the guy. But for right now, I think this is where my thoughts on the book end (at least in this document).

Now my thoughts here are very jumbled and I'm sure I'm not writing very cohesively but that is also kinda how the book left my brain lol so I guess it's only right. Will definitely be going down a Murakami rabbit hole and reading more of his work. A smaller little piece I want to add before I wrap up is that Murakami has some of the coolest metaphors and comparisons in writing I have ever read. He connects/comares to things that I would never piece together but when he does it will make perfect sense and I noticed those throughout the book and really appreciated them. One that I remember (and I'm paraphrasing here) he said was "I sat back and let myself roam my vast consciousness like an unleashed dog in a big meadow" or some shit like that and I thought that was cool asf.