

1Q84 (Vintage International)

By Haruki Murakami

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“Murakami is like a magician who explains what he’s doing as he performs the trick and still makes you believe he has supernatural powers . . . But while anyone can tell a story that resembles a dream, it's the rare artist, like this one, who can make us feel that we are dreaming it ourselves.” —*The New York Times Book Review*

The year is 1984 and the city is Tokyo.

A young woman named Aomame follows a taxi driver’s enigmatic suggestion and begins to notice puzzling discrepancies in the world around her. She has entered, she realizes, a parallel existence, which she calls 1Q84 —“Q is for ‘question mark.’ A world that bears a question.” Meanwhile, an aspiring writer named Tengo takes on a suspect ghostwriting project. He becomes so wrapped up with the work and its unusual author that, soon, his previously placid life begins to come unraveled.

As Aomame’s and Tengo’s narratives converge over the course of this single year, we learn of the profound and tangled connections that bind them ever closer: a beautiful, dyslexic teenage girl with a unique vision; a mysterious religious cult that instigated a shoot-out with the metropolitan police; a reclusive, wealthy dowager who runs a shelter for abused women; a hideously ugly private investigator; a mild-mannered yet ruthlessly efficient bodyguard; and a peculiarly insistent television-fee collector.

A love story, a mystery, a fantasy, a novel of self-discovery, a dystopia to rival George Orwell’s—*1Q84* is Haruki Murakami’s most ambitious undertaking yet: an instant best seller in his native Japan, and a tremendous feat of imagination from one of our most revered contemporary writers.

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1Q84 (Vintage International) By Haruki Murakami Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review
Amazon Best Books of the Month, October 2011: The year is 1984, but not for long. Aomame, on her way to meet a client--the gravid implications of which only come clear later--sits in a taxi, stuck in traffic. On a lark, she takes the driver's advice, bolts from the cab, walks onto the elevated Tokyo expressway, descends an emergency ladder to the street below, and enters a strange new world.

In parallel, a math teacher and aspiring novelist named Tengo gets an interesting offer. His editor has come upon an entry for a young writer's literary prize, a story that, despite its obvious stylistic drawbacks, strikes a deeply moving chord with those who've read it. Its author is a mysterious 17-year-old, and the editor proposes that Tengo quietly rewrite the story for the final round of the competition.

So begins Haruki Murakami's *magnus opus*, an epic of staggering proportions. As the tale progresses, it folds in a deliciously intriguing cast of characters: a physically repulsive private investigator, a wealthy dowager with a morally ambiguous mission, her impeccably resourceful bodyguard, the leader of a somewhat obscure and possibly violent religious organization, a band of otherworldly "Little People," a door-to-door fee collector seemingly immune to the limits of space and time, and the beautiful Fuka-Eri: dyslexic, unfathomable, and scarred.

Aomame names her new world "1Q84" in honor of its mystery: "Q is for 'question mark.' A world that bears a question.'" Weaving through it, central motifs--the moon, Janá?ek's Sinfonietta, George Orwell's 1984--acquire powerful resonance, and Aomame and Tengo's paths take on a conjoined life of their own, dancing with a protracted elegance that requires nearly 1,000 pages to reach its crowning denouement.

1Q84 was a runaway best seller in its native Japan, but it's more instructive to frame the book's importance in other ways. For one, it's hard not to compare it to James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Both enormous novels mark their respective author's most ambitious undertaking by far, occupy an artificially discrete unit of time (*Ulysses*, one day; *1Q84*, one year), and can be read as having a narrative structure that evinces an almost quantum-mechanical relationship to reality, which is not to say that either author intended this.

More to the point, the English translation of *1Q84*--easily the grandest work of world literature since Roberto Bolaño's *2666*--represents a monstrous literary event. Now would somebody please award Murakami his Nobel Prize? --*Jason Kirk*

Review

“A book that . . . makes you marvel, reading it, at all the strange folds a single human brain can hold . . . A grand, third-person, all encompassing meganovel. It is a book full of anger and violence and disaster and weird sex and strange new realities, a book that seems to want to hold all of Japan inside of it . . . Murakami has established himself as the unofficial laureate of Japan—arguably its chief imaginative ambassador, in any medium, to the world: the primary source, for many millions of readers, of the texture and shape of his native country . . . I was surprised to discover, after so many surprising books, that he managed to surprise me again.”
—Sam Anderson, *The New York Times Magazine*

“Profound . . . A multilayered narrative of loyalty and loss . . . A fully articulated vision of a not-quite-

nightmare world . . . A big sprawling novel [that] achieves what is perhaps the primary function of literature: to reimagine, to reframe, the world . . . At the center of [*1Q84*'s] reality . . . is the question of love, of how we find it and how we hold it, and the small fragile connections that sustain us, even (or especially) despite the odds . . . This is a major development in Murakami's writing . . . A vision, and an act of the imagination."
—David L. Ulin, *Los Angeles Times*

"Murakami is clearly one of the most popular and admired novelists in the world today, a brilliant practitioner of serious, yet irresistibly engaging, literary fantasy . . . Once you start reading *1Q84*, you won't want to do much else until you've finished it . . . Murakami possesses many gifts, but chief among them is an almost preternatural gift for suspenseful storytelling . . . Despite its great length, [his] novel is tightly plotted, without fat, and he knows how to make dialogue, even philosophical dialogue, exciting . . . Murakami's novels have been translated into a score of languages, but it would be hard to imagine that any of them could be better than the English versions by Jay Rubin, partnered here with Philip Gabriel . . . There's no question about the sheer enjoyability of this gigantic novel, both as an eerie thriller and as a moving love story . . . I read the book in three days and have been thinking about it ever since."
—Michael Dirda, *The Washington Post*

"Fascinating . . . A remarkable book in which outwardly simple sentences and situations snowball into a profound meditation on our own very real dystopian trappings . . . One of those rare novels that clearly depict who we are now and also offer tantalizing clues as to where literature may be headed . . . I'd be curious to know how Murakami's yeoman translators Jay Rubin and Philip Gabriel divided up the work . . . because there are no noticeable bumps in the pristine and deceptively simple prose . . . More than any author since Kafka, Murakami appreciates the genuine strangeness of our real world, and he's not afraid to incorporate elements of surrealism or magical realism as tools to help us see ourselves for who we really are. *1Q84* is a tremendous accomplishment. It does every last blessed thing a masterpiece is supposed to—and a few things we never even knew to expect."
—Andrew Ervin, *The San Francisco Chronicle*

"[*1Q84*] is fundamentally different from its predecessors. We realize before long that it is a road. And what the writer has laid down is a yellow brick road. It passes over stretches of deadly desert, to be sure, through strands of somniferous poppies, and past creatures that hurl their heads, spattering us with spills of kinked enigma. But the destination draws us: We crave it, and the craving intensifies as we go along (unlike so many contemporary novels that are sampler menus with neither main course nor appetite to follow). More important, the travelers we encounter, odd and wildly disparate as they are, possess a quality hard to find in Murakami's previous novels: a rounded, sometimes improbable humanity with as much allure as mystery. It is not just puzzlement they present, but puzzled tenderness; most of all in the two leading figures, Aomame and Tengo. Converging through all manner of subplot and peril, they arouse a desire in us that almost mirrors their own . . . Murakami makes us want to follow them; we are reluctant to relinquish them. Who would care about the yellow brick road without Scarecrow's, Woodman's and Lion's freakiness and yearning? What is a road, particularly Murakami's intricately convoluted road, without its human wayfarers?"
—Richard Eder, *The Boston Globe*

"*1Q84* is one of those books that disappear in your hands, pulling you into its mysteries with such speed and skill that you don't even notice as the hours tick by and the mountain of pages quietly shrinks . . . I finished *1Q84* one fall evening, and when I set it down, baffled and in awe, I couldn't help looking out the window to see if just the usual moon hung there or if a second orb had somehow joined it. It turned out that this magical novel did not actually alter reality. Even so, its enigmatic glow makes the world seem a little strange long after you turn the last page. Grade: A."

—Rob Brunner, *Entertainment Weekly*

"A 932-page Japanese novel set in Tokyo in which the words 'sushi' and 'sake' never appear but there are mentions of linguine and French wine, as well as Proust, Faye Dunaway, *The Golden Bough*, Duke Ellington, Macbeth, Churchill, Janáèek, Sonny and Cher, and, give the teasing title, George Orwell? Welcome to the world of Haruki Murakami . . . A symmetrical and multi-layered yarn, as near to a 19th-century three-decker as it is possible to be . . . The label of fantasy-realism has been stuck to it, but it actually has more of a Dickensian or Trollopian structure . . . Explicit, yet subtle and dream-like, combining viciousness with whimsy . . . this is Murakami's unflagging and masterful take on the desire and pursuit of the Whole."
—Paul Theroux, *Vanity Fair*

"Do you miss the girl with the dragon tattoo? Do you long for the thrill of following her adventures again through three volumes of exciting, intelligent fiction? If so, I have good news for you. She's got a sort of soul sister in one of the two main characters in Haruki Murakami's wonderful novel *1Q84* . . . With more than enough narrative and intellectual heft to make it enjoyable for anyone with a taste for moving representations of modern consciousness in the magical realist mode, this story may easily carry you away to a new world and keep you there for a long time . . . The deep and resonant plot . . . unfolds at a leisurely pace but in compelling fashion by luring us along with scenes of homicidal intrigue, literary intrigue, religious fanaticism, physical sex, metaphysical sex and asexual sex. And music . . . Murakami's main characters find themselves drawn toward each other as irresistibly, magnetically, hypnotically, soulfully and physically as any characters in Western fiction. Given the plain-spoken but appealing nature of the prose (translated by Jay Rubin and Philip Gabriel), most of you will feel that same power as an insinuating compulsion to read on, despite the enormous length, hoping against hope for a happy ending under a sky with either two moons or one. Two moons—two worlds—a girl with—900 pages—*1Q84* is a gorgeous festival of words arranged for maximum comprehension and delicious satisfaction."
—Alan Cheuse, NPR

"Murakami's new novel is the international literary giant at his uncanny, mesmerizing best . . . The spell cast by Murakami's fiction is formed in the tension between his grounded accounts of everyday life and the otherworldly forces that keep intruding on that life, propelling the characters into surreal adventures . . . Translation is at the center of what Murakami does; not a translation from one tongue to another, but the translation of an inner world into this, the outer one. Very few writers speak the truths of that secret, inner universe more fluently."
—Laura Miller, *Salon*

"Bewitching and extraordinarily unsettling . . . Part noir crime drama, part love story, and part hallucinatory riff on *1984* . . . Murakami paces a story as well as any writer alive. He knows how to tell a love story without getting cute. He understands how to blend realism and fantasy (magical realism if you want to get all literary about it) in just the right proportions. And he has a knack for writing about everyday matters—fixing dinner, going for a walk—in such a way that the events at hand, no matter how mundane, are never boring . . . Most impressive, he knows how to inject the logic and atmosphere of dreams into his fiction without becoming coy or vague. He's Kafka-esque to the extent that he's not interested in why or how a man may have turned into an insect overnight, but in how the man deals with his new situation. And like Beckett, he furnishes his dreamscapes with a mere handful of carefully chosen props—a tree, a streetlight, a playground sliding board—specifics that ground a scene but leave room for the reader to fill in details. This is perhaps the key point: he makes you, the reader, his collaborator. What he leaves out is as important as what he includes, because it encourages you to fill in the blanks in the canvas . . . Murakami is one of the very few novelists—Dickens comes most easily to mind—who can make a serious, play-by-the-rules reader cheat and

jump ahead to find out what's happened to a character . . . Even while we are being entertained by the weirdness of the world he's creating, we feel a gnawing anxiety that this same book is unraveling our own sense of normality. You don't know where things are going while you read it, and you can't say exactly where you've been when you're finished, but everything around you looks different somehow. If this is fiction as funhouse, it is very serious fun, and you enter at the risk of your own complacency."
—Malcolm Jones, *Newsweek*

"If you haven't previously read Murakami . . . this is a good introduction to his Lewis-Carroll-meets-Mister-Rogers style, a distinctive blend of the wild and the ordinary that can be as engaging as Wonderland itself. If you've read his previous book, you'll find a lot to enjoy here . . . *1Q84* has a big, romantic heart and deserves to be celebrated on our shores."
—Josh Emmons, *People* (3.5/4 stars)

"[*1Q84*] gets off to a vintage Murakami start: eerie wrinkles in an otherwise ordinary Tokyo day. A woman stuck in traffic decides to get out and walk. A struggling novelist is roped into a shady writing project. But with every page, the ready edges closer to an Orwellian rabbit hole. And when the plunge comes, it brings all the trippy delights of Murakami's unsettling imagination: a vanishing, a parallel world with two moons, and 'Little People' who make Big Brother look like an oaf."
—Devin Gordon, *GQ*

"Voracious visionary Haruki Murakami's *1Q84* mixes down-the-rabbit-hole fantasy with out-there science fiction for a superhefty but accessible adventure."
—Lisa Shea, *Elle*

"Powerful . . . In *1Q84*, award-winning Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami skips between alternate worlds, offering readers a moving love story in what is perhaps his most ambitious novel yet . . . An unstoppably readable, deeply moving love story that cements Murakami's reputation as a uniquely compassionate and imaginative novelist who's among the leading voices of his global generation . . . Murakami likes to blur the boundaries of reality, and in this sense *1Q84* is his most intricate work . . . Aomame and Tengo work their way towards each other and out of the year 1Q84 like divers straining for the surface. Finishing the book I felt as if I, too, were coming to the surface; days later the world still does not feel the way it used to."
—Kevin Hartnett, *The Christian Science Monitor*

"*1Q84* is extraordinarily ambitious . . . Beguiling and ridiculously entertaining . . . Murakami has created the big, beautiful book so many people have been waiting for. Before it even arrived in this country, *1Q84* was one of the most chattered-about titles of the fall. We got our hopes up—and he didn't let us down."
—Kevin Canfield, *The Kansas City Star*

"Murakami has created his genuine masterpiece, one that reaches out to fans while also satisfying the critics who have called for a more deft use of symbolism and literary worldliness in his work . . . In this book, Murakami simplifies his familiar artistic elements, leaving us with a readable pair of intertwined stories that wind up on the same, enjoyable track. For readers willing to enter Murakami's literary marathon, the outcome will be one to remember."
—Jeremy C. Owens, *San Jose Mercury News*

"Lose yourself in the nearly 1,000 pages of Murakami's alternately mesmerizing and menacing world, living for large stretches of each day with its characters, and time actually shifts and becomes harder to measure—one of the many themes, as it happens, in this big and brilliant book . . . It's the quest for such shared experience, between writer and reader in the dream world they inhabit together, that explains why we

read fiction—that magical carpet whisking us from the lonely prison of the self into the hearts and minds of others . . . It may not be easy traveling to another world; it's often hard enough getting around in our own. But what is true for this novel's determined protagonists will go double for its faithful readers: Take the time to get carried away, and time itself—as well as the way you think about how you spend yours—will take on new dimensions. It's a mind-blowing experience. Great novels always are."
—Mike Fischer, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*

"[A] masterwork . . . [Murakami has] crafted what may well become a classic literary rendering of pre-2011 Japan . . . Orwell wrote his masterpiece to reflect a future dystopia through a Cold War lens . . . Similarly, Murakami's *1Q84* captures attitudes and circumstances that characterize Japanese life before the March earthquake-tsunami-nuclear disaster. Reading *1Q84,* once can't help but sense already how things have changed."
—Lee Makela, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*

"Always intriguing . . . *1Q84* is a huge novel in every sense . . . putting it down is not an option . . . The reader who steps into its time flow only reluctantly comes ashore."
—Sherryl Connelly, *New York Daily News*

"*1Q84* is a tremendous feat and a triumph . . . A must-read for anyone who wants to come to terms with contemporary Japanese culture."
—Lindsay Howell, *Baltimore Examiner*

"Perhaps one of the most important works of science fiction of the year . . . *1Q84* does not disappoint . . . [It] envelops the reader in a shifting world of strange cults and peculiar characters that is surreal and entrancing."
—Matt Staggs, Suvudu.com

"There's no denying that Haruki Murakami's *1Q84* . . . is an impressive achievement, both for its already accomplished author and for the two separate translators who took on the not inconsequential task of translating the book from Murakami's native Japanese into English. Equally impressive is the author's facility at working in this long form—the story moves, it seems, effortlessly through hundreds of pages, and the reader, too, glides easily from page to page as if the book were a third of its length . . . What's most remarkable about Murakami's novel, however, is neither its prose style nor its accompanying emotional distance: it's its scope. Most so-called doorstopper novels contain multitudes of characters, conflicts, decades, or even footnotes. *1Q84*, at its heart, is primarily a story of two separated lovers. It takes place in a short time frame and in a single city, but it's enriched by Murakami's philosophical musings and his uniquely visionary form of fantasy."
—Norah Piehl, BookReporter.com

"Murakami's dystopian magnum opus . . . *1Q84* unfolds as a science-fiction thriller, and despite the pointed Orwellian reference, it is closer in spirit to the work of Philip K. Dick. Fantastic elements seamlessly integrate with the mundane to create a world much like, if not quite like, our own . . . The supporting cast . . . is lovingly lifted from classic pulp fiction archetypes, and roots the novel in the noir mystery genre as well. Pulp fiction, indeed, but on a grand scale—as ambitious, quirky and imaginative as only Murakami can be."
—Robert Weibezahl, *BookPage*

"Murakami's trademark plainspoken oddness is on full display in this story of lapsed childhood friends Aomame and Tengo, now lonely adults in 1984 Tokyo, whose destinies may be curiously intertwined . . . Murakami's fans know that his focus has always been on the quiet strangeness of life, the hidden connections between perfect strangers, and the power of the non sequitur to reveal the associative strands

that weave our modern world. *1Q84* goes further than any Murakami novel so far, and perhaps further than any novel before it, toward exposing the delicacy of the membranes that separate love from chance encounters, the kind from the wicked, and reality from what people living in the pent-up modern world dream about when they go to sleep under an alien moon."
—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

"Unquestionably Murakami's most vividly imagined parallel world . . . Gradually but inexorably, the tension builds, as we root passionately for Tengo and Aomame to find one another and hold hands again, so simple a human connection offering a kind of oasis in the midst of the unexplainable and the terrifying. When Murakami melds fantasy and realism, mystery and epic, it is no simple genre-bending exercise; rather, it is literary alchemy of the highest order."
—Bill Ott, *Booklist* (starred review)

"Ambitious, sprawling and thoroughly stunning . . . Orwellian dystopia, sci-fi, the modern world (terrorism, drugs, apathy, pop novels)—all blend in this dreamlike, strange and wholly unforgettable epic."
—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

"At the core of this work is a spectacular love story about a girl and a boy who briefly held hands when they were both ten. That said, with the fiercely imaginative Murakami as author, the story's exposition is gloriously labyrinthine . . . Originally published in Japan as three volumes, each of which were instant best sellers, this work—perhaps Murakami's finest—will surely have the same success in its breathlessly anticipated all-in-one English translation. Murakami aficionados will delight in recognizing traces of earlier titles, especially *A Wild Sheep Chase*, *Norwegian Wood*, and even *Underground*."
—Terry Hong, *Library Journal* (starred review)

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 Jerusalem Prize, whose previous recipients include J. M. Coetzee, Milan Kundera, and V. S. Naipaul.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Karen Keegan:

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Thomas Murray:

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those information which is inside the former life are challenging be find than now is taking seriously which one would work to believe or which one the resource are convinced. If you obtain the unstable resource then you obtain it as your main information you will see huge disadvantage for you. All those possibilities will not happen throughout you if you take 1Q84 (Vintage International) as your daily resource information.

Roberto Senn:

Playing with family inside a park, coming to see the ocean world or hanging out with good friends is thing that usually you may have done when you have spare time, after that why you don't try factor that really opposite from that. A single activity that make you not feeling tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you already been ride on and with addition associated with. Even you love 1Q84 (Vintage International), you can enjoy both. It is very good combination right, you still want to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh seriously its mind hangout folks. What? Still don't buy it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

Laura Clark:

Reading a book to get new life style in this year; every people loves to go through a book. When you read a book you can get a large amount of benefit. When you read books, you can improve your knowledge, mainly because book has a lot of information on it. The information that you will get depend on what forms of book that you have read. If you would like get information about your study, you can read education books, but if you act like you want to entertain yourself you are able to a fiction books, such us novel, comics, as well as soon. The 1Q84 (Vintage International) will give you a new experience in reading through a book.

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