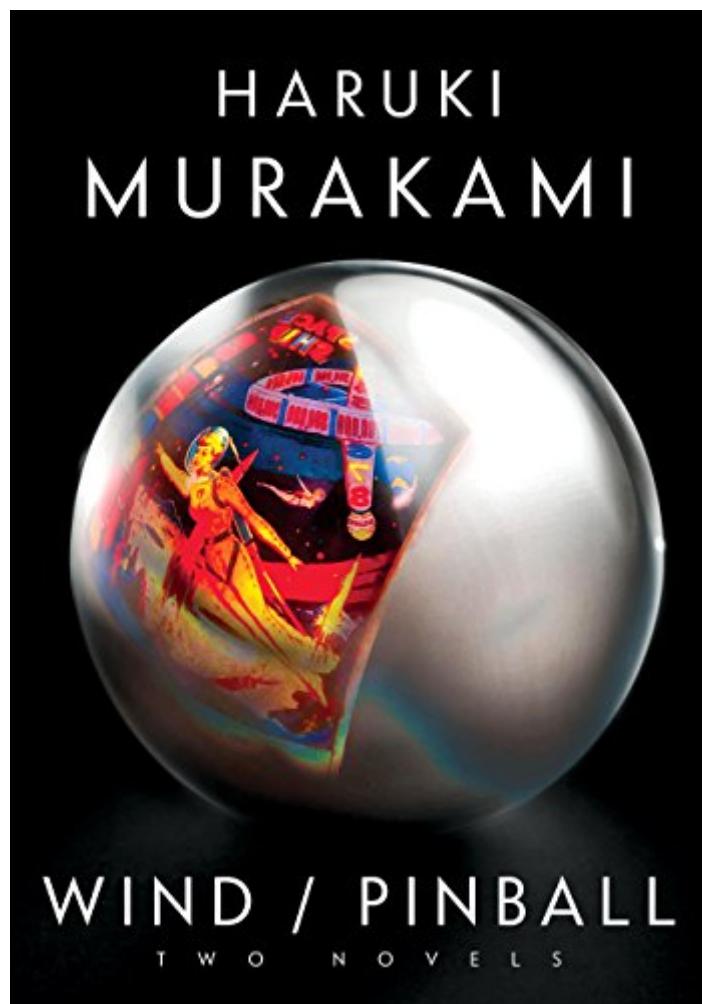


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Wind/Pinball: Two Novels



Synopsis

NATIONAL BESTSELLER In the spring of 1978, a young Haruki Murakami sat down at his kitchen table and began to write. The result: two remarkable short novels—“Hear the Wind Sing” and “Pinball, 1973”—that launched the career of one of the most acclaimed authors of our time. These powerful, at times surreal, works about two young men coming of age—the unnamed narrator and his friend the Rat—are stories of loneliness, obsession, and eroticism. They bear all the hallmarks of Murakami’s later books, and form the first two-thirds, with “A Wild Sheep Chase,” of the trilogy of the Rat. Widely available in English for the first time ever, newly translated, and featuring a new introduction by Murakami himself, “Wind/Pinball” gives us a fascinating insight into a great writer’s beginnings. From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It is somewhat ironic that despite being an international phenomenon and enjoying perennial buzz about potentially winning the Nobel Prize for Literature, Murakami’s first two novels are extremely difficult to get your hands on unless you can read Japanese. Before even cracking the cover of these works, one is confronted by two conflicting emotions. On the one hand, it feels like one has the “forbidden fruit” in their hands, which lends a kind of titillating thrill. On the other

hand, one feels some trepidation. After all, Murakami has supposedly suppressed these booksâ™ release in English for decades â | could they really be that bad? Fortunately, Murakamiâ™s earliest works areâ "[dramatic pause]â "pretty much exactly what youâ™d expect from early works of Murakami in terms of content and style. The cool, detached â œBokuâ• protagonist (so-named because, like many of Murakamiâ™s early first-person protagonists, this one has no name: only the polite-but-not-overly-formal pronoun â œBokuâ•), who cracks wry jokes and has a weakness for jazz, drinking, and mysterious women. Other delights: an enigmatic friend who goes only by the name â œRatâ• (and is the yang to Bokuâ™s yin), a nine-fingered woman, mysterious twins, a talking pinball machine, Martian wells, and a bar where time seems to stand still. Is there a plot to these stories? Yes, but like much of Murakamiâ™s oeuvre (especially his early works), the enjoyment is in the journey, not the destination. The â œjourneyâ• in these works is a leisurely, almost aimless one that is as much a meditation on the only certainty in life being that the connections formed between people are made to be broken; we are all fundamentally alone, the comfort provided by companionship and love is illusory at best.

Newly translated into English, "Wind/Pinball" are the first two books of the author, part of "Rat" trilogy that is completed with, A Wild Sheep Chase. Both Wind and Pinball are very short and probably best described as novellas. In "Wind", an unnamed narrator is home from college for the summer and spends his time patronizing J's Bar, listening to music and drinking beer with his wealthy friend, "The Rat". He talks and fantasizes about the women he has been with including a 9-fingered woman he has been seeing. In "Pinball", the narrator is now out of college and living and working in Tokyo as a translator. He's bent on tracking down a spaceship pinball machine he played while in college. He's involved with identical twins who are staying in his bed one morning. The twins at times are only distinguishable by the numbers on their shirts - 208 and 209 (assuming they haven't switched shirts to have a little fun of their own). The Rat is still hanging out at J's but seems depressed and has had no luck with women. For Murakami fans who have an appreciation for the writer's work, these (2) entry novellas seem to reveal how the author is trying to develop his style. "Wind", almost seems incomplete with rambling dialogue which reader's new to this author may be put off by, especially since there is no real plot or resolution to this short story. In "Pinball" there was more of a surreal feeling developing. I couldn't help but wonder if this unnamed narrator in both stories was in some small way a bit autobiographical of the author at that particular point in his life. There were recurring themes like loneliness, death and obsession.

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