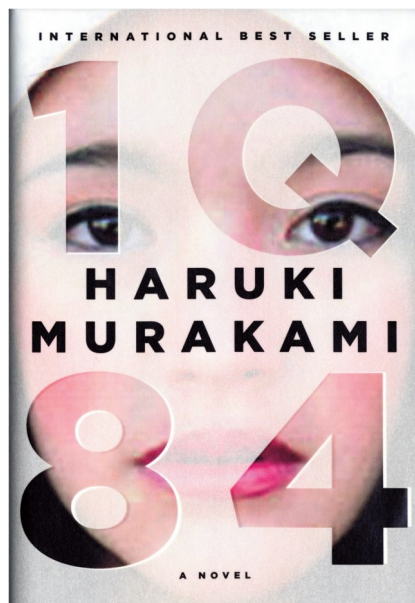


1Q84

by Haruki Murakami

1Q84 (a play on the Japanese pronunciation of the year 1984) has been heralded as the masterwork by Murakami, an already successful author of such works as *A Wild Sheep Chase*, *Kafka on the Shore*, and *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running*. Set in three serial novellas, this epic begins in Tokyo in the year 1984, but the story runs its course throughout the whole of Japan, from prefecture to prefecture, into and out of this world, and even to a town of cats and back. The story is told from the perspectives of the two main characters, Tengo and Aomame. Chapters alternate between these two characters, giving the reader the unique perspective of two different sides of the same enigma.



The story begins in gridlock on a Tokyo superhighway bridge. Aomame, late for an important yet fatally brief meeting, elects to leave her cab to escape down a set of emergency stairs to the streets below. It is here that the world she knows falls behind and a new world filled with impossibilities opens up to her. It is this new impossible world she will come to call 1Q84. The mysteries of this world slowly reveal themselves to her, and the haunting memory of a love long lost drives her purpose and seals her fate.

Chapter 2 begins with Tengo, a math teacher who moonlights as a novelist, being persuaded by his brilliant, albeit shady, editor to review an applicant's entry into a national writing contest. Tengo recognizes genius in the story, dubbed *Air Chrysalis*, which is written by an unknown and mysterious 17 year old girl, Fuka-Eri. What follows in his attempts to help this young author brings about an inevitable chain of events both unexpected and incredible that only ends on the last page of the book.

Murakami weaves storytelling and philosophy, love and violence, family and chance with a master's touch. His use of traditional Japanese magical realism and modern storytelling creates a potent cocktail of entertainment, adventure, danger, and romance. This novel does not unfold so much as slowly unravel, only to have it tighten its cords again till each loose string meets its counterpart in a most cathartic way.

Article submitted by Joe Armin
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