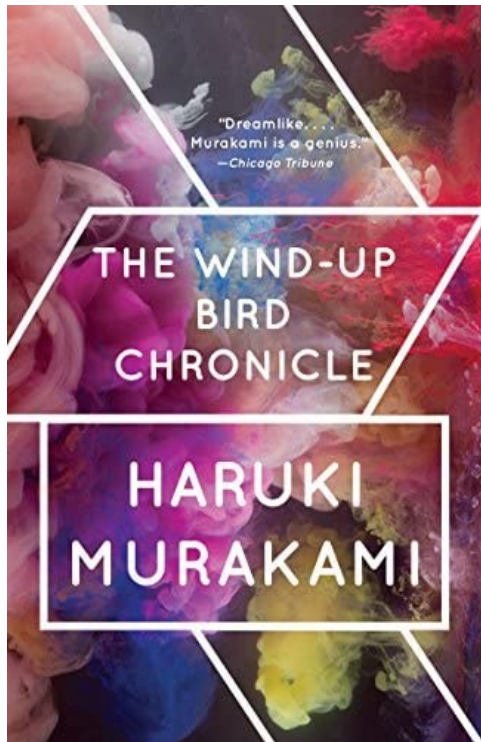


# THE WIND-UP BIRD CHRONICLE



*Adult*

**By Haruki Murakami**

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## **Book Summary:**

A man's outlook on life changes after encountering new people.

## **Summary of Concerns:**

This book contains explicit sexual activities; sexual nudity; alcohol use; self-harm; suicide; extreme/excessive violence; abortion commentary; and mild profanity

**4** /5

**Not For Minors**  
BookLooks Review Rating

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10	<p>“Now it’s your turn,” she said, her voice seductive. “Try picturing me. From my voice. Imagine what I’m like. My age. Where I am. How I’m dressed. Go ahead.”</p> <p>“I have no idea,” I said.</p> <p>“Oh, come on,” she said. “Try.”</p> <p>I looked at my watch. Only a minute and five seconds had gone by. “I have no idea,” I said again.</p> <p>“Then let me help you,” she said. “I’m in bed. I just got out of the shower, and I’m not wearing a thing.”</p> <p>Oh, great. Telephone sex.</p> <p>“Or would you prefer me with something on? Something lacy. Or stockings. Would that work better for you?”</p> <p>“I don’t give a damn. Do what you like,” I said. “Put something on if you want to. Stay naked if you want to. Sorry, but I’m not interested in telephone games like this. I’ve got a lot of things I have to—”</p> <p>“Ten minutes,” she said. “Ten minutes won’t kill you. It won’t put a hole in your life. Just answer my question. Do you want me naked or with something on? I’ve got all kinds of things I could put on. Black lace panties ...”</p> <p>“Naked is fine.”</p> <p>“Well, good. You want me naked.”</p> <p>“Yes. Naked. Good.”</p> <p>Four minutes.</p> <p>“My pubic hair is still wet,” she said. “I didn’t dry myself very well. Oh, I’m so wet! Warm and moist. And soft. Wonderfully soft and black. Touch me.”</p> <p>“Look, I’m sorry, but—”</p> <p>“And down below too. All the way down. It’s so warm down there, like butter cream. So warm. Mmm. And my legs. What position do you think my legs are in? My right knee is up, and my left leg is open just enough. Say, ten-oh-five on the clock.”</p> <p>I could tell from her voice that she was not faking it. She really did have her legs open to ten-oh-five, her sex warm and moist.</p> <p>“Touch the lips,” she said. “Sloowly. Now open them. That’s it. Slowly, slowly. Let your fingers caress them. Oh so slowly. Now, with your other hand, touch my left breast. Play with it. Caress it. Upward. And give the nipple a little squeeze. Do it again. And again. And again. Until I’m just about to come.”</p>
20	<p>She took her finger from my lips and placed it on my wrist.</p> <p>“I wish I had a scalpel. I’d cut it open and look inside. Not the corpse ... the lump of death. I’m sure there must be something like that. Something round and squishy, like a softball, with a hard little core of dead nerves. I want to take it out of a dead person and cut it open and look inside. I always wonder what it’s like. Maybe it’s all hard, like toothpaste dried up inside the tube. That’s it, don’t you think? No, don’t answer. It’s squishy on the outside, and the deeper you go inside, the harder it gets. I want to cut open the skin and take out the squishy stuff, use a scalpel and some kind of spatula to get through it, and the closer you get to the center, the harder the squishy stuff gets, until you reach this tiny core. It’s sooo tiny, like a tiny ball bearing, and really hard. It must be like that, don’t you think?”</p> <p>She cleared her throat a few times.</p> <p>“That’s all I think about these days. Must be because I have so much time to kill</p>

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	every day. When you don't have anything to do, your thoughts get really, really far out—so far out you can't follow them all the way to the end."
25	I sat at the kitchen table, sipping a beer and munching some slightly soggy soda crackers I had found in the back of the cabinet.
41	"My sister is five years my junior," she said. "She was defiled by Noboru Wataya. Violently raped."
47	I poured myself some more beer and watched the head settle.
53	Some officers had, on their own initiative, ordered their troops to retreat to avoid annihilation; their superiors forced them to commit suicide.
89	True, it was a beautiful, peaceful land, and the people there sought only spiritual peace, free of material desires, but they were too dependent on sex and drugs.
95	"And so I escaped death. I was hardly even injured. And strangest of all, I felt almost no pain. It was the weirdest thing. They took me to the hospital and patched up my one broken rib. The police came to investigate, but I told them I didn't remember a thing. I said I had probably mixed up the gas and the brake. And they believed me. I had just turned twenty, and it had been only six months since I got my license. Besides, I just didn't look like the suicidal type. Who would try to kill herself with her seat belt fastened?"
97	<p>Even my broken rib caused me hardly any pain. I had no idea why such a thing had happened. But suddenly I was free of pain.</p> <p>"I decided to go on living for the time being. If only for a little while, I wanted to find out what it meant to live life without pain. I could die whenever I wanted to. "But to go on living meant for me to pay back my debt. Altogether, I owed more than three million yen. In order to pay it back, I became a prostitute."</p> <p>"A prostitute?!"</p> <p>"That's right," said Creta Kano, as if it were nothing at all. "I needed money over the short term. I wanted to pay off my debts as quickly as possible, and that was the only way I knew of to raise the money. I didn't have the slightest hesitation. I had seriously intended to die. And I still intended to die, sooner or later. The curiosity I felt about a life without pain was keeping me alive, but strictly on a temporary basis. And compared with death, it would be nothing at all for me to sell my body."</p> <p>..."I went to a neighborhood that had lots of bars, approached the first likely-looking man I saw, negotiated a price, went to a hotel, and slept with him," said Creta Kano. "Sex no longer gave me any physical pain at all. Nor any pleasure, either. It was just a physical movement. Neither did I feel guilt at doing sex for money.</p>
98	"But then one night, when I was propositioning men by the station, two men grabbed me from behind. At first I thought it was the police, but then I realized that they were gangsters. They dragged me into a back street, showed me some kind of knife, and took me to their local headquarters. They shoved me into a back room, stripped my clothes off, strung me up by the wrists, and proceeded to rape me over and over in front of a video camera. I kept my eyes closed the entire time and tried not to think. Which was not difficult for me, because I felt neither pain nor pleasure.

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	<p>“Afterward, they showed me the video and told me that if I didn’t want anyone to see it, I should join their organization and work for them. They took my student ID from my purse. If I refused to do what they wanted, they said, they would send a copy of the tape to my parents and blackmail them for all the money they were worth. I had no choice. I told them I would do as they said, that it didn’t matter to me. And it really didn’t matter. Nothing mattered to me then. They pointed out that my income would go down if I joined their organization, because they would take seventy percent, but that I would no longer have to go to the trouble of finding customers by myself or worry about the police. They would send me high-quality customers. If I went on propositioning men indiscriminately, I would end up strangled to death in some hotel room.</p> <p>“After that, I didn’t have to stand on street corners anymore. All I had to do was show up at their office in the evening, and they would tell me which hotel to go to. They sent me good customers, as they had promised. I’m not sure why, but I received special treatment. Maybe it was because I looked so innocent. I had an air of breeding about me that the other girls lacked. There were probably a lot of customers who wanted this not-so-professional type. The other girls had three or more customers a day, but I could get away with seeing only one or, at most, two. The other girls carried beepers with them and had to hurry to some run-down hotel when the office called them to sleep with men of uncertain background. In my case, though, I always had a proper appointment in a proper first-class hotel—or sometimes even a condo. My customers were usually older men, rarely young ones. “The office paid me once a week—not as much as I used to make on my own, but not a bad amount including individual tips from customers. Some customers wanted me to do some pretty weird things for them, of course, but I didn’t mind. The weirder the request, the bigger the tip. A few of the men started asking for me on a regular basis. These tended to be good tippers. I saved my money in several different accounts. But actually, by then, the money didn’t matter to me. It was just rows of figures. I was living for one thing only, and that was to confirm my own lack of feeling.</p>
101	<p>I took the next seat at the bar and ordered a scotch on the rocks. The bartender asked me what kind of scotch I’d like, and I answered Cutty Sark. I really didn’t care which brand of scotch he served me, but Cutty Sark was the first thing that came to mind.</p>
103	<p>As I watched, she shed her clothes as easily as opening a pea pod and stood before me naked, without warning or explanation. “We have so little time, Mr. Okada, let’s finish this as quickly as possible. I am sorry for the rush, but I have my reasons. Just getting here was hard enough.” Then she came up to me, opened my fly, and, as if it were the most natural thing in the world, took out my penis. Lowering her eyes, with their false lashes, she enclosed my penis with her mouth. Her mouth was far larger than I had imagined. Inside, I immediately came erect. When she moved her tongue, the curled ends of her hair trembled as in a gentle breeze, caressing my thighs. All I could see was her hair and her false eyelashes. I sat on the bed, and she went down on her knees, her face buried in my crotch. “Stop it,” I said. “Noboru Wataya will be here any minute. I don’t want to see him here.”</p>

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	<p>Creta Kano took her mouth from my penis and said, “Don’t worry. We have plenty of time for this, at least.”</p> <p>She ran the tip of her tongue over my penis. I didn’t want to come, but there was no way of stopping it. I felt as if it were being sucked out of me. Her lips and tongue held on to me like slippery life forms. I came. I opened my eyes.</p> <p>Terrific. I went to the bathroom, washed my soiled underpants, and took a hot shower, washing myself with care to get rid of the sticky sensations of the dream. How many years had it been since my last wet dream?</p>
106	<p>I had my arms wrapped around her back, and she had her breasts pressed hard against my chest. They were larger and softer than I had imagined them to be. I was sitting on the floor with my back against the wall, and she was slumped against me. We stayed in that position for a long time, holding each other without a word.</p>
107	<p>She said nothing, but I could feel her nod.</p> <p>She was wearing a sweatshirt and a thin skirt that came down to her knees, but soon I realized that she had nothing on underneath. Almost automatically, this gave me an erection, and she seemed to be aware of it. I could feel her warm breath on my neck.</p> <p>...I ended up confessing the truth. I told her the entire story from beginning to end—without the erection part, of course—maintaining that I had done nothing with the woman.</p>
108	<p>“You lied to me! You said you were drinking and playing mah-jongg. A total lie! How do you expect me to believe you didn’t sleep with her?”</p>
120	<p>“A little,” Kumiko said, after taking a sip of beer and staring at what was left in her glass.</p>
124	<p>Then she raised her face and looked straight at me. “I once saw him masturbating. I opened a door, and there he was.”</p> <p>“So what? Everybody masturbates,” I said.</p> <p>“No, you don’t understand,” she said. Then she sighed. “It happened maybe two years after my sister died. He was probably in college, and I was something like a third grader. My mother had wavered between getting rid of my sister’s things and putting them away, and in the end she decided to keep them, thinking I might wear them when I got older. She had put them in a carton in a closet. My brother had taken them out and was smelling them and doing it.”</p> <p>I kept silent.</p> <p>o keep them, thinking I might wear them when I got older. She had put them in a carton in a closet. My brother had taken them out and was smelling them and doing it.” I kept silent. “I was just a little girl then. I didn’t know anything about sex. I really didn’t know what he was doing, but I could tell that it was something twisted, something I wasn’t supposed to see, something much deeper than it appeared on the surface.” Kumiko shook her head.</p> <p>“Does Noboru Wataya know you saw him?” “Of course. We looked right into each other’s eyes.”</p>
158	<p>He pulled the knife from its sheath and held it aloft. In the morning sun, the blade shone with a dull white gleam.</p> <p>“This man is one of those professionals of whom I spoke,” said the Russian officer.</p>

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	<p>“I want you to look at his knife. Closely. It is a very special knife, designed for skinning, and it is extraordinarily well made. The blade is as thin and sharp as a razor. And the technical skill these people bring to the task is extremely high. They’ve been skinning animals for thousands of years, after all. They can take a man’s skin off the way you’d peel a peach. Beautifully, without a single scratch. Am I speaking too quickly for you, by any chance?” Yamamoto said nothing. “They do a small area at a time,” said the Russian officer. “They have to work slowly if they want to remove the skin cleanly, without any scratches. If, in the meantime, you feel you want to say something, please let me know. Then you won’t have to die. Our man here has done this several times, and never once has he failed to make the person talk. Keep that in mind. The sooner we stop, the better for both of us.”</p> <p>Holding his knife, the bearlike Mongolian officer looked at Yamamoto and grinned. To this day, I remember that smile. I see it in my dreams. I have never been able to forget it. No sooner had he flashed this smile than he set to work. His men held Yamamoto down with their hands and knees while he began skinning Yamamoto with the utmost care. It truly was like skinning a peach. I couldn’t bear to watch. I closed my eyes. When I did this, one of the soldiers hit me with his rifle butt. He went on hitting me until I opened my eyes. But it hardly mattered: eyes open or closed, I could still hear Yamamoto’s voice. He bore the pain without a whimper—at first. But soon he began to scream. I had never heard such screams before: they did not seem part of this world. The man started by slitting open Yamamoto’s shoulder and proceeded to peel off the skin of his right arm from the top down—slowly, carefully, almost lovingly. As the Russian officer had said, it was something like a work of art. One would never have imagined there was any pain involved, if it weren’t for the screams. But the screams told the horrendousness of the pain that accompanied the work.</p> <p>Before long, the entire skin of Yamamoto’s right arm had come off in a single thin sheet. The skinner handed it to the man beside him, who held it open in his fingertips, circulating among the others to give them a good look. All the while, blood kept dripping from the skin. Then the officer turned to Yamamoto’s left arm, repeating the procedure. After that he skinned both legs, cut off the penis and testicles, and removed the ears. Then he skinned the head and the face and everything else. Yamamoto lost consciousness, regained it, and lost it again. The screams would stop whenever he passed out and continue when he came to again. But his voice gradually weakened and finally gave out altogether. All this time, the Russian officer drew meaningless patterns on the ground with the heel of his boot. The Mongolian soldiers watched the procedure in silence. Their faces remained expressionless, showing neither disgust nor excitement nor shock. They watched Yamamoto’s skin being removed a piece at a time with the same kind of faces we might have if we were out for a stroll and stopped to have a look at a construction site.</p> <p>Meanwhile, I did nothing but vomit. Over and over again. Long after it seemed there was nothing more for me to bring up, I continued to vomit. At last, the bearlike Mongolian officer held up the skin of Yamamoto’s torso, which he had so cleanly peeled off. Even the nipples were intact. Never to this day have I seen anything so horrible. Someone took the skin from him and spread it out to dry the</p>

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	<p>way we might dry a sheet. All that remained lying on the ground was Yamamoto's corpse, a bloody red lump of meat from which every trace of skin had been removed. The most painful sight was the face. Two large white eyeballs stared out from the red mass of flesh. Teeth bared, the mouth stretched wide open as if in a shout. Two little holes were all that remained where the nose had been removed. The ground was a sea of blood.</p> <p>The Russian officer spit on the ground and looked at me. Then he took a handkerchief from his pocket and wiped his mouth. "The fellow really didn't know anything, did he?" he said, putting the handkerchief back. His voice sounded somewhat flatter than it had before. "If he had known, he would have talked. Pity. But in any case, the man was a professional. He was bound to have an ugly death sooner or later. Ah, well, can't be helped. And if he knew nothing, there's no way that you could know anything."</p>
189	<p>"There is nothing to worry about. Everything is going to be fine."</p> <p>And again, as before, she unzipped my fly, took out my penis, and put it in her mouth. The one thing different from before was that she did not take off her own clothing. She wore Kumiko's dress the whole time. I tried to move, but it felt as if my body were tied down by invisible threads. I felt myself growing big and hard inside her mouth.</p> <p>I saw her fake eyelashes and curled hair tips moving. Her bracelets made a dry sound against each other. Her tongue was long and soft and seemed to wrap itself around me. Just as I was about to come, she suddenly moved away and began slowly to undress me. She took off my jacket, my tie, my pants, my shirt, my underwear, and made me lie down on the bed. Her own clothes she kept on, though. She sat on the bed, took my hand, and brought it under her dress. She was not wearing panties. My hand felt the warmth of her vagina. It was deep, warm, and very wet. My fingers were all but sucked inside.</p> <p>"Won't Noboru Wataya be here any minute?" I asked. "Weren't you expecting to see him here?"</p> <p>Instead of answering, Creta Kano touched my forehead. "You don't have to think, Mr. Okada. We'll take care of all that. Leave everything to us."</p> <p>"To us?" I asked, but there was no reply.</p> <p>Then Creta Kano mounted me and used her hand to slip me inside her. Once she had me deep inside, she began a slow rotation of her hips. As she moved, the edges of the pale-blue dress caressed my naked stomach and thighs. With the skirts of the dress spread out around her, Creta Kano, riding atop me, looked like a soft, gigantic mushroom that had silently poked its face up through the dead leaves on the ground and opened under the sheltering wings of night. Her vagina felt warm and at the same time cold. It tried to envelop me, to draw me in, and at the same time to press me out. My erection grew larger and harder. I felt I was about to burst wide open. It was the strangest sensation, something that went beyond simple sexual pleasure. It felt as if something inside her, something special inside her, were slowly working its way through my organ into me. With her eyes closed and her chin lifted slightly, Creta Kano rocked quietly forward and back as if she were dreaming. I could see her chest rising and falling with each breath beneath the dress. A few hairs had come loose and hung over her forehead. I imagined myself floating alone in the middle of a vast sea. I closed</p>

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	<p>my eyes and listened, expecting to hear the sound of little waves hitting my face. My body was bathed in lukewarm ocean water. I sensed the gradual flow of the tide. It was carrying me away. I decided to do as Creta Kano had said and not think about anything. I closed my eyes, let the strength go out of my limbs, and gave myself up to the current.</p> <p>All of a sudden, I noticed that the room had gone dark. I tried to look around, but I could hardly see a thing. The wall lamps had all been extinguished. There was only the faint silhouette of Creta Kano's blue dress rocking on top of me. "Just forget," she said, but it was not Creta Kano's voice. "Forget about everything. You're asleep. You're dreaming. You're lying in nice, warm mud. We all come out of the warm mud, and we all go back to it."</p> <p>It was the voice of the woman on the telephone. The mysterious woman on the phone was now mounted atop me and joining her body with mine.</p> <p>...I opened my eyes wide and tried to see the face of the woman mounted on top of me, but the room was too dark.</p> <p>The woman said nothing more. Instead, she began to move her hips in an even more erotically stimulating way. Her soft flesh, itself almost an independent organism, enveloped my erection with a gentle pulling motion.</p> <p>...But I couldn't think anymore. There was only one thing I could do: I came.</p>
191	<p>I washed myself off in the shower and laundered my semen-stained underwear by hand. Terrific, I thought. Why did I have to be having wet dreams at such a difficult time in my life?</p> <p>...And yet both times I had been in that room, joining my body with hers.</p> <p>...I went through the various sexual partners I had had in life, but none of them was the telephone woman.</p>
211	<p>"I would like to know more about Mr. Wataya myself. I believe that my sister has already told you that he defiled me once, a very long time ago. I don't have time to go into that today, but I will, on some future occasion. In any case, it was something done to me against my will. It had originally been arranged for me to have relations with him. Which is why it was not rape in the ordinary sense of the word. But he did defile me, and that changed me as a person in many important ways.</p> <p>...Whatever the end results may have been, the fact remains that Noboru Wataya violated and defiled me at that time against my will.</p> <p>...Creta Kano then said, "Of course, we did not have relations in reality. When you ejaculated, it was not into me, physically, but in your own consciousness.</p>
212	<p>"You should have no sense of guilt about having had relations with me," said Creta Kano. "You see, Mr. Okada, I am a prostitute. I used to be a prostitute of the flesh, but now I am a prostitute of the mind. Things pass through me."</p>
214	<p>"No sex talk before breakfast, please."</p> <p>..."The woman you were holding in your arms last night? Do you talk about sex with her on the telephone?"</p>
216	<p>"And if she had been the one making this call, not me, and you started talking about telephone sex, what would she have thought about that?"</p>
227	<p>I made love to her for the first time that day. It was what she wanted, I was sure. In a sense, it was she who seduced me. Not that she ever said or did anything</p>



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	<p>overtly seductive. But when I put my arms around her naked body, I knew for certain that she had intended that this happen. Her body was soft and completely unresisting.</p> <p>It was Kumiko's first experience of sex.</p>
229	<p>I convinced myself that my initial sense of distance had been the result of its being her first experience of sex.</p>
233	<p>The pregnant ladies all looked my way with the most intense interest—and no hint of goodwill. Anyone could see at a glance that I was a college student who had accidentally gotten his girlfriend pregnant and had come with her for an abortion.</p>
234	<p>I knew that it was unrealistic for us to have a child, but I didn't want Kumiko to have an abortion, either. When I said this to her, she replied, "We've been through all this. If I have a baby now, that's the end of working for me, and you'll have to find a better-paying job to support me and the baby. We won't have money for anything extra. We won't be able to do anything we want to do. From now on, the realistic possibilities for us will be narrowed down to nothing. Is that OK with you?"</p> <p>...I don't know what's right. I've just got this feeling that I don't want you to have an abortion.</p>
244	<p>Someone had ordered the whiskey, ice, and glasses from room service and had opened the door to let the waiter in.</p> <p>...I went back to the living room, opened the new bottle of whiskey, put ice in the glasses, and poured two drinks.</p>
247	<p>I felt the woman's tongue coming into my mouth. Warm and soft, it probed every crevice and it wound around my own tongue. The heavy smell of flower petals stroked the walls of my lungs. Down in my loins, I felt a dull need to come.</p>
261	<p>"Hey, I'm still a kid, ya know. I don't know anything about marriage. I don't know what was in your wife's mind when she started fooling around with another man or when she left you.</p>
273	<p>You may have begun to suspect by now that I was seeing a man. I was sexually involved with him for close to three months. He was someone I met through work, someone you don't know at all.</p> <p>...I slept with him because I wanted to sleep with him. Because I couldn't bear not to sleep with him. Because I couldn't suppress my own sexual desire.</p> <p>...The instant we touched, I knew that he wanted my body, and he seemed to sense that I wanted his. It was a totally irrational, overwhelming charge of electricity that passed between us. I felt as if the sky had fallen on me. My cheeks were burning, my heart was pounding, and I had a heavy, melting feeling below the waist. I could hardly sit straight on the bar stool, it was so intense. At first I didn't realize what was happening inside me, but soon I realized it was lust. I had such a violent desire for him that I could hardly breathe. Without either of us being the first to suggest it, we walked to a nearby hotel and went wild with sex.</p> <p>...What I did with him had virtually nothing to do with "love." All I wanted was to be held by him and have him inside me. Never in my life had I experienced such a suffocating need for a man's body. I had read about "unbearable desire" in books,</p>

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	<p>but until that day I could never really imagine what such a phrase meant.</p> <p>... The sex I had in that hotel bed with him was something close to madness. To be totally honest, I had never in my life felt anything so good. No, it wasn't that simple: it didn't just "feel good." My flesh was rolling in hot mud. My mind sucked in the sheer pleasure to the point of bursting—and then it burst. It was absolutely miraculous. It was one of the most wonderful things that had ever happened to me.</p> <p>... It was the world I belonged to. But my body had this violent need for sex with him. Half of me was here, and half there. I knew that sooner or later the break would have to come, but at the time, it felt as if this double life would go on forever. Over here I was living peacefully with you, and over there I was making violent love with him.</p> <p>I want you to understand one thing, at least. This was never a matter of your being sexually inferior to him or lacking in sex appeal, or my being tired of sex with you. It was just that, at that time, my body experienced this violent, irrepressible hunger. I could do nothing to resist it. Why such things happen I have no idea. All I can say is that it did happen. A few times during the weeks that I was sleeping with him, I thought about having sex with you too. It seemed unfair to me, for your sake, that I would sleep with him but not with you.</p> <p>... For close to two months, I made up all kinds of excuses to avoid having sexual relations with you.</p>
276	<p>But there is one other thing, in addition, that continues to bother me, and that is: how did I suddenly come to feel such intense, abnormal sexual desire for a man I didn't even love?</p> <p>...There was some kind of blockage inside me, which would always hold any sexual feeling I had in check. When, for reasons I cannot grasp, that blockage was swept away by sex with him, I no longer had any idea what I should do.</p> <p>...That gave me some relief. But then I ran up against the fact that I had not had sex with anyone for almost two months.</p> <p>...As she had said in her letter, Kumiko had resisted sleeping with me all that time. She had symptoms of a mild bladder infection, she said, and the doctor had told her to refrain from sex for a while.</p>
277	<p>During those two months, I had had relations with women in my dreams—or in some world that, within the limits of my vocabulary, I could only call a dream—with Creta Kano and with the telephone woman. But now that I thought about it, two months had gone by since the last time I had slept with a real woman in the real world. Lying on the sofa, staring at my own hands atop my chest, I thought about the last time I had seen Kumiko's body. I thought about the soft curve of her back when I zipped her dress up, and the smell of cologne behind her ears. If what she said in the letter was the irrevocable truth, however, I would probably never sleep with Kumiko again.</p> <p>...The more I thought about the possibility that my relationship with Kumiko had become a thing of the past, the more I began to miss the gentle warmth of that body that had once belonged to me. I had enjoyed sleeping with her. Of course, I had enjoyed it before we were married, but even after some years had gone by and the initial thrill had faded somewhat, I enjoyed having sex with Kumiko. Her</p>

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	<p>slender back, the nape of her neck, her legs, her breasts—I could recall the touch of every part of her with present vividness. I could recall all the things I had done for her and she had done for me in the course of our sexual union.</p> <p>But now Kumiko had joined her body with that of someone I did not know—and with an intensity I could hardly imagine. She had discovered in that a pleasure she had been unable to obtain from sex with me. Probably, while she was doing it with him, she had squirmed and writhed enough to make the bed toss and had released groans loud enough to be audible in the next room. She had probably done things with him that she would never have done with me. I went and opened the refrigerator, took out a beer, and drank it.</p> <p>...I imagined Kumiko twisting her hips beneath the other man, raising her legs, planting her fingernails in his back, drooling on the sheets.</p>
292	<p>Creta Kano was stark naked. Facing toward my side of the bed, she lay there asleep, with nothing on, not even a cover, revealing two well-shaped breasts, two small pink nipples, and, below a perfectly flat stomach, a black triangle of pubic hair, looking like a shaded area in a drawing. Her skin was very white, with a newly minted glow. At a loss to explain her presence here, I nevertheless went on staring at her beautiful body.</p>
293	<p>I set my elbows on the table and, without really intending to, found myself thinking in strangely vivid detail about Creta Kano’s naked body. She was sound asleep in my bed. I thought about the time in my dream when I joined my body with hers as she wore Kumiko’s dress. I still had a clear impression of the touch of her skin, the weight of her flesh.</p>
297	<p>“You know, Creta Kano,” I said, “you haven’t told me your whole story. Last time, you were partway through when you disappeared. Remember? If you don’t mind, I’d like to hear the rest. You told me how the mob got hold of you and made you work as one of their prostitutes, but you didn’t tell me what happened after you met Noboru Wataya and slept with him.”</p> <p>...The shape of her nipples showed clearly through the white T-shirt, a vivid reminder to me of the naked body I had seen the night before.</p> <p>...“As I told you before, the very last customer I had as a prostitute of the flesh was Noboru Wataya.</p> <p>...“As I told you before, I was in a state at that time in which I had absolutely no perception of pain. And not only pain: I had no sensations of any kind. I lived in a bottomless numbness. Of course, I don’t mean to say that I was unable to feel any sensations at all—I knew when something was hot or cold or painful. But these sensations came to me as if from a distance, from a world that had nothing to do with me. Which is why I felt no resistance to the idea of having sexual relations with men for money. No matter what anyone did to me, the sensations I felt did not belong to me. My unfeeling flesh was not my flesh.</p> <p>“Now, let’s see, I told you about how I had been recruited by the mob’s prostitution ring. When they told me to sleep with men I did it, and when they paid me I took it. I left off at that point.”</p>
298	<p>“Still seating on the sofa, without saying a word, he ran his eyes over my body. From head to foot. That was what usually happened when I entered a client’s</p>

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	<p>room. Most men would look me over. Excuse me for asking, Mr. Okada, but have you ever bought a prostitute?"</p>
299	<p>He didn't have much time. He wanted me to undress right away.</p> <p>"Once I was naked, he told me to lie on the bed facedown, which I did. He ordered me to stay still, to keep my eyes closed, and not to speak until I was spoken to.</p> <p>...He just sat and looked down at my naked body.</p> <p>I could feel his eyes boring into the nape of my neck, my back, my buttocks, and my legs, with almost painful intensity. It occurred to me that he might be impotent. Customers like that turn up now and then. They buy a prostitute, have her undress, and they look at her. Some will undress the woman and finish themselves off in her presence. All kinds of men buy prostitutes, for all kinds of reasons.</p> <p>"After a while, though, he reached out and began to touch me. His ten fingers moved down my body, from my shoulders to my back, from my back to my buttocks, in search of something. This was not foreplay. Neither, of course, was it a massage. His fingers moved over my body with the utmost care, as if tracing a route on a map.</p> <p>..."And yet the touch of his fingers aroused me sexually. For the first time in my life. Sex had been nothing but a source of pain for me until I became a prostitute. The mere thought of it had filled me with fear—fear of the pain I knew I would have to endure. Just the opposite happened after I became a prostitute: I felt nothing. I no longer felt pain, but I felt no other sensations, either. I would sigh and pretend to be aroused for the pleasure of the customer, but it was all fake, a professional act. When he touched me, though, my sighs were real. They came out of my body's innermost depths.</p> <p>..."Eventually, the man stopped moving his fingers. With his hands on my waist, he seemed to be thinking. Through his fingertips, I could tell that he was steadying himself, quietly regularizing his breathing. Then he began to remove his clothing. I kept my eyes closed and my face buried in the pillow, waiting for what would come next. Once he was naked, he spread my arms and legs open wide.</p> <p>"The room was almost frighteningly quiet. The only sound was the soft rush of the air conditioner. The man himself made almost no perceptible sounds. I couldn't even hear him breathing. He placed his palms on my back. I went limp. His penis touched my buttocks, but it was still soft.</p> <p>..."His fingers began to move again, touching every part of my body," Creta Kano continued, "every part without exception. I lost the power to think. My ears were filled with the sound of my own heart, pounding but with strange slowness. I could no longer control myself. I cried out aloud again and again as he caressed me. I tried to keep my voice in check, but another someone was using my voice to moan and shout. I felt as if every screw in my body had come loose. Then, after a very long time, and with me still lying facedown, he put something inside me from behind. What it was, I still have no idea. It was huge and hard, but it was not his penis. I am certain of that.</p> <p>..."Whatever it was that he put inside me, it made me feel pain for the first time since my failed suicide attempt—real, intense pain that belonged to me and to no one else. How can I put this? The pain was almost impossibly intense, as if my</p>

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	<p>physical self were splitting in two from the inside out. And yet, as terrible as it felt, I was writhing as much in pleasure as in pain. The pleasure and pain were one. Do you see what I mean? The pain was founded on pleasure, and the pleasure on pain. I had to swallow the two as a single entity. In the midst of this pain and pleasure, my flesh went on splitting in two.</p> <p>..."I then reached the sexual peak—although, rather than a peak, it felt more as if I were being thrown down from a high cliff...knew it as that dull, fatal, never-ending pain that I had experienced before my failed suicide attempt..."</p>
304	<p>And when I did attempt to release it—which is to say, when I tried to kill myself and failed—I became my second self: an interim me.</p> <p>..."Being caressed by that man, and held by him, and made to feel such impossibly intense sexual pleasure for the first time in my life, I experienced some kind of gigantic physical change..."</p>
310	<p>"...I was nothing but a prostitute. A prostitute of the flesh. A prostitute of the mind."</p>
311	<p>After our supper, Creta Kano said she wanted to sleep with me. She wanted to have physical sex with me, she said.</p> <p>...Looking directly at me, Creta Kano said, "Whether or not you go with me to Crete, Mr. Okada, entirely separately from that, I want you to take me one time—just one time—as a prostitute. I want you to buy my flesh. Here. Tonight. It will be my last time. I will cease to be a prostitute, whether of the flesh or of the mind."</p>
312	<p>That night I went to bed with Creta Kano. I took off what she was wearing of Kumiko's and joined my body with hers. Quietly and gently.</p> <p>...I came inside her. It was reality.</p>
317	<p>Great bikini," I said.</p> <p>"Thanks."</p> <p>"Looks like they put it together from scraps—making the maximum use of our limited natural resources."</p> <p>"I take off the top when everybody's out."</p> <p>"Well, well," I said.</p> <p>"Not that there's all that much underneath to uncover," she said, as if by way of excuse.</p> <p>True, the breasts inside her bikini top were still small and undeveloped.</p>
321	<p>I lowered myself into a deck chair and looked at the body of May Kasahara, hardly covered by her little bikini. She was sixteen years old, but she had the build of a girl of thirteen or fourteen. Her breasts and hips were far from fully matured.</p> <p>...Then, all of a sudden, it occurred to me to ask her, "Have you ever had the Highlight(yellow) - Chapter 15 &gt; Page 321 · Location 5693 feeling that you had been defiled by something?"</p> <p>"Defiled?" She looked at me, her eyes slightly narrowed. "You mean physically? You mean, like, raped?"</p> <p>"Physically. Mentally. Either."</p> <p>May Kasahara looked down at her own body, then returned her gaze to me.</p> <p>"Physically, no. I mean, I'm still a virgin. I've let a boy feel me up. But just through my clothes."</p>

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323	Tell me, Mr. Wind-Up Bird, did you sleep with that Creta Kano person?" I nodded.
324	"Tell me, Mr. Wind-Up Bird, is it fun to sleep with a bunch of different women?"
327	He had brought me a good bottle of scotch and a package of fish-paste cakes that he had bought in Odawara. We sat on the veranda, eating the cakes and drinking the whiskey.
329	The numbers were nowhere near as great as directly outside the main entrance of the station, and there weren't any homeless guys here with bottles of whiskey stuck in their pockets.
332	Now that I thought about it, that abortion had been an event of great significance for the two of us. ...I had been all too distracted by the act of abortion itself, while the genuinely important thing may have been something else entirely.
337	But the man did not use the knife to attack me. Instead, he took all his clothes off and started to peel his own skin as if it were the skin of an apple. He worked quickly, laughing aloud all the while. The blood gushed out of him, forming a black, menacing pool on the floor. With his right hand, he peeled the skin of his left arm, and with his bloody, peeled left hand he peeled the skin of his right arm. In the end, he became a bright-red lump of flesh, but even then, he went on laughing from the dark hole of his open mouth, the white eyeballs moving spasmodically against the raw lump of flesh.
343	Sometimes, as I sat staring at a dress, I would imagine a man I didn't know helping Kumiko out of it. His hands would slip the dress off, then go on to remove the underwear beneath. They would caress her breasts and press her thighs apart. I could see those breasts and thighs in all their white softness, and the other man's hands touching them. ...Now and then, I would recall the night I slept with Creta Kano, but the memory of it was mysteriously vague. I held her in my arms that night and joined my body with hers any number of times: that was an undeniable fact.
368	Finally, she stopped caressing my mark. She then stood up, came around behind me, and, instead of her fingertips, used her tongue. Just as May Kasahara had done in the garden last summer, she licked my mark. The way she did it, however, was far more mature than the way May Kasahara had done it. Her tongue moved and clung to my flesh with far greater skill. With varying pressure, changing angles, and different movements, it tasted and sucked and stimulated my mark. I felt a hot, moist throbbing below the waist. I didn't want to have an erection. To do so would have been all too meaningless. But I couldn't stop myself.
372	What I had done yesterday was amazingly similar to the work Creta Kano had done as a call girl. You go to a designated place, sleep with someone you don't know, and get paid. I had not actually slept with the woman (just come in my pants), but aside from that, it was the same thing. In need of a certain amount of money, I had offered my flesh to someone to get it. ...To think that I should have become a prostitute! Who could have imagined that I would have sold my body for money? Or that I would have first bought new sneakers with the money?

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376	<p>To tell you the truth, when I was seeing you that summer, Mr. Wind-Up Bird, like, when we were sitting at the kitchen table talking and drinking beer and things, I would think, What would I do if Mr. Wind-Up Bird all of a sudden pushed me down and tried to rape me?</p> <p>...But I also would have been thinking I had to explain why it was wrong and why you shouldn't be doing it, and the more I thought, the more mixed up I would get, and by that time you probably would have finished raping me.</p>
387	<p>Locals call this plot in——2-chome, Setagaya, the “hanging house.” Located in a quiet residential neighborhood, this 3,500-square-foot piece of prime real estate with fine southern exposure is a virtually ideal location for a home, but those in the know agree on one thing: they wouldn't take it if you gave it to them.</p> <p>... Our investigations have revealed that, since the start of the Showa Period, in 1926, no fewer than seven owner occupants of this property have ended their lives in suicide, the majority by hanging or asphyxiation.</p>
388	<p>Finally, in January of this year, Miyawaki used his belt to strangle his fourteen-year-old daughter, Yukie, in her sleep at an inn in Takamatsu City, after which he and his wife, Natsuko, hanged themselves with ropes they had brought with them for that purpose.</p>
394	<p>The woman brings the whiskey glass to her lips, allows a few drops of the liquid to trickle down her throat, and then she tries to speak to me.</p>
399	<p>Many women chose—or were forced to choose—mass suicide over rape.</p>
431	<p>I'd beat her face out of shape until you couldn't recognize her. And not just beat her: I'd slam her against the wall and kick her, pour hot tea on her, throw things at her, you name it. The kids would try to stop me, and I'd end up hitting them. Little kids: seven, eight years old. And not just push them around: I'd wallop them with everything I had. I was an absolute devil.</p> <p>... Do you see what a horror I was? So then, five years ago, when my daughter was five, I broke her arm—just snapped it.</p>
434	<p>“...Let's compare this visit to the dentist. So far, we're at the stage of poking a spot where the novocaine's still working. Which is why no one's complaining. But soon the drill is going to hit a nerve, and then somebody's going to jump out of the chair. Somebody could get seriously angry. Do you see what I'm saying? I'm not trying to threaten you, but it seems to me—to old Ushikawa here—that you are slowly being dragged into dangerous territory without even realizing it.”</p> <p>Ushikawa seemed finally to have made his point.</p> <p>“You mean I should pull out before I get hurt?” I asked.</p> <p>Ushikawa nodded. “This is like playing catch in the middle of the expressway, Mr. Okada. It's a very dangerous game.”</p> <p>“In addition to which, it's going to cause Noboru Wataya a lot of trouble. So if I just fold up my cards, he'll put me in touch with Kumiko.”</p> <p>Ushikawa nodded again. “That about sums it up.” I took a swallow of beer.</p>
481	<p>As first revealed in the October 7 issue of this magazine, there is a house in a quiet Setagaya residential neighborhood known to locals as the “hanging house.” All those who ever lived there have been visited by misfortune and ended their lives in suicide, the majority by hanging.</p>

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519	<p>With a deep breath, the soldier took a backswing, then smashed the bat with all his strength into the back of the Chinese cadet's head. He did it amazingly well. He swung his hips exactly as the lieutenant had taught him to, the brand of the bat made a direct hit behind the man's ear, and the bat followed through perfectly. There was a dull crushing sound as the skull shattered. The man himself made no sound. His body hung in the air for a moment in a strange pose, then flopped forward. He lay with his cheek on the ground, blood flowing from one ear. He did not move. The lieutenant looked at his watch. Still gripping the bat, the young soldier stared off into space, his mouth agape.</p> <p>The lieutenant was a person who did things with great care. He waited for a full minute. When he was certain that the young Chinese man was not moving at all, he said to the veterinarian, "Could you do me a favor and check to see that he's really dead?"</p> <p>The veterinarian nodded, walked over to where the young Chinese lay, knelt down, and removed his blindfold. The man's eyes were open wide, the pupils turned upward, and bright-red blood was flowing from his ear. His half-opened mouth revealed the tongue lying tangled inside. The impact had left his neck twisted at a strange angle. The man's nostrils had expelled thick gobs of blood, making black stains on the dry ground.</p>
535	Malta Kano was wearing a trench coat. The lapels were closed tightly across the front, but from the subtle fragrance of a woman's naked flesh I could tell she was wearing nothing underneath. She had her red vinyl hat on, of course.
537	To calm myself, I took an old bottle of brandy from the back of the kitchen cabinet, poured a glass, and drank it down.
541	Young women were often used as prostitutes.
574	She spoke with the slightest hint of a playful, girlish lisp, but the voice itself belonged to a mature, sensual woman. I laid the penlight lengthwise on the table and in its light went about pouring the two whiskeys, taking a moment first to steady my breathing. I broke the seal on the Cutty Sark, used tongs to fill the two glasses, and poured the whiskey over the ice cubes.
578	He couldn't stand it anymore and chose to die. Your parents have always kept her suicide a secret.
580	"I would guess that all this started after you became pregnant. That, I'm sure, was the turning point. Which is probably why I received my first warning from the guitar player in Sapporo the night you had the abortion..."

Profanity	Count
Bitch	2
Fuck	1
Goddamn	2
Shit	27