By Leah Chase on May 20, With the central conflict hinging on a rather supernatural sleep paralysis experience, it refuses to be identified with either of the two established categories. Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage novel is centered on year-old Tsukuru Tazaki, who seeks closure with the four friends who unexpectedly cut him off 16 years prior.
It is this separation that lays the groundwork for the novel. As an adult, Tsukuru is prompted to track down these four friends by his girlfriend, Sara, to uncover the reason behind his sudden expulsion from their group. He quickly learns it is because Shiro, mainly referred to as Yuzu, claimed he had raped her in their sophomore year of college.

At this point reality and dreams collide. Around the same time as the alleged rape, Tsukuru had had a violent and erotic dream involving the two girls, Yuzu and Eri, and a new college friend, Fumiaki Haida.

Further complicating the mystery, Tsukuru discovers that Yuzu had been murdered in her apartment six years prior to the present storyline. He blur’s the lines between reality and the supernatural, and in doing so, Tsukuru becomes a character destitute of place. What is truly concrete? What is not? What constitutes place? But perhaps it is being rooted in nothing that gives Tsukuru a sense of place.

Regardless, Murakami never quite answers any of the philosophical questions he poses. To some extent, this greatly benefits the novel. That being said, there are moments when curiosity becomes frustration, when certain unanswered questions make matters more confusing and narratives meet their abrupt demise.

Upon meeting with Eri, the last of the three Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage friends, at her new Finland residence, he learns that Yuzu had had a miscarriage and developed anorexia as a means of preventing all future pregnancies. So she set Tsukuru up as the apostate. It leaves one to wonder: What was it all for? Why introduce the dream at all? Rape and murder are two very serious and shocking crimes, and for a more concrete discussion of such themes to be evaded in favor of an aesthetic ambiguity does not do them proper justice.

Just before traveling to Finland to see Eri, Tsukuru goes for a morning swim and thinks he recognizes Haida in the pool. In fact, Tsukuru never even seeks to Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage Haida. It is a phenomenological exploration of self and a powerful insight into the nature of relationships. While it faces the detriments of several misguided ambiguities, it is nevertheless important to celebrate the power of an open-ended question.

Support our student journalism Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage. Leah Chase reviews Haruki Murakami’s novel about a man who decides to get to the bottom of his mysterious expulsion from his college friend group decades prior.

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At 36, Tsukuru Tazaki looks back on a derailed life. Friends, home and love are mere words to him. People remain estranged; at most he feels a remote interest in trains and stations. When he meets Sara, who works in a travel agent’s, for the first time in ages he opens up to another person and what she hears is almost unfathomable.

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Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage : Haruki Murakami :

A mesmerising mystery story about friendship from the internationally bestselling author of Norwegian Wood and 1Q Tsukuru Tazaki had four best friends at school. By chance all of their Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage contained a colour. Tazaki was the only last name with no colour in it. Since that day Tsukuru has been floating through life, unable to form intimate connections with anyone.

But then he meets Sara, who tells him that the time has Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage to find out what happened all those
years ago. A naturalistic coming-of-age story… sprinkled with strange images and written in a hauntingly mournful key. A rich and even brilliant piece of work…. Genuinely resonant and satisfying. This is a book for both the new and experienced reader. Incurably restive, ambiguous and valiantly struggling toward a new level of maturation.

In Haruki Murakami was twenty-nine and running a jazz bar in downtown Tokyo. One April day, the impulse to write a novel came to him suddenly while watching a baseball game. Murakami writes with admirable discipline, producing ten pages a day, after which he runs ten kilometres he began long-distance running in and has participated in numerous marathons and races works on translations, and then reads, Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage to records and cooks.

His passions colour his non-fiction output, from What I Talk About When I Talk About Running to Absolutely On Music, and they also seep into his novels and short stories, providing quotidian moments in his otherwise freewheeling flights of imaginative inquiry. Tokyo has inspired all manner of writers, from home and abroad, seeking to evoke its unique atmosphere over the years.

Read an extract from the epic new novel by the internationally acclaimed and bestselling author of 1Q84, Norwegian Wood and Kafka on the Shore. For the latest books, recommendations, offers and more.

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