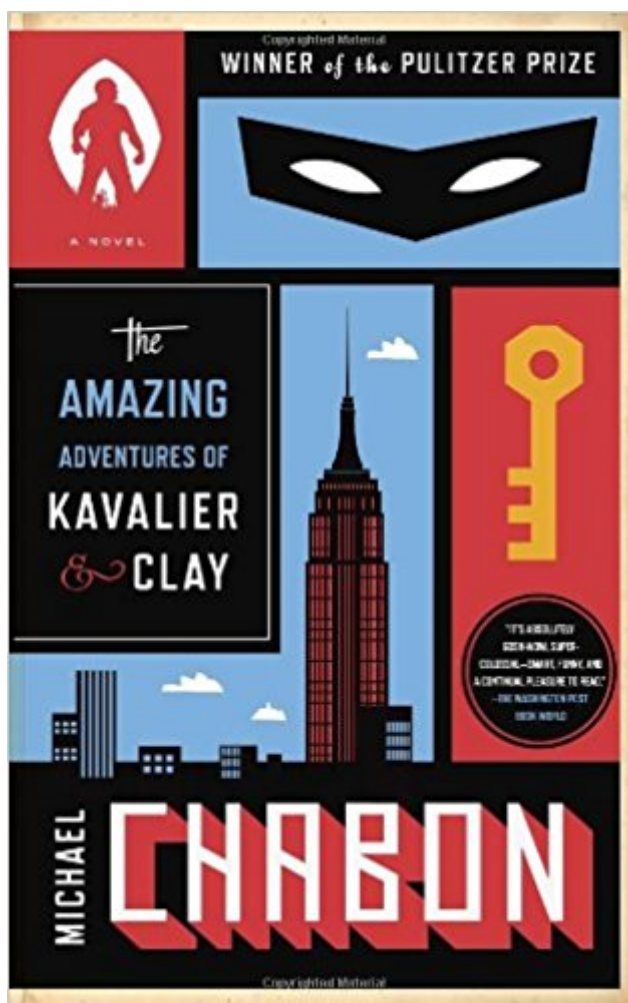


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The Amazing Adventures Of Kavalier & Clay



Synopsis

WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE • The beloved, award-winning *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*, a Michael Chabon masterwork, is the American epic of two boy geniuses named Joe Kavalier and Sammy Clay. Now with special bonus material by Michael Chabon. • A towering, swash-buckling thrill of a book • (Newsweek), hailed as Chabon's magnum opus • (The New York Review of Books), *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay* is a triumph of originality, imagination, and storytelling, an exuberant, irresistible novel that begins in New York City in 1939. A young escape artist and budding magician named Joe Kavalier arrives on the doorstep of his cousin, Sammy Clay. While the long shadow of Hitler falls across Europe, America is happily in thrall to the Golden Age of comic books, and in a distant corner of Brooklyn, Sammy is looking for a way to cash in on the craze. He finds the ideal partner in the aloof, artistically gifted Joe, and together they embark on an adventure that takes them deep into the heart of Manhattan, and the heart of old-fashioned American ambition. From the shared fears, dreams, and desires of two teenage boys, they spin comic book tales of the heroic, fascist-fighting Escapist and the beautiful, mysterious Luna Moth, otherworldly mistress of the night. Climbing from the streets of Brooklyn to the top of the Empire State Building, Joe and Sammy carve out lives, and careers, as vivid as cyan and magenta ink. Spanning continents and eras, this superb book by one of America's finest writers remains one of the defining novels of our modern American age. • **NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER** • Finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Award, National Book Critics Circle Award, and Los Angeles Times Book Prize • Winner of the Bay Area Book Reviewers Award and the New York Society Library Book Award • Named one of the 10 Best Books of the Decade by Entertainment Weekly

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

When I read this book, I didn't even know that it had won the Pulitzer Prize--there's no trace of that information anywhere on the library hardback that I read. So I was blissfully unaware that I was reading what was supposed to be a Literary Masterpiece, and I would have been surprised if I had known. There's no doubt that Michael Chabon is a master of his craft; his writing is a mix of the matter-of-fact and flights of fantasy, and often reality is granted an additional glow of the magical. His characters are real from the start: Sammy, Joe, Ethel and Kornblum are not talking heads, but characters who are distinct and touching in their fallibility. Probably the best aspect of this book is where it deals with art, and art and escapism are themes that are tightly woven throughout this story until they become inseparable. At first art is the means to manipulate one's personal reality, as Joe convinces himself that he is fighting the war against the Nazis by having his hero fight them in the comics; and later this idea is carried further, so that art is not only used to manipulate reality, but to escape it utterly; and this is viewed as the ultimate goal of the artist. Another high point of the novel is its moments in which the blend of art and realism are so seamless that at first it is difficult to tell where reality ends and the art begins. These moments are consistent with the magical atmosphere that marks Kavalier and Clay's "Golden Age," as well as with the theme of art as a means of escape. The theme of art and its relationship with escapism is the one theme that threads consistently throughout the novel.

"A faster read than a Grisham book. More powerful than an Oprah pick. Able to win Pulitzer Prizes in a single bound edition. Look! Up on the bookshelf! It's pulp fiction! It's serious literature! It's 'The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay'! Yes it's 'The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay', written by a strange visitor from Pittsburgh who came to the literary world with powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal men. 'The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay', a book that can change the course of mighty literary trends, bend public discourse in its bare hands, and which, disguised as Michael Chabon's latest novel, a mild-mannered bestseller for a great metropolitan readership, fights a never-ending battle for Truth! Justice! and the American Way!" Pretty cheesy, that. But good cheese, no? Actually, the above is just a thinly veiled attempt to usher you into the world of super-hero comic books that Michael Chabon has created for this book. It is a world of convenient coincidences, of nick-of-time rescues, of unbelievable happenstance, and

hyper-romanticism. It's a world whose characters are drawn in two tones (black or white), where good and evil combat in epic struggles, and little boys pay ten cents an issue to read about it. It's an entirely made up world, embracing its own fictionality, but one that the reader can easily get lost in. Chabon has written a book that takes the conventions of the comic book and exploits them. If you encounter a situation here that tests the boundaries of reality, try reading it as if spread over six cheerily drawn panels. It'll make much more sense that way. The reason for this technique, if I may be so bold as to articulate it, is quite simple: Escapism.

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