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One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest: (Penguin Classics Deluxe Edition)



Synopsis

A Penguin Classics Deluxe Edition of a counterculture classic with a foreword by Chuck Palahniuk. Boisterous, ribald, and ultimately shattering, Ken Kesey's 1962 novel has left an indelible mark on the literature of our time. Now in a new deluxe edition with a foreword by Chuck Palahniuk and cover by Joe Sacco, here is the unforgettable story of a mental ward and its inhabitants, especially the tyrannical Big Nurse Ratched and Randle Patrick McMurphy, the brawling, fun-loving new inmate who resolves to oppose her. We see the struggle through the eyes of Chief Bromden, the seemingly mute half-Indian patient who witnesses and understands McMurphy's heroic attempt to do battle with the powers that keep them all imprisoned. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

This novel officially ends the 4-book reading that I had set forth to get my teeth into this summer. I must say, that it truly stands out from anything I had read before it, be it this summer or anytime for that matter. Ken Kesey weaves a tale that is smart, witty, sometimes insane and ultimately tragic. Though the setting is mainly in a mental asylum somewhere in Oregon, this story has a universal

appeal to it that can be felt by anyone, anywhere in this world. R.P. McMurphy is a sane man that, due to a brush with the law, opts for being committed in a mental asylum rather than be incarcerated with hard labor. Upon his entry in the secluded world of the asylum, he strips all the barriers formed and starts laying his own rules, in his own way. This leads to problems with the head honcho of the place. A big, gruesome, and menacingly evil Nurse Ratched, dubbed Big Nurse for her huge frame and even huger bosom. The rollercoaster, that patient McMurphy takes the inmates through, finally leads them to realize the ultimate goal. That man, no matter the situation, can always hold his destiny in his hands. This knowledge, achieved in the end, does not come without a price. Set in the late 60s, early 70s, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is a gem of modern literary works that came out at the time. It brought out a wonderfully-made movie, starring Jack Nicholson as McMurphy. The role defined him as an actor to be reckoned with. Though the movie is seen through the eyes of McMurphy, the novel's perspective looks at things through the eyes of a big half white, half Native American inmate, that acts deaf and dumb in front of the asylum's staff. The narrative, because it is through the eyes of a mental patient, can at times be truly insane. That's where the fun really lies.

Counterculture icon and author Ken Kesey (1935-2001) wrote his first novel, "*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*," in 1960. The book was a response to the author's experiences testing mind-altering drugs for the federal government and his later tenure as a nurse's aide in the same facility. In the introduction to the novel, Robert Faggen places this seminal novel in its proper context, arguing that this book incorporates several themes of the 1950's: the Cold War, the plight of the Native Americans, the reliance on psychiatry as a cure all for social problems, and the vestigial remnants of McCarthyism. Even if you could care less about how Kesey's book fits into American cultural history, you could hardly fail to miss the overarching theme of his novel: the tensions between the individual and the state, between those trapped in an industrial society and those who wish to live in freedom. There is a film version of this book starring Jack Nicholson and Louise Fletcher that adequately captures Kesey's stark visions. The author's tale takes place in a mental asylum at an unknown time. Perhaps this is because time has little importance to the inmates in the facility. The people in this particular ward of the hospital fall into categories of 'acute' or 'chronic,' depending on whether they have hope of recovery or are irrevocably ill. The days are full of drudgery, an endless round of medications interspersed with playing cards against the background of canned polka music. Everyday the acute patients meet for group therapy that really doubles as a McCarthyesque tattling session. The name of the game is acquiescence to the myriad rules and regulations of the institution. Those inmates who violate the rules earn a trip to the disturbed ward or a quick trip to the

electroshock chamber.

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