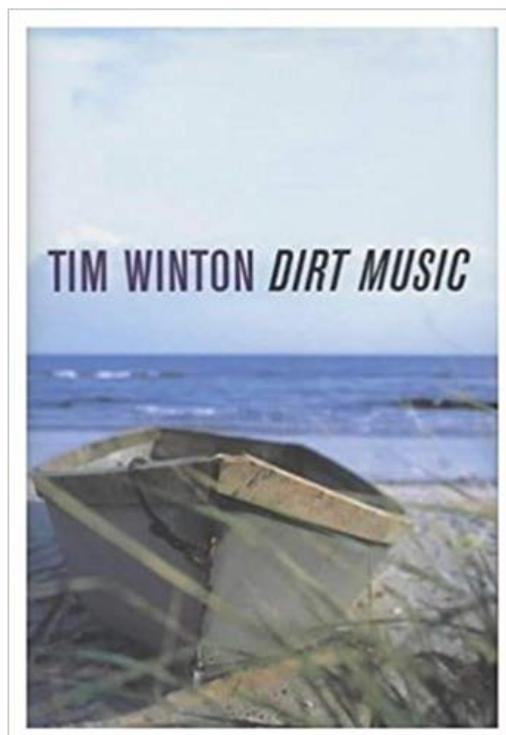


Dirt Music *by* Tim Winton



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Reviews of the *Dirt Music* by Tim Winton

Gaua

I'm really starting to consider Australian literature to be some of the best fiction I've had the pleasure of getting my hands on. I've already been able to delve into authors like Murray Bail and Elliot Perlman and now I've had the pleasure of reading a stunning novel, 'Dirt Music', written by acclaimed Australian author Tim Winton. I must say this; after this read I surely will be researching his bibliography.

'Dirt Music' takes place in a small fishing town in Western Australia (a fictitious town called White Point) where middle-aged Georgie Jutland is trying to find herself. She's always been a rebellious and free-spirited woman; at odds with her family constantly, never truly feeling as though she belonged anywhere. She's longed for a sense of freedom that everyone around her seems to take

away, but she lacks the ability to make the needed effort to really save herself from her apparent failings. She lives with widower Jim Buckridge; a shell of a man who drowns himself in fishing and remains a distant and reclusive mystery to Georgie. She feels as though she loves him, but she struggles with understanding why. She cooks for him, she cleans his house and she takes care of his two sons, but at the end of the day she feels alone and cold.

And then she meets Lu.

The man known as Luther Fox comes with some serious baggage. A beautiful musician who comes from a dishonorable family; Fox has been reduced to a shamateur (fish poacher) due to some unspeakable tragedies in his life. Let's just say that he is the sole survivor to the Fox name. When Georgie spots Fox poaching late at night it is her obligation to inform her husband, a local fisherman. This is their way of living and this man is encroaching on that. Instead of playing informant she decides to play desperate housewife and starts up a heated affair that is far more than just a one-night stand type thing. No, it becomes apparent that both Lu and Georgie fill a void within one another; a void they've been trying to fill for a long time.

The novel effortlessly paints these characters for us, giving us a realistic and authentic portrait of middle-aged despair and self-awareness. Winton's descriptive prose is littered with beautiful expressions of pure emotion and his languid delivery is a joy to read.

My one critique, if I were to have any, would be that at times he expounds too much on areas that need little expansion. He goes to great lengths to flesh out each and every move these characters make, and the prose spans over a good length of time, and so some scenes could have been cut and some time could have been shortened to keep the pacing a little brisker in areas, but in the end it is a trivial complaint when you consider the richly rewarding entirety of the novel. I felt that the novel's ending was a tad premature (even if the novel spans nearly 500 pages), but it was not a disappointment in the least; it just felt a little too sudden for what I was expecting.

Some novels take a full chapter to wind things down; this one almost feels like the ending is on a solitary page.

It's still the best thing I've read in quite some time, and certainly a masterful example of pure storytelling at it's finest. I'd highly recommend this one. If you enjoy a good dramatic story, filled with love, loss and ample amounts of genuine (and realistic) tension then dive right in, for 'Dirt Music' covers all those bases and then some.

Beranyle

It took me a while to really get caught up in this story. Once I did, I found myself thinking about this book and especially the main characters, Lu and Georgie. They both had horrendous backgrounds and they eventually worked their problems out to finally be together. I read the book because it took place in Australia, a place I'll visit soon. Too bad it is, that there is no Georgie to meet me or Lu to put all of me into a song.

Raniconne

Like many promising novels, a disappointing ending. Lovely evocation of time and place, but he loses the thread of structure 2/3 of the way through it and it's just a struggle from there on out. Not up to the level of "Breath ", for sure,

Wiliniett

I was impressed with the pictures and personalities that the author drew - the reader spent much of the time in the main characters heads - great writing challenge - great author. Enjoyed the small Australian town & landscape. The plot came together right at the end with an unexpected satisfaction.

But all the internal stressing didn't suit me - prefer a bit more action so only a 3 from me.

Saithinin

A thoroughly absorbing read that combines funny, sharp-tongued dialogue with rich descriptions of the harsh and beautiful natural environment of Australia. Sympathetic characters try to come to terms with difficult pasts and follow their hearts to live in tune with their own natures. It's about love, and how it gets inside us to compel actions without choice.

Georgie falters from one ill-fitting relationship to another, until she ends up moving in with Jim Buckridge, a widower with two scrappy sons and a very successful fishing business in a small town on the Western coast of Australia. The Buckridges are a prominent family there, and Georgie becomes by day the caretaker of children, home, and man. At night, she tries to quiet her inner restlessness with alcohol and long hours on the Internet, until one night she takes her restlessness outside to the beach, where she happens upon the truck and dog of a fisherman poacher. She trades the Internet for watching this man's activities, befriending the dog and following him until she discovers where he lives. Her fascination with Lu Fox takes her into a new kind of relationship, and Winton renders well the effortless obsession of love. Lu has a tragic family history of his own, which drives him to abandon the music he once prenatally played with his dead relatives.

More than a love story, though, this chronicle of tragedy and loss steers its characters through the contrasting diversities of human adaptations from small town to urban to solitary scavenging on the harsh coastal landscape. And despite human missteps and loss, there is in Winton's vision the possibility for redemption.

Adorardana

Every sentence, each word of this richly layered saga is worth savoring. The imagery is deliciously textured. The skillful use of assonance allows the reader to feel as well as hear the author's words.

The language Tim Winton uses is so absolute and so decisive and yet seems so effortless. If it weren't for the urgency of the plot, this would be a book one could linger over endlessly.

This novel isn't so much about a journey of self-discovery or self-absorption as it is about a rite that unlocks the characters' ability to accept another's love. This is a book that could be reread many times and deliver fresh discoveries each time.

Stan

An all time favorite. A beautiful, complex story that acknowledges the influence of nature in human life, in this case it's the wild natural environment of Australia. I didn't want it to end; the characters are so vibrant, that I wanted to see where life will take them next.

This is the first book I have read by this author and it was excellent

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