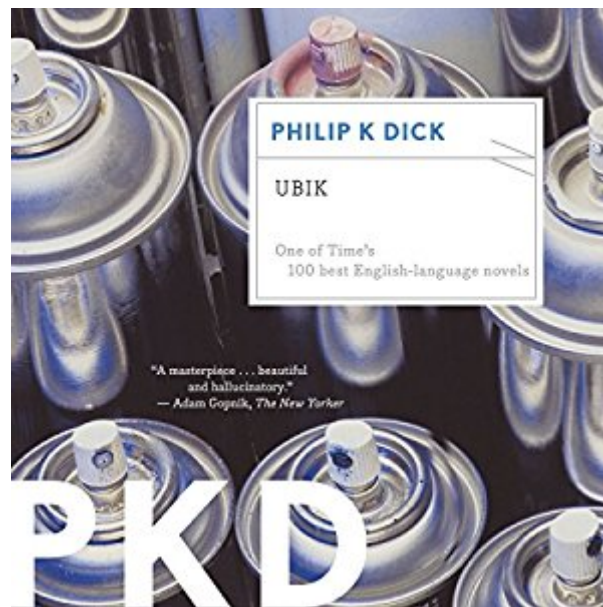


The book was found

Ubik



Synopsis

A mind-bending, classic Philip K. Dick novel about the perception of reality. Named as one of Time's 100 best books. Glen Runciter runs a lucrative business - deploying his teams of anti-psychics to corporate clients who want privacy and security from psychic spies. But when he and his top team are ambushed by a rival, he is gravely injured and placed in "half-life," a dreamlike state of suspended animation. Soon, though, the surviving members of the team begin experiencing some strange phenomena, such as Runciter's face appearing on coins and the world seeming to move backward in time. As consumables deteriorate and technology gets ever more primitive, the group needs to find out what is causing the shifts and what a mysterious product called Ubik has to do with it all.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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Whispersync for Voice: Ready

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Customer Reviews

Although "Ubik" wasn't the first Philip K. Dick novel I read (having read just about all of them now, it's hard to remember which was first, but I think it was "Martian Time-Slip"), I would recommend it as the best starting point for someone trying to decide if PKD is your cup of tea. "Ubik" has all of the major elements of the typical PKD novel (to the extent there is any typicality): (1) questioning of the meaning of reality; (2) an almost pathetic sense of humor in the face of the unraveling of reality; (3) an everyman protagonist; and (4) extreme readability despite a somewhat pedestrian writing style. The plot can be summed up like this: some humans have psychic powers, but rather than being seen as heroes (as is the case in most sci-fi), they're possible sources of invasions of your

privacy. Never fear, however, because some humans have developed anti-psychic powers -- they block the powers of the others. A bunch of anti-psychics go on a mission, but something goes wrong and they barely get away with their lives. Almost immediately, they notice that something is not right. Phone directories are out of date, coffee is disgustingly stale, and so on. Time, it seems, is flowing backwards! For readers who aren't aware, PKD was one of the most influential sci-fi writers, with his reality-warping stories. His interest in this topic can be traced, no doubt, to his youthful experimentation with narcotics -- an experience recounted largely in "A Scanner Darkly." PKD was an incredibly prolific writer; he wrote something like 16 novels in a five year stretch in the late-1960s, including "Ubik." Many of his best novels were written during that stretch.

With UBIK, Dick wrote a book which is, in the same time, extremely pleasant to read and extremely confusing - quite a feat... UBIK is a "best of" Dick's obsessions: it contains obvious reminiscences of The Eye in the Sky (the collective nightmare), The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch (the greedy, almighty, elusive son of a b...), Counter-clock world (time running backwards), The World Jones Made (precognition), Time Out of Joint (the fake world), to name a few. In a way, it is also reminiscent of VALIS (the Godlike entity which communicates with the hero by mystical means), which was written 12 years after UBIK! How could so many themes be exploited so intelligently in such a short novel? The answer is: thanks to Dick's straightforward style. In UBIK, every word counts. The hero, Joe Chip, races with Death: each passing minute lowers his chances to find a UBIK vaporizer and to save his skin. Through Dick's sparing use of words, the reader understands this message: if Joe Chip rests, he will die. Some of Dick's despisers criticize his so-called "hasty" style: can't they see that, thanks to this style, he could describe the undecipherable? When you get rid of the superfluous, you get a chance to grab the true essence of horror. At least, that's what Dick thought; I personally think he was right and that he should be remembered of today not only for his hallucinatory visions but also for his style. The style allows Dick to exploit the above themes "intelligently", ie in depth and by intertwining them. But it will probably not allow the reader to fully understand the book after the first reading, unless he's VERY familiar with Dick's tricks, mainly the different levels of reality.

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