



Review of Birdy

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I could never get interested in animals--except as a metaphor for what humans do. In and of themselves their powers to fascinate and inform were always limited. Human activity, however secular, however holy, has been the sole fascination on this planet for me. Or so I used to think. But I am beginning to believe quite the opposite these days. Not in any zoological or biological sense, but I have to tell you that, at least in the area of sexual^{had} the physical act of love, the animals may have it all over us--all the time. I mean for Romantic sex, gentle, caring, may I say humane, sex, is a province that increasingly seems to belong to Non-human species. What brought my attention to this subject which zoologists must have known all along, is a book I read last summer which should be in the stores now, by a man named Wharton. A book entitled Birdy. I can't describe to you all the important things it is about, but one of the things it does is restore honor and love and commitment and mystery and friendliness^{humanism} to the act of love. And who are these lovers? Yes. Birds. Canaries, in fact whose courtship and consummation are not only a writer's triumph, and a reader's delight--it is an avant garde view of what the possibilities are for us, even, in the future. If we are to believe the literature of rape, the annals of divorce, the overheard conversations in public transportation, then what is not readily available to a large number of us is sex without power or greed or fear or shame or hostility. Sex performed as thought it were a friendly thing to do. Something mutual. If we heed Mr. Wharton, there may be hope for us. "Perty starts to fly," he writes. "I fly after her, singing. She flies, dances to my song and I sing, dance to her dance. It's not a chase but mutual following."

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Having ever
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Well, Birdy is about a lot of things more important than
the marriage of two canaries Its really about the ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~
~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ intricate, ^{generous} believable ~~refreshing~~ ~~rels~~
relationships between tow young men. It's about looking for
grace and a civilization that has no meanness in it. And it
is about love, love made human by its intimate association with
love in the animal kingdom.

I'm