

Tuco: The Parrot, the Others, and A Scattershot World

By Brian Brett

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Tuco: The Parrot, the Others, and A Scattershot World By Brian Brett

A BBC Radio 2 Book Club Pick

For thirty years, Brian Brett shared his office and his life with Tuco, a remarkable parrot given to asking such questions as “Whaddya know?” and announcing “Party time!” when guests showed up at Brett’s farm. Although Brett bought Tuco on a whim as a pet, he gradually realizes the enormous obligation he has to the bird and learns that the parrot is a lot more complex than he thought.

Simultaneously a biography of this singular bird and a history of bird/dinosaurs and the human relationship with birds, *Tuco* also explores how we “other” the world—abusing birds, landscapes, and each other—including Brett’s own experience with a rare genetic condition that turned his early years into an obstacle course of bullying and nurtured his affinity for winged creatures. The book also provides an in-depth examination of our ideas about knowledge, language, and intelligence (including commentary from Tuco himself) and how as we learn more about animal languages and intelligence we continually shift our definitions of them in order to retain our “superiority.” As Brett says, “Whaddya know? Not much. I don’t even know what knowledge is. I know only the magic ... and

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Editorial Review

Review

"*Tuco* is, at its heart, an account of survival, of the life of the Other, whether in its human or avian form. It's a beautiful book, rich in both information and emotion, anchored in Brett's rich, accessible prose and his humble, plain-spoken strength."—*Toronto Star*

"A wonderful gyre of a journey into the mind of man and bird, *Tuco* is an avian feast of astounding nuggets, tales, and insights. It is also a deep meditation on our place in time and nature: moving, funny, personal yet universal."—Ronald Wright, author of *A Short History of Progress*

"*Tuco* is an avian odyssey, an homage to strange birds, both feathered and human. The path winds through the gardens of life, through adventure and heartache, with Brett as your eloquent guide, his delightfully mischievous parrot perched on his shoulder. A remarkable story of interspecies companionship.

—Charlotte Gill, author of *Eating Dirt*

About the Author

Brian Brett is the author of *Trauma Farm: A Rebel History of Rural Life*, which won the Writers' Trust Non-Fiction Prize, and *Uproar's Your Only Music*, a *Globe and Mail* Book of the Year. He has also written numerous books of poetry and fiction. He lives with his family on Salt Spring Island, British Columbia, Canada.

Users Review

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