

Found Audio

N. J. Campbell

Two Dollar Radio (Jul 11, 2017)

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Found Audio is a philosophical exploration of humanity, ambition, and the quest for knowledge that exists within us all.

Found Audio, by N.J. Campbell, is a novel comprising a series of letters and transcriptions, forcing a state of metaphysical uncertainty. The questions that permeate the text become more and more pertinent as it switches from something almost plausible to something unbelievable.

It begins with a foreword written by a fictional N. J. Campbell and moves on to two notes from Amrapali Anna Singh regarding the transcriptions, her intent to publish them, and how she came to work on them. A. A. Singh, PhD, is approached by Mr. Cavey, who hires her to transcribe and intuit as much information as possible about a series of three tapes. An unmoored setting is created. Everything starts off with no clear sense of whether *Found Audio* is fictional or not.

The story is broken up between the three tapes. In them, an unnamed man describes a series of events that changed his life. These events awake a curiosity in him that brings him searching for the answers to questions he isn't quite certain how to ask. When the answers finally arise, they are just as indescribable and curious as the circumstances that led the man there.

The setup and format of the novel is genius. It is simple, spare, and amazingly effective in helping to set the tone and evoke engagement. The reader becomes another person drawn unwittingly into the mystery of the tapes and the story they tell. Most of the novel is one man recounting his journey of discovery. As a character, he is self-aware, concise, and prone to a thoughtfulness regarding his life that is refreshing. These traits succeed in making him relatable despite the grandness of the events he retells.

As the novel is not narrated in the traditional third-person omniscient fashion, the dialogue carries the brunt of the plot. Practically one extended monologue, it is a testament to Campbell's skill that it flows and works so well.

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SHANA CREANEY (July/August 2017)

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