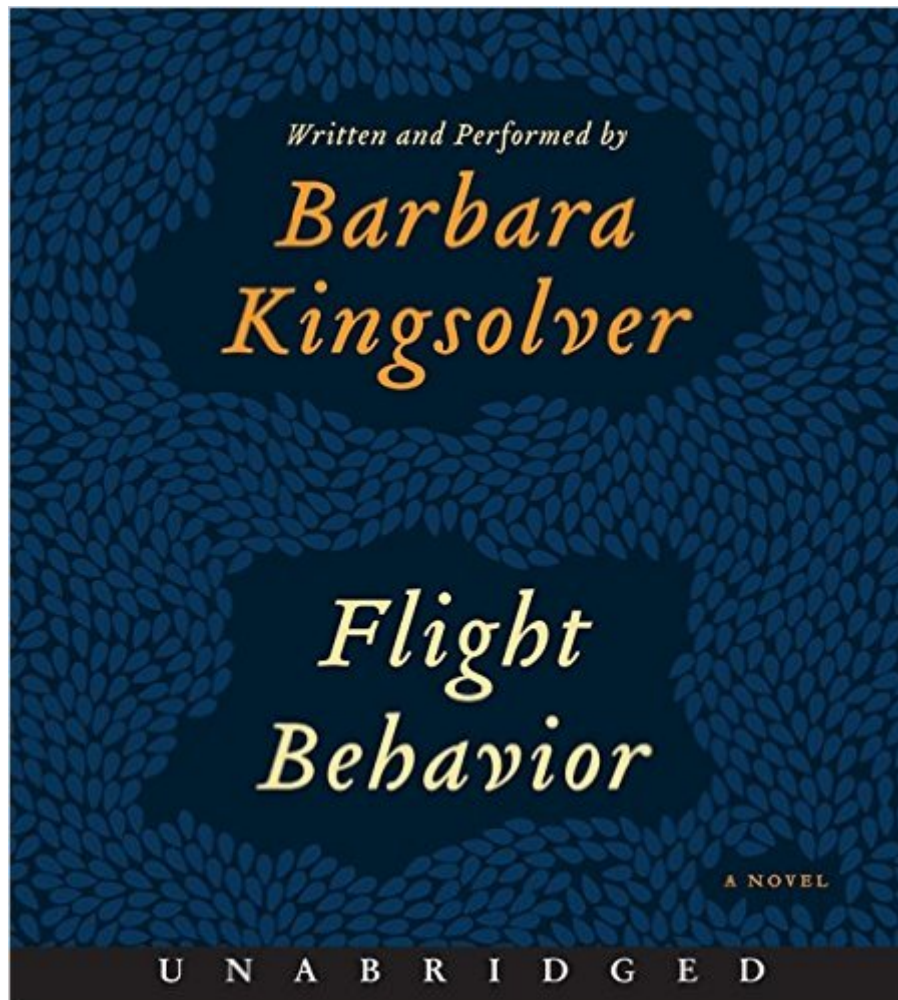


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Flight Behavior Unabridged CD



Synopsis

Barbara Kingsolver is a gifted magician of words. *Time* magazine named her the extraordinary New York Times bestselling author of *The Lacuna* (winner of the Orange Prize), *The Poisonwood Bible* (nominated for the Pulitzer Prize), and *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*. Barbara Kingsolver returns with a truly stunning and unforgettable work. *Flight Behavior* is a brilliant and suspenseful novel set in present day Appalachia; a breathtaking parable of catastrophe and denial that explores how the complexities we inevitably encounter in life lead us to believe in our particular chosen truths. Kingsolver's riveting story concerns a young wife and mother on a failing farm in rural Tennessee who experiences something she cannot explain, and how her discovery energizes various competing factions—religious leaders, climate scientists, environmentalists, politicians—trapping her in the center of the conflict and ultimately opening up her world. *Flight Behavior* is arguably Kingsolver's most thrilling and accessible novel to date, and like so many other of her acclaimed works, represents contemporary American fiction at its finest.

Book Information

Audio CD

Publisher: HarperAudio; Unabridged edition (November 6, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0062124323

ISBN-13: 978-0062124326

Product Dimensions: 5.8 x 5.3 x 2.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (2,853 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,272,762 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #7 in [Books > Books on CD > Authors, A-Z > \(K \) > Kingsolver, Barbara](#) #3198 in [Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction > Unabridged](#) #4520 in [Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction > General](#)

Customer Reviews

When I first heard the title to Barbara Kingsolver's seventh novel, I thought of airplanes. Such is the orientation of the 21st century. Well, prepare to step into the rural, economically depressed farming and sheepherding town of Feathertown, Tennessee, where the shepherds flock on Sundays to commune with Pastor Bobby Ogle, their beloved and kind preacher and spiritual leader. This is the kind of repressed, technologically challenged community who believes that climate change is determined by God, not explained by science, and that the past year's flooding was decreed by the

heavens and can only be reversed by prayer. In this story, the survival techniques of the Monarch butterfly, those bright orange, delicate but hardy creatures, and that of a diminutive, flame-haired young woman are inextricably intertwined and analogous. The Monarchs have had an atypical flight behavior this year. Floods and landslides led to felled trees everywhere in their usual roosting place in Mexico. Subsequently, they migrated to Feathertown to overwinter. Why Feathertown? That's the big question that one team of scientists comes to examine. However, they are challenged by the residents, who are skeptical of science-based answers to climate-based questions. In the meantime, residents of Feathertown need to fill their coffers. Dellarobia Turnbow, 27, has her own kind of flight behaviors, spurred on by too much domestic confinement too soon, and now she is primed to flee, restive--flying from pillar to post, as her mother always said. Unlike the rest of the townspeople, she wasn't as inspired by religion. "She was a...911 Christian: in the event of an emergency, call the Lord...Jesus was a more reliable backer, less likely to drink himself unconscious or get liver cancer.

Barbara Kingsolver is one of those rare writers with whom you know what you are getting before you open the first page. You know, for example, that the prose is going to be literary, dense, and luscious (take this descriptive line: Summer's heat had never really arrived, nor the cold in turn, and everything living now seemed to yearn for sun with the anguish of the unloved.") You know that the content will focus on some kind of social justice, biodiversity, or environmental issue. You know, too, that at some point, Ms. Kingsolver will cross the line into authorial intrusion based on her passion for the subject she is writing on. But you keep coming back for more. At least, I do. There is something mesmerizing about a Barbara Kingsolver novel, and something refreshing about a writer who combines a solid scientific background with stunning prose. This book is entitled *Flight Behavior*, and for good reason. It opens with a young Appalachian woman - Dellarobia Turnbow - ready to take flight from her shotgun marriage and closed-in life with two young children. On her way up the mountain to engage in an affair, she views an astounding natural phenomenon that changes everything for her. The core of the novel focuses on that phenomenon, centering on the migratory patterns of the bright orange Monarch butterfly, usually viewed only in Mexico. The topic is climate change and Ms. Kingsolver slashes through the obtuse definitions with language anyone can understand. Dellarobia is paired thematically with a Harvard-educated scientist Ovid Byron, whose lifework is studying the butterflies. He says, "If you woke up one morning, Dellarobia, and one of your eyes had moved to the side of your head, how would you feel about that?"

I love Barbara Kingsolver. All of her books automatically go on my to-read list, because she's brilliant. One of the things I love about her is how unique her books are from one another. She writes different kind of characters in disparate environments and focuses on varying themes. I find it so impressive when authors can reinvent themselves so often. Flight Behavior is my fourth Kingsolver book. Unfortunately, unlike the others, this one failed to meet my expectations. My first Kingsolver read was The Bean Trees, which centers around a girl desperate to get out of her small, hick town where most of the girls are pregnant before they even leave high school. She wants to be one of the ones to leave and never come back. Through some odd circumstances, she finds herself stuck raising a baby that's not hers, sort of falling into motherhood. The plot itself didn't have much appeal for me as a reader, but the book was utterly compelling and I loved it so much. Kingsolver's powerful writing and intriguing, quirky characters pulled me in despite myself. In Flight Behavior, Kingsolver again focuses on a heroine who had dreams of escaping her hick town, but this one didn't make it. Dellarobia hoped to go to college, but wound up pregnant instead. Even worse, the baby boy died, leaving her stuck in a marriage with a man she doesn't respect and reliant on judgmental in-laws. Her unhappiness manifests itself in a wandering eye; she has had a number of crushes on men, flirted with the idea of an affair. The hook of the novel is when Dellarobia heads up the mountain to meet with one of her men and cheat on her husband. On her way, she sees the forest burning with butterflies, and interprets that as a sign from God that she needs to go back to her life and make good.

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