



## The Yokota Officers Club: A Novel (Ballantine Reader's Circle)

By Sarah Bird

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**The Yokota Officers Club: A Novel (Ballantine Reader's Circle)** By Sarah Bird

**“A GEM, POLISHED AND FACETED IN A WAY THAT PULLED ME INTO THE HEART OF IT WITH THE FIRST PARAGRAPH. . . .**

**Important, touching, meaningful, and uplifting.”**

**–JEANNE RAY**

*Chicago Tribune*

After a year away at college, military brat Bernadette Root has come “home” to Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan, to spend the summer with her bizarre yet comforting clan. Ruled by a strict, regimented Air Force Major father, but grounded in their mother’s particular brand of humor, Bernie’s family was destined for military greatness during the glory days of the mid-’50s. But in Base life, where an unkempt lawn is cause for reassignment, one fateful misstep changed the Roots’ world forever. Yet the family’s silence cannot keep the wounds of the past from reemerging . . . nor can the memory fade of beloved Fumiko, the family’s former maid, whose name is now verboten. And the secrets long ago covered up in classic military style—through elimination and denial—are now forcing their way to the surface for a return engagement.

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## **The Yokota Officers Club: A Novel (Ballantine Reader's Circle) By Sarah Bird Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Stories nestle inside stories like a set of Russian dolls in Bird's (*Virgin of the Rodeo*) wonderful fifth novel. Set in the late 1960s, it is narrated by 18-year-old Bernie, the eldest of six children in the peripatetic Root family. After her freshman year in college, Bernie joins her nomadic kin at their current home, an Okinawan air force base. They have changed: her younger sister, Kit, is out of control and "now being played by Lolita"; her once glamorous mother, Moe, is overweight and depressed; her father, who was a heroic and swaggering fighter pilot, has become a distant, self-loathing "ground pounder." And Bernie can't stop thinking of Fumiko, the family's former maidservant, whom no one is allowed to mention. Before being sucked into the family's torpor, Bernie escapes by winning a dance contest that lands her in Tokyo as the stage partner of Bobby Moses, a third-rate borscht belt comedian. There she delves into the past to solve the mystery surrounding Fumiko's disappearance and her family's deterioration. Bernie sharp and snarky, yet severely introverted is a delightful heroine, and the large cast that swirls around her is equally endearing. Particularly fine are the wisecracking yet nurturing Moe and the oddly touching Bobby Moses, who's vulgar and mediocre, but insistent on professionalism. The dialogue is first-rate, and all the '60s brand-name dropping is amusing; the decade becomes fresh again when seen from the unusual perspective of a military family (especially this one) removed from mainland society. (June) Forecast: Bird has David Sedaris's gift for mining scathing wit from family dysfunction. Only one of her earlier novels is still in print, but hopefully her move to Knopf (and a slew of enthusiastic blurbs from the likes of Rick Bass) will help her to win the large readership she deserves.

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School-Bird has created a deftly choreographed journey of the heart, delicate and nuanced in its disclosure of painful family secrets, yet liberally seasoned with robust humor. Readers travel with 18-year-old Bernie Root as she returns from her freshman year of college in the States to visit her military family, currently stationed on Okinawa. The "fresh eyes" with which she views her parents and five younger siblings will resonate with many teens. Beyond this, the complex range of emotions generated by her reentry into life on a military base, with all its familiar, yet insular and confining, characteristics is poignantly captured. Bernie's distress at her parents' deteriorating marriage and her continuing thorny relationship with her beautiful younger sister provide a sober backdrop that is nevertheless leavened by vignettes and hilarious reminiscences of life on the move and the pitfalls of always being the new kid in town. At the core of the story is the protagonist's attempt to unveil the mystery surrounding the disappearance of a beloved servant who lived with the family 10 years prior when they were stationed in Japan, while the father was assigned to a squadron flying surveillance missions shrouded in secrecy. Bernie intuitively senses that discovering Fumiko's fate is key to understanding the forces that are destabilizing her family. The revelations that ensue lead her along a path of self-discovery to a heartrending confrontation with the harsh consequences of one's actions, and to a new level of maturity. A beautifully paced story, especially recommended for (but not limited to) any locale with a military base nearby.

*Lynn Nutwell, Fairfax City Regional Library, VA*

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From Library Journal

Bernie (Bernadette), age 18, flies to Okinawa after a year at college to visit her parents and five younger

siblings. It's 1968, and she is as stunned by the changes in her close-knit air force family as they are by her newly acquired radical antiwar convictions. With her parents' marriage in ruins, Bernie begins to unravel the eight-year old mystery that tangled them all in a disastrous web of betrayal and calamity, derailing her father's flying career and wrecking the family's close friendship with their former maid Fumiko. In a scene of exquisitely rendered detail, Bernie wins a dance contest and returns to the Japan of her childhood to track down the truth of what happened. Bird, author of such hits as *The Mommy Club*, nails the voice of Bernie in a delicate balance of confused, shy child vs. the bright emerging woman she has become. Bird's masterly use of the tricky technique of children revealing adult subtleties is breathtaking. An even trickier technique, smoothly moving from the scene-setting, literally translated "bar-girl" English of Fumiko to the proper English Bernie "hears," puts the reader right in the middle of all the heartache. Expect demand for Bird's previous works once patrons finish this one. Highly recommended. Beth E. Andersen, Ann Arbor Dist. Lib., MI

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## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Mark Spears:**

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#### **Brenda Wright:**

The publication with title *The Yokota Officers Club: A Novel* (Ballantine Reader's Circle) includes a lot of information that you can find out it. You can get a lot of benefit after read this book. That book exist new knowledge the information that exist in this book represented the condition of the world currently. That is important to yo7u to be aware of how the improvement of the world. That book will bring you with new era of the internationalization. You can read the e-book on your smart phone, so you can read it anywhere you want.

#### **Vikki Maynard:**

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**Ruth Little:**

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