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An Artist Of The Floating World (Penguin Drop Caps)



Synopsis

From A to Z, the Penguin Drop Caps series collects 26 unique hardcovers featuring cover art by Jessica Hische. It all begins with a letter. Fall in love with Penguin Drop Caps, a new series of twenty-six collectible and hardcover editions, each with a type cover showcasing a gorgeously illustrated letter of the alphabet. In a design collaboration between Jessica Hische and Penguin Art Director Paul Buckley, the series features unique cover art by Hische, a superstar in the world of type design and illustration, whose work has appeared everywhere from Tiffany & Co. to Wes Anderson's recent film *Moonrise Kingdom* to Penguin's own bestsellers *Committed* and *Rules of Civility*. With exclusive designs that have never before appeared on Hische's hugely popular Daily Drop Cap blog, the Penguin Drop Caps series launches with six perennial favorites to give as elegant gifts, or to showcase on your own shelves.

I is for Ishiguro. Masuji Ono saw misery in his homeland and became unwilling to spend his skills solely in the celebration of physical beauty. Instead, he envisioned a strong and powerful nation of the future, and he put his painting to work in the service of the movement that led Japan into World War II. Now, as the mature Masuji Ono struggles through the spiritual wreckage of that war, his memories of the floating world of his youth, full of pleasure and promise, serve as an escape from, a punishment for, and a justification of his entire life. Drifting without honor in Japan's postwar society, which indicts him for its defeat and reviles him for his aesthetics, he relives the passage through his personal history that makes him both a hero and a coward but, above all, a human being.

An Artist of the Floating World is a sensual and profoundly convincing portrait of the artist as an aging man. At once a multigenerational tale and a samurai death poem written in English, it is also a saga of the clash of the old and new orders, blending classical and contemporary iconography with compassion and wit.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars See all reviews (110 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I read "An Artist of the Floating World" twice in one week, once in fascination and once more to explore the nuances and subtleties that characterize Kazuo Ishiguro's novels. This short work, Ishiguro's second novel, was short listed for the prestigious Booker Prize. Both a character study and an intriguing glimpse of pre-war Japan, in many ways it is a Japanese parallel to Ishiguro's highly successful third novel, "The Remains of the Day". Ishiguro enjoys slowly revealing his characters through their recollection of events long past. The memories are often fragmented, sometimes hazy, sometimes simply untrustworthy. In "An Artist of the Floating World" the situation is further complicated by the tendency of its protagonist, Masuji Ono, to misinterpret his own memories. "An Artist of the Floating World" is a portrait as Masuji Ono saw himself, and as he believed that others saw him. It is three years after Japan's defeat and Ono is preoccupied with the negotiations around his younger daughter's proposed marriage. Last year Noriko's marriage negotiations with another young man were unexpectedly terminated by the groom's family. Almost without self-awareness, Ono begins to question whether his artistic support of the imperialistic movement in the thirties and during the war now places his daughter's prospects in jeopardy. Although Ono sees himself as a modest man, he overstates the impact that his military and patriotic art had in conditioning the Japanese people for the impending imperialistic war effort. It is never quite clear just how popular and widespread his war posters actually were. In contrast, Ono seems incapable of recognizing the magnitude of his crime against his best student, Kuroda, whom he betrayed to the authorities.

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