

The Sky Above Great Wind: A Comprehensive Exploration of Jun'ichirō Tanizaki's Masterpiece



Jun'ichirō Tanizaki's "The Sky Above Great Wind" is a seminal work in Japanese literature, renowned for its exquisite prose, captivating characters, and profound insights into the human condition. Published in 1949, this masterpiece explores themes of beauty, desire, and the elusive nature of happiness. Through its vivid portrayal of a love triangle set in pre-World War II Kyoto, Tanizaki invites readers on an immersive journey into a world of aesthetics, longing, and self-discovery.



Sky Above, Great Wind: The Life and Poetry of Zen

Master Ryokan by Kazuaki Tanahashi

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 1922 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 271 pages
Screen Reader : Supported



The Characters: A Tapestry of Desire and Identity

- **Otomaru Sasaki:** A renowned calligrapher and tea master, Otomaru embodies the epitome of traditional Japanese culture. His refined taste and unwavering pursuit of beauty captivate those around him, yet his aloof nature conceals a deep-seated longing for connection.
- **Nishiki: Nishiki:** A geisha of extraordinary beauty and allure, Nishiki possesses a magnetic presence that captivates men and women alike. Her enigmatic smile and enigmatic demeanor hint at a complex inner world, making her an object of both desire and fascination.
- **Joe Otori:** A wealthy and successful businessman, Joe Otori represents the modern age. His Westernized lifestyle and hedonistic pursuits contrast sharply with Otomaru's conservatism, creating a dynamic tension between tradition and modernity.

The Love Triangle: A Symphony of Longing and Betrayal

The central conflict of "The Sky Above Great Wind" unfolds through the intertwined relationships between Otomaru, Nishiki, and Joe. Otomaru's initial attraction to Nishiki's beauty gradually transforms into a consuming obsession, threatening the foundations of his marriage and social standing. Nishiki, torn between her affection for Otomaru and the allure of Joe's wealth and power, embarks on a forbidden affair that sets the stage for tragedy.

Joe, driven by a ruthless desire for Nishiki and an animosity towards Otomaru, manipulates the situation to his advantage. As the love triangle intensifies, the characters confront their own flaws, desires, and the consequences of their actions.

The Pursuit of Beauty and the Illusion of Happiness

Tanizaki's exploration of beauty in "The Sky Above Great Wind" is both captivating and unsettling. Through Otomaru's obsession with Nishiki's physical beauty, Tanizaki questions the fleeting and subjective nature of aesthetic perfection. The pursuit of beauty, he suggests, can become a dangerous and self-destructive path.

The characters' relentless search for happiness further highlights the novel's poignant themes. Otomaru's desire for Nishiki, Nishiki's longing for love and security, and Joe's pursuit of pleasure ultimately lead to disappointment and suffering. Tanizaki exposes the fragility of human happiness and the impossibility of finding lasting fulfillment through external sources.

The Sky Above: Metaphors for Change and Resolution

The titular "sky above great wind" serves as a recurring motif throughout the novel. It represents the ever-changing nature of life and the inevitability of loss. The characters' attempts to control or predict the future are ultimately futile, as the winds of fate blow in unpredictable directions.

In the novel's climax, the sky is depicted as both a source of destruction and renewal. A devastating typhoon symbolizes the destruction of the characters' illusions and the shattering of their dreams. However, as the storm passes, a new day emerges, offering hope and the possibility of redemption.

"The Sky Above Great Wind" is a literary masterpiece that continues to resonate with readers today. Through its vivid characters, haunting prose, and profound insights, Tanizaki explores the complexities of human desire, the fragility of beauty, and the elusive nature of happiness. The novel's timeless themes and enduring impact have solidified its place as one of the most important works of Japanese literature.

Whether you are a seasoned reader of Japanese literature or a newcomer to this captivating world, "The Sky Above Great Wind" is an unforgettable journey that will linger in your mind long after you have finished its final page.



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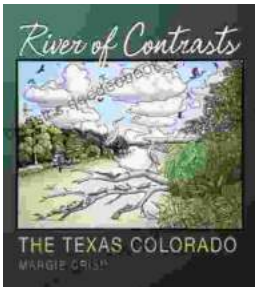
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