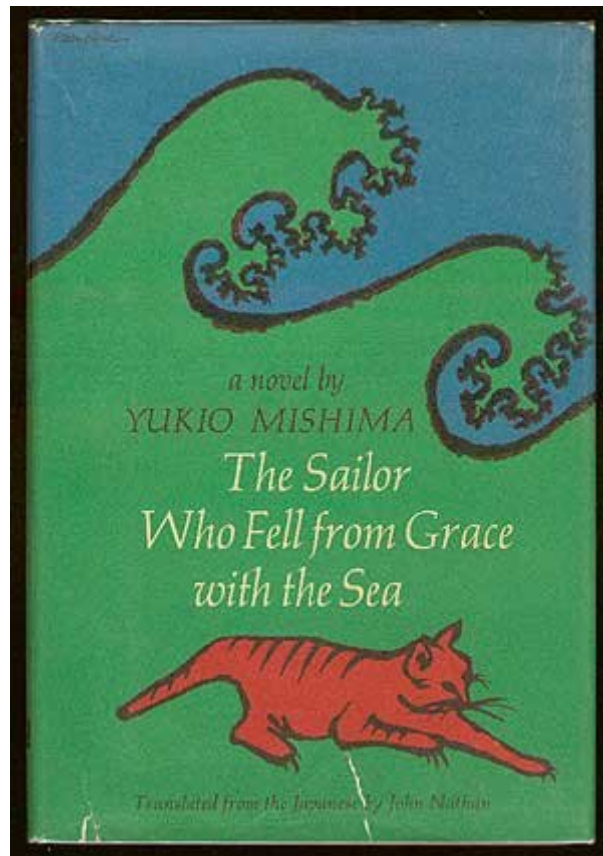
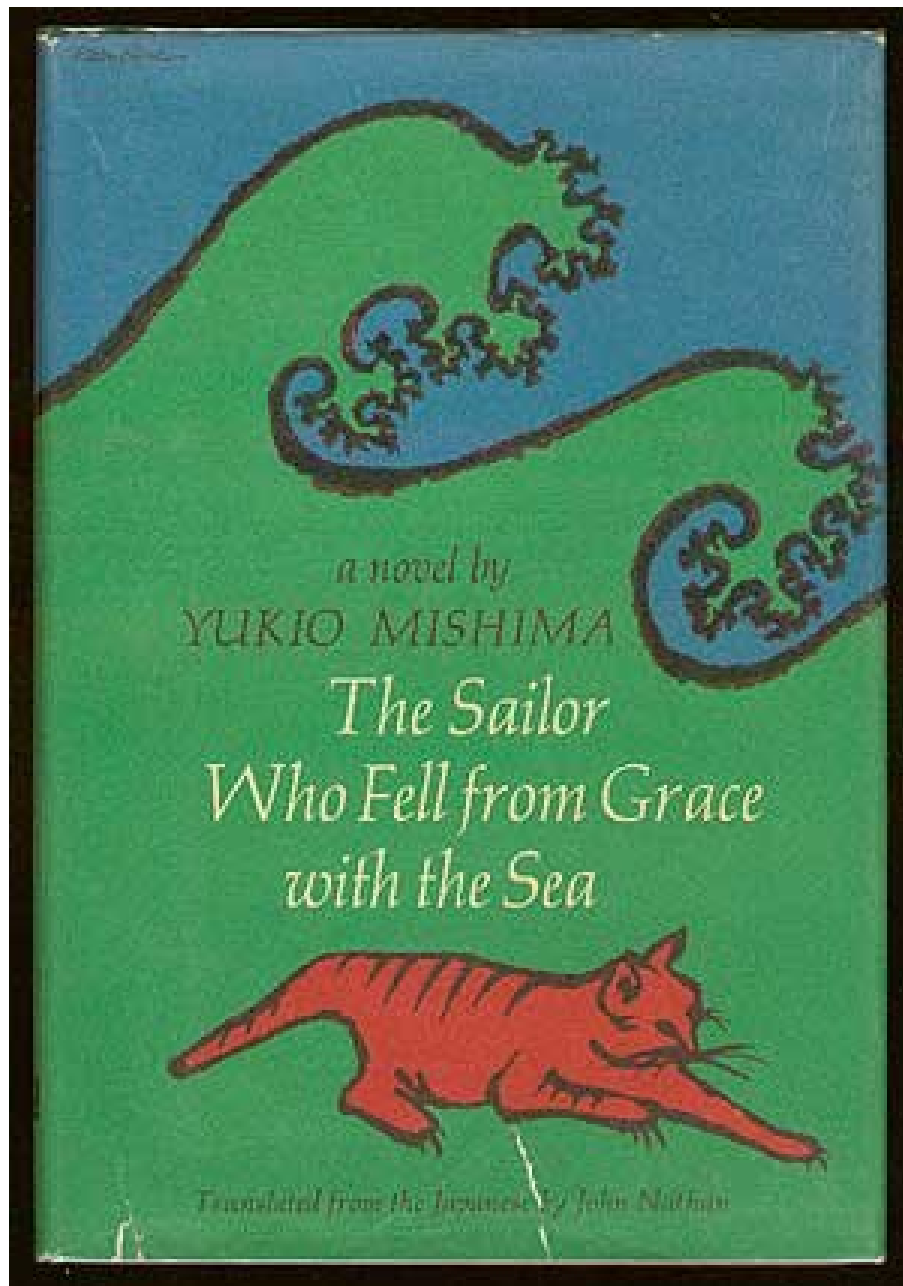


THE SAILOR WHO FELL FROM GRACE WITH THE SEA BY YUKIO MISHIMA



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Review

“Brilliant in the conciseness of its narrative.”

—The Nation

“A major work of art.”

—Time

“Mishima is like Stendhal in his precise psychological analyses, like Dostoevsky in his explorations of darkly destructive personalities.”

—Christian Science Monitor

Language Notes

Text: English (translation)

Original Language: Japanese

From the Back Cover

A band of savage thirteen-year-old boys who reject the adult world as illusory, hypocritical, and sentimental, and train themselves in a brutal callousness they call 'objectivity.'

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THE SAILOR WHO FELL FROM GRACE WITH THE SEA BY YUKIO MISHIMA PDF

Yukio Mishima's *The Sailor Who Fell From Grace With the Sea* explores the vicious nature of youth that is sometimes mistaken for innocence.

Thirteen-year-old Noboru is a member of a gang of highly philosophical teenage boys who reject the tenets of the adult world — to them, adult life is illusory, hypocritical, and sentimental. When Noboru's widowed mother is romanced by Ryuji, a sailor, Noboru is thrilled. He idolizes this rugged man of the sea as a hero. But his admiration soon turns to hatred, as Ryuji forsakes life onboard the ship for marriage, rejecting everything Noboru holds sacred. Upset and appalled, he and his friends respond to this apparent betrayal with a terrible ferocity.

- Sales Rank: #363765 in Books
- Published on: 1965-09
- Number of items: 1
- Binding: Hardcover
- 181 pages

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“A major work of art.”
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A band of savage thirteen-year-old boys who reject the adult world as illusory, hypocritical, and sentimental, and train themselves in a brutal callousness they call 'objectivity.'

Most helpful customer reviews

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Simple Vessel, Dark Passage

By G. Bestick

The genius of *Sailor* is how it examines complex issues - Japan's postwar identity, western materialism

versus traditional Japanese values, the ways in which nihilism overwhelms meaning - in such a concise, straightforward story. Ryuji is a simple sailor who went to sea to achieve some vaguely defined higher glory. Although Ryuji believes he's destined for great things, so far the fates haven't aligned to reveal what that great thing is. While on shore leave in Yokohama he meets Fusako, a widow who owns a high end clothing store that offers imported English articles. They become lovers, and, before long, fall in love.

Fusako's thirteen year old son Noburu runs with a gang of strange and frightening youths who reject all attempts to impose meaning on them from the outside, whether it's from school, parents, society or literature. Noburu is torn between loyalty to the beliefs of his gang and his admiration for the heroic life he believes Ryuji exemplifies. But Ryuji's growing love for Fusako leads him to abandon the sea to become a clerk in Fusako's shop. Noburu's gang pounces on this as evidence that Ryuji has betrayed Noburu and them, and that he must be punished for abandoning the heroic course. This they proceed to do, in a way that feels both horrifying and inevitable.

Written five years before his death at 45, this novel encapsulates Mishima's major intellectual and emotional preoccupations, but doesn't resolve them. Ryuji is punished for abandoning his dreams of glory, but it's not clear he would have achieved them. Fusako symbolizes collaboration with the western devil taking over Japan, but she is accomplished and financially successful. The most disturbing character is young Noburu. At an age when most humans are acquiring the mental sextants they need to navigate through the world, he is ensnared by a group who see life as having meaning only in the extremes of glory or death. The growing distance between his everyday life and his dark fantasies opens up during the course of the novel in profound and unsettling ways. What happens to Noburu, who has his whole life in front of him, is in many ways sadder than what happens to Ryuji.

Noburu's dark dialectic is also a glimpse into the mental torments that affected Mishima. The most un-Japanese of its major writers in terms of his interests and lifestyle, he was nevertheless the most jingoistic Japanese patriot. A man of massive discipline and ambition, he was bedeviled by the fear that beneath the surface of his successful, glittering life lay a vast emptiness devoid of meaning. He spent his enormous intellectual and physical resources on turning himself into a symbol, but doubts about the meaning of that symbol led him to constantly revise it. Out of these internal contradictions he generated a furious literary output, a high profile life and a very public, if puzzling death meant to protest Japan's turn away from its traditional values. His internal struggles were both sad and heroic; his legacy is the great novels he left us, including this one.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

The horror, the horror ...

By Harry

Yukio Mishima was a true master of confronting themes, written with great style. His descriptions of place are wonderful, plucking out one small pine bathed in sunlight in the midst of the desolation of an industrial landscape. You soon sense the underlying tension of this book - steadily emerging from the beauty, you know that this is going to end badly, with an unavoidable horror that is coming ... Gripping stuff. Thankfully no splatter-fest - but the cold, sociopathic "chief" and his nihilistic acolytes are truly frightening. The inevitability of what will be done is left to haunt you.

Sure, you can read it at a number of levels - a contemporary view of a post-war Japan, a treatise on charismatic but psychopathic leadership, whatever. Or maybe just take it as a beautifully written tale of suspense and horror. Either way, it is great literature.

Not one for the faint hearted - the cold, hard suspense is difficult to bear.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Three Stars

By Drew S.

Good idea and well developed characters. The writing is a too romantic.

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