



Light and Dark: A Novel (Weatherhead Books on Asia)

By Natsume

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Published in 1917, *Light and Dark* is unlike any of Natsume Soseki's previous works and unique in Japanese fiction of the period. What distinguishes the novel as "modern" is its remarkable representation of interiority. The protagonists, Tsuda Yoshio, thirty, and his wife O-Nobu, twenty-three, exhibit a gratifying complexity that qualifies them as some of the earliest examples of three-dimensional characters in Japanese fiction.

O-Nobu is quick-witted and cunning, a snob and narcissist no less than her husband, passionate, arrogant, spoiled, insecure, naive—yet, above all, gallant. Under Soseki's scrutiny, she emerges as a flesh-and-blood heroine with a palpable reality, dueling with her husband, his troublemaking friend, Kobayashi, and her sister-in-law, O-Hidé. Tsuda undertakes his own battles with Kobayashi, O-Hidé, and the manipulative Madam Yoshikawa, his boss's wife. These exchanges explode into moments of intense jealousy, rancor, and recrimination that will surprise English-speaking readers who expect indirectness, delicacy, and reticence in Japanese relations. Echoing the work of Jane Austen and Henry James, Soseki's novel achieves maximal drama with minimal action and symbolizes a tectonic shift in literary form.

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Editorial Review

Review

This is Natsume Soseki's longest and most complex work, his most ambitious in terms of social description and psychological analysis, and his most intricately plotted. It is a book for the ages, a modernist masterpiece, masterfully translated.

(Alan Tansman, University of California, Berkeley)

With its dramatic expansion of the use of stream-of-consciousness narration, which Natsume Soseki had experimented with in previous novels, *Light and Dark* is a landmark in world literature. This new rendering by one of the very best translators of Japanese fiction reintroduces this modern masterpiece to a twenty-first-century audience.

(Michael K. Bourdaghs, University of Chicago)

Light and Dark is the greatest novel by modern Japan's greatest novelist. What Natsume Soseki achieved in this, his last, work is a pure miracle: no other word can do justice to the irony and precision of his character delineations and the gripping reality of his portrayal of a Japan in transition. Thanks to John Nathan's fine new translation, literature lovers everywhere can finally share in savoring this treasure, a detailed and unforgiving limning of love and marriage, faith and betrayal.

(Minae Mizumura, author of *A True Novel* and *The Fall of the Japanese Language in the Age of English*)

Natsume Soseki's *Light and Dark* is one of the most gripping novels in modern Japanese literature. It represents a historical turning point in the development of Japanese fiction. John Nathan, a distinguished translator, has produced a masterful rendition that captures the subtle nuances of the original.

(Haruo Shirane, Columbia University, author of *Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons*)

An enduring masterpiece.

(*Times Literary Supplement*)

Unusual, in several respects, *Light and Dark* is nevertheless an accomplished work of art and a fascinating example of Japanese fiction of its time.

(M.A. Orthofer *Complete Review*)

Light and Dark is a masterful novel, and Nathan's is a superior translation. For readers of Japanese literature it will be enlightening as it is one of the most important modern Japanese novels that inspired a rich literary tradition.

(*Asian Review of Books*)

A pitch-perfect new translation by John Nathan.

(*Public Culture*)

About the Author

Natsume Soseki (1867–1916) was the foremost Japanese novelist of the Meiji period, known for his books *Kokoro*, *Botchan*, and *I Am a Cat*. He is also the author of *Theory of Literature and Other Critical Writings*.

John Nathan is Takashima Professor of Cultural Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Terrie Delgadillo:

Nowadays reading books become more and more than want or need but also become a life style. This reading routine give you lot of advantages. The huge benefits you got of course the knowledge the actual information inside the book which improve your knowledge and information. The knowledge you get based on what kind of e-book you read, if you want attract knowledge just go with training books but if you want feel happy read one along with theme for entertaining for instance comic or novel. The particular Light and Dark: A Novel (Weatherhead Books on Asia) is kind of guide which is giving the reader unforeseen experience.

Joseph Esparza:

Information is provisions for individuals to get better life, information today can get by anyone in everywhere. The information can be a information or any news even a problem. What people must be consider any time those information which is inside former life are hard to be find than now is taking seriously which one is appropriate to believe or which one the particular resource are convinced. If you get the unstable resource then you have it as your main information there will be huge disadvantage for you. All those possibilities will not happen within you if you take Light and Dark: A Novel (Weatherhead Books on Asia) as the daily resource information.

Wade Diaz:

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Sarah Lopez:

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