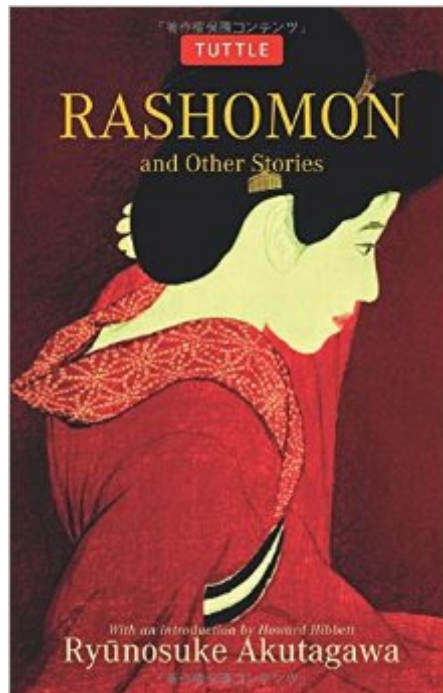


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Rashomon And Other Stories (Tuttle Classics)



Synopsis

"Clear-eyed glimpses of human behavior in the extremities of poverty, stupidity, greed, vanity" | Story-telling of an unconventional sort, with most of the substance beneath the shining, enameled surface." —The New York Times Book Review

This collection of six short stories, most of which have never been translated before, includes "In a Grove", a psychologically sophisticated tale about murder, rape, and suicide; "Rashomon", the story of a thief scared into honesty by an encounter with a ghoul; and "Kesa and Morito", the story of a man driven to kill someone he doesn't hate by a lover whom he doesn't love.

There are enough Swiftian touches in Akutagawa to show his hatred of stupidity, greed, hypocrisy and the rising jingoism of the day. But Akutagawa's artistic integrity kept him from joining his contemporaries in the easy social criticism or naive introspection. What he did was question the values of his society, dramatize the complexities of human psychology, and study, with a Zen taste for paradox, the precarious balance of illusion and reality." —Howard Hibbett, from the Introduction of *Rashomon and Other Stories*

Classic Japanese stories include: In a Grove, Rashomon, Yam Gruel, The Martyr, Kesa and Morito, The Dragon

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Tuttle Classics edition of *Rashomon* contains six stories by Ryunosuke Akutagawa, with an introduction by Howard Hibbet. "In a Grove" recounts a woman's rape and her husband's death from the conflicting perspectives of the rapist, the woman, and the husband, each of whom provides

a different account of how the husband died. Akutagawa employs the same device -- telling a story from different perspectives -- in "Kesa and Morito": after a married woman has sex with a man who loathes her, they agree to murder her husband -- but the woman's vision of that crime is quite different from the man's. "Rashomon" -- a meditation on good and evil, on desperation and hypocrisy -- tells of a servant who cannot decide whether to steal or starve until he meets an old woman who is pulling the hair out of corpses. Lacking compassion or empathy, he fails to recognize himself in her. Similarly, the Christian values of charity and forgiveness give way to hypocrisy in "The Martyr," as Jesuit missionaries and members of the Christian church in Nagasaki condemn a devout parishioner (Lorenzo) on the strength of rumored sin -- only later to declare Lorenzo a martyr after an act of self-sacrifice reveals Lorenzo's true (and surprising) nature. "Yam Gruel" is the story of an aging samurai who, having been treated with contempt his whole life, clings to a dream -- to eat his fill of yam gruel -- until, finally given the opportunity to fulfill his desire, he questions whether he really wants to do so. In "The Dragon," a priest who is ridiculed because of his long nose decides to pull a prank on his fellow priests by posting a notice board that says "On March third a dragon shall ascend from this pond," only to find the prank taking on a life of its own.

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