



the famous author Chikura Raikichi. Though quite well-to-do, Raikichi has a small house: the family and the maids (usually a few, sharing a little room next to the kitchen) are on top of one another. This proximity allows Raikichi to observe the maids and their daily lives extremely closely, and while the house may be straight from *The Makioka Sisters*, his interest carries with it more than a dash of the erotic, calling to mind Tanizaki's raciest books, such as *Diary of a Mad Old Man* and *The Key*.

VINTAGE JAPANESE CLASSICS - five masterpieces of Japanese fiction in gorgeous new gift editions. In the Tokyo suburbs four women work the graveyard shift at a factory. Burdened with heavy debts, alienated from husbands and children, they all secretly dream of a way out of their dead-end lives. A young mother among them finally cracks and strangles her philandering, gambling husband. She confesses her crime to her colleagues and unexpectedly, they agree to help. But then the dismembered body parts are discovered, the police start asking questions and more dangerous enemies begin to close in. *OUT* is a psychologically taut and unflinching foray into the darkest recesses of the human soul, an unsettling reminder that the desperate desire for freedom can make the most ordinary person do the unimaginable.

Winner of the Kobayashi Hideo Award, *The Fall of Language in the Age of English* lays bare the struggle to retain the brilliance of one's own language in this period of English-language dominance. Born in Tokyo but raised and educated in the United States, Minae Mizumura acknowledges the value of a universal language in the pursuit of knowledge yet also embraces the different ways of understanding offered by multiple tongues. She warns against losing this precious diversity. Universal languages have always played a pivotal role in advancing human societies, Mizumura shows, but in the globalized world of the Internet, English is fast becoming the sole common language of humanity. The process is unstoppable, and striving for total language equality is delusional—and yet, particular kinds of knowledge can be gained only through writings in specific languages. Mizumura calls these writings "texts" and their ultimate form "literature." Only through literature and, more fundamentally, through the diverse languages that give birth to a variety of literatures, can we nurture and enrich humanity. Incorporating her own experiences as a writer and a lover of language and embedding a parallel history of Japanese, Mizumura offers an intimate look at the phenomena of individual and national expression.

Six short stories by Tanizaki Jun'ichiro (1886-1965), capturing the breadth of his literary oeuvre

The diaries of a husband and wife detail their feelings about the sexuality, love, and strength of their relationship, in *The Key*, while in *Diary of a Mad Old Man*, after suffering a stroke, an aging Japanese man records his sensual and philosophical experiences, thoughts, and desires, in two novels from the acclaimed Japanese novelist. Original.

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