



Nocturnes: Five Stories of Music and Nightfall (Vintage International)

By Kazuo Ishiguro

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From the award-winning author of *Remains of the Day* comes an inspired sequence of stories, which is as affecting as it is beautiful.

With the clarity and precision that have become his trademarks, Kazuo Ishiguro interlocks five short pieces of fiction to create a world that resonates with emotion, heartbreak, and humor. Here is a fragile, once famous singer, turning his back on the one thing he loves; a music junky with little else to offer his friends but opinion; a songwriter who inadvertently breaks up a marriage; a jazz musician who thinks the answer to his career lies in changing his physical appearance; and a young cellist whose tutor has devised a remarkable way to foster his talent. For each, music is a central part of their lives and, in one way or another, delivers them to an epiphany.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This suite of five stories hits all of Ishiguro's signature notes, but the shorter form mutes their impact. In Crooner, Tony Gardner, a washed-up American singer, goes sloshing through the canals of Venice to serenade his trophy wife, Lindy. The narrator, Jan, is a hired guitar player whose mother was a huge fan of Tony, but Jan's experience playing for Tony fractures his romantic ideals. Lindy returns in the title story, which finds her in a luxury hotel reserved for celebrity patients recovering from cosmetic surgery. The narrator this time is Steve, a saxophonist who could never get a break because of his loser ugly looks. Lindy idly strikes up a friendship with Steve as they wait for their bandages to come off and their new lives to begin. In the final story, Cellists, an unnamed saxophonist narrator who, like Jan, plays in Venice's San Marco square, observes the evolving relationship of a Hungarian cello prodigy after he meets an American woman. The stories are superbly crafted, though they lack the gravity of Ishiguro's longer works (*Never Let Me Go; Remains of the Day*), which may leave readers anticipating a crescendo that never hits. (Sept.)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Ishiguro blends musical concepts with their literary counterparts in his latest work, and *Nocturnes* has the ephemeral quality of a song cycle with recurring themes and motifs developed in different prose keys. Though critics admired Ishiguro's lovely writing, "unassuming to the point of near-invisibility, like a lake whose still surface belies the turbulent currents beneath" (*Los Angeles Times*), they took issue with his characters—insubstantial and unconvincing when compared to the haunting creations found in his novels—and his implausible plot developments. Perhaps *Entertainment Weekly* summed it up best by stating that *Nocturnes*, by any other writer, would be praiseworthy; by a celebrated author like Ishiguro, it can best be likened to a minor work from a master composer.

Review

"Expressive and harmonic, delicate yet substantive. . . . [A] true virtuoso performance."--*Christian Science Monitor*

"In both craft and substance *Nocturnes* reveals a master at work."--*Seattle Times*

"Immaculate."--*Los Angeles Times*

"Ishiguro is, as always, a master of style and tone. . . . [*Nocturnes*] build[s] into a melancholic soundtrack. We're helpless to do anything but listen."--*Time Out New York*

"Tight and assured. . . . Suffused with sympathy." --*Time*

"These stories recall Ishiguro's best known novel, *The Remains of the Day*. . . . By now it is clear that this exquisite stylist is serious in his pursuit of a minimal - perhaps even universal - mode of expression for the emotional experiences that define our lives as human."—*The Times*, London

"Superb . . . a deceptively plain and easy style that rides on the surfaces of manners and decorous behavior."—*Providence Journal*

"A brilliant new book . . . art, its dangers, its pains and its gaiety [are] all topics seriously considered in this accomplished book." -*Frank Kermode*, London Review of Books

"Ishiguro blends musical concepts with their literary counterparts in his latest work, and *Nocturnes* has the . . . quality of a song cycle with recurring themes and motifs developed in different prose keys." --*Bookmarks* magazine

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