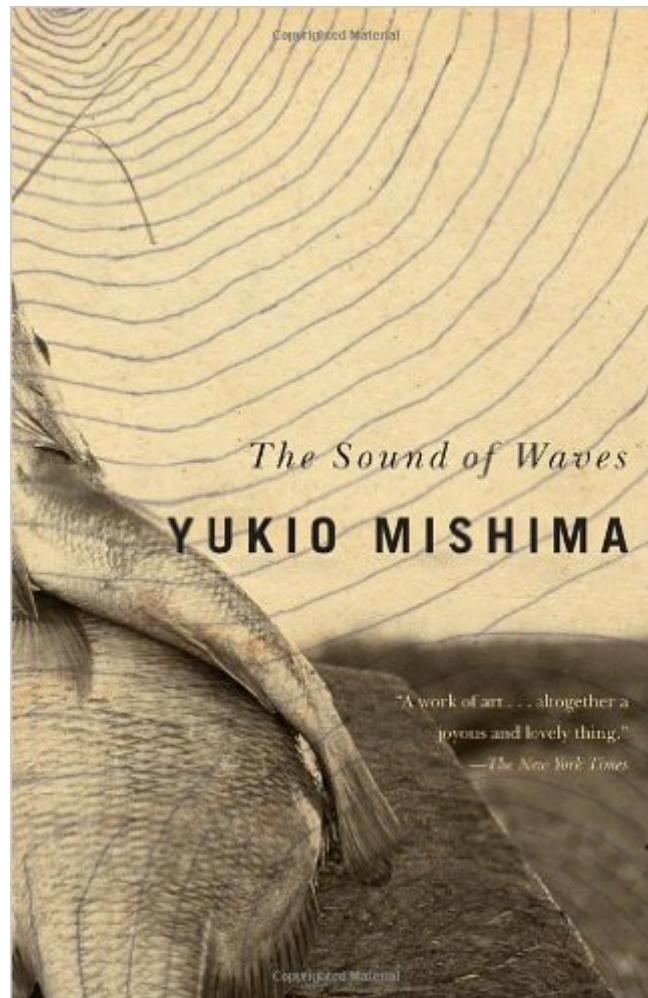


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The Sound Of Waves



Synopsis

Set in a remote fishing village in Japan, *The Sound of Waves* is a timeless story of first love. A young fisherman is entranced at the sight of the beautiful daughter of the wealthiest man in the village. They fall in love, but must then endure the calumny and gossip of the villagers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Few books accurately capture the feeling of first love the way Yukio Mishima's "The Sound of Waves" does. Set in a small Japanese fishing village in the mid-20th century, this is a beautiful story that will charm the romantic at heart with its simplicity and intensity. Shinji is a poor young fisherman, living with his widowed mother and relatively carefree. That changes when he sees a lovely young pearl-diver named Hatsue looking out to sea. Shinji soon finds that he can't get Hatsue out of his mind; he's fallen in love, for the very first time. She soon falls in love with him as well -- it's first love for them both, and for a few days everything seems fine. But things start to go wrong when an unhappy young girl sees the two of them leaving a secluded spot. Soon rumors are spread about Hatsue and Shinji's relationship, and the arrogant Yasuo even physically chases Hatsue when she is getting water. When Hatsue's overprotective father forbids her to see Shinji again, and seems about to betroth her to Yasuo, Shinji has only one chance to be reunited with his love. Generally the word "romance" conjures images of busty half-naked women being held in impossible positions by chiseled he-men with torn shirts. But "Sound of Waves" is genuine romance, about the sort of love that any person could experience if they are open to it, in any part of the world. He is also one of the few authors who can convey the joy and pain of being in love. Not to mention the exalted way one

can feel, without losing sight of their humanity: Shinji and Hatsue definitely have hormones, but keep them in check. There's a kind of mature innocence to how these two interact. Yukio Mishima's writing is both brief and detailed.

Yukio Mishima wrote *The Sound of Waves* following a visit to Greece and his immersion in the literature of ancient Greece. His fascination with the Mediterranean world and his affection for ancient literature (in particular, *Daphnis and Chloe*) is reflected in this sunny novel. He produced a very approachable and charming story about a island fishing village, and it is no wonder that this book was the first selected for translation into English in 1956 (published in Japan in 1954). The novel centers around Shinji, a young fisherman, and Hatsue, who had been given away by her father Terukichi but was called back by him when his son died so he could marry his daughter and adopt the husband into his family. The story follows what one would expect in a small village where everyone is known and gossip abounds. It is assumed that Hatsue will marry Yasuo, who is from a family that is well off whereas Shinji is poor. Love, however, takes a different hand and when Shinji and Hatsue see each other something begins that cannot be stopped. Of course, there are obstacles in their way and Terukichi places his daughter under house arrest because of the gossip that has grown over their relationship. But the reader understands early that Shinji is bound to triumph over adversity and win Hatsue because his character is noble and hard-working. I don't think anyone would doubt the end of the novel; it is the character development and Mishima's powers of description that keep your attention. What adds so much to this novel is Mishima's description of island life. For example, he brilliantly describes the women divers who struggle to bring up abalone and notes how they cut their toes when they use their foot to push off the sea floor.

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