

[PDF] The Hare With Amber Eyes: A Hidden Inheritance. Edmund De Waal

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Author: Edmund de Waal

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Description:

: At the heart of Edmund de Waal's strange and graceful family memoir, *The Hare with Amber Eyes*, is a one-of-a-kind inherited collection of ornamental Japanese carvings known as netsuke. The netsuke are tiny and tactile--they sit in the palm of your hand--and de Waal is drawn to them as "small, tough explosions of exactitude." He's also drawn to the story behind them, and for years he put aside his own work as a world-renowned potter and curator to uncover the rich and tragic family history of which the carvings are one of the few concrete legacies. De Waal's family was the Ephrussi, wealthy Jewish grain traders who branched out from Russia across the capitals of Europe before seeing their empire destroyed by the Nazis. Beginning with his art connoisseur ancestor Charles (a model for Proust's Swann), who acquired the netsuke during the European rage for

Japonisme, de Waal traces the collection from Japan to Europe--where they were saved from the brutal bureaucracy of the Nazi Anschluss in the pockets of a family servant--and back to Japan and Europe again. Throughout, he writes with a tough, funny, and elegant attention to detail and personality that does full justice to the exactitude of the little carvings that first roused his curiosity. --Tom Nissley --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From Publishers Weekly In this family history, de Waal, a potter and curator of ceramics at the Victoria & Albert Museum, describes the experiences of his family, the Ephrussis, during the turmoil of the 20th century. Grain merchants in Odessa, various family members migrated to Vienna and Paris, becoming successful bankers. Secular Jews, they sought assimilation in a period of virulent anti-Semitism. In Paris, Charles Ephrussi purchased a large collection of Japanese netsuke, tiny hand-carved figures including a hare with amber eyes. The collection passed to Viktor Ephrussi in Vienna and became the family's greatest legacy. Loyal citizens of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Vienna Ephrussis were devastated by the outcome of WWI and were later driven from their home by the imposition of Nazi rule over Austria. After WWII, they discovered that their maid, Anna, had preserved the netsuke collection, which Ignace Ephrussi inherited, and he settled in postwar Japan. Today, the netsuke reside with de Waal (descended from the family's Vienna branch) and serve as the embodiment of his family history. A somewhat rambling narrative with special appeal to art historians, this account is nonetheless rich in drama and valuable anecdote. 20 b&w illus. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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