



Rashomon and Other Stories

Ryunosuke Akutagawa

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This fascinating collection gave birth to a new paradigm when Akira Kurosawa made famous Akutagawa's disturbing tale of seven people recounting the same incident from shockingly different perspectives.

Writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, Ryunosuke Akutagawa created disturbing stories out of Japan's cultural upheaval. Whether his fictions are set centuries past or close to the present, Akutagawa was a modernist, writing in polished, superbly nuanced prose subtly exposing human needs and flaws. "In a Grove," which was the basis for Kurosawa's classic film *Rashomon*, tells the chilling story of the killing of a samurai through the testimony of witnesses, including the spirit of the murdered man. The fable-like "Yam Gruel" is an account of desire and humiliation, but one in which the reader's sympathy is thoroughly unsettled. And in "The Martyr," a beloved orphan raised by Jesuit priests is exiled when he refuses to admit that he made a local girl pregnant. He regains their love and respect only at the price of his life. All six tales in the collection show Akutagawa as a master storyteller and an exciting voice of modern Japanese literature.

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