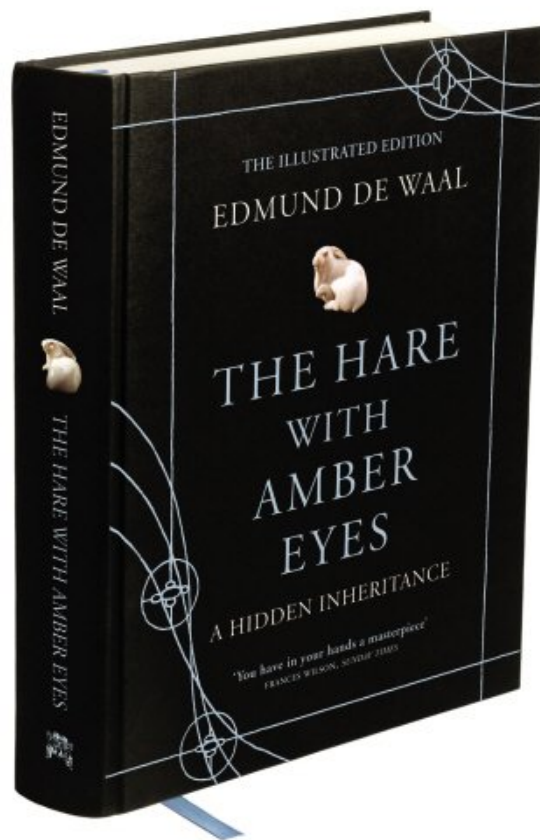
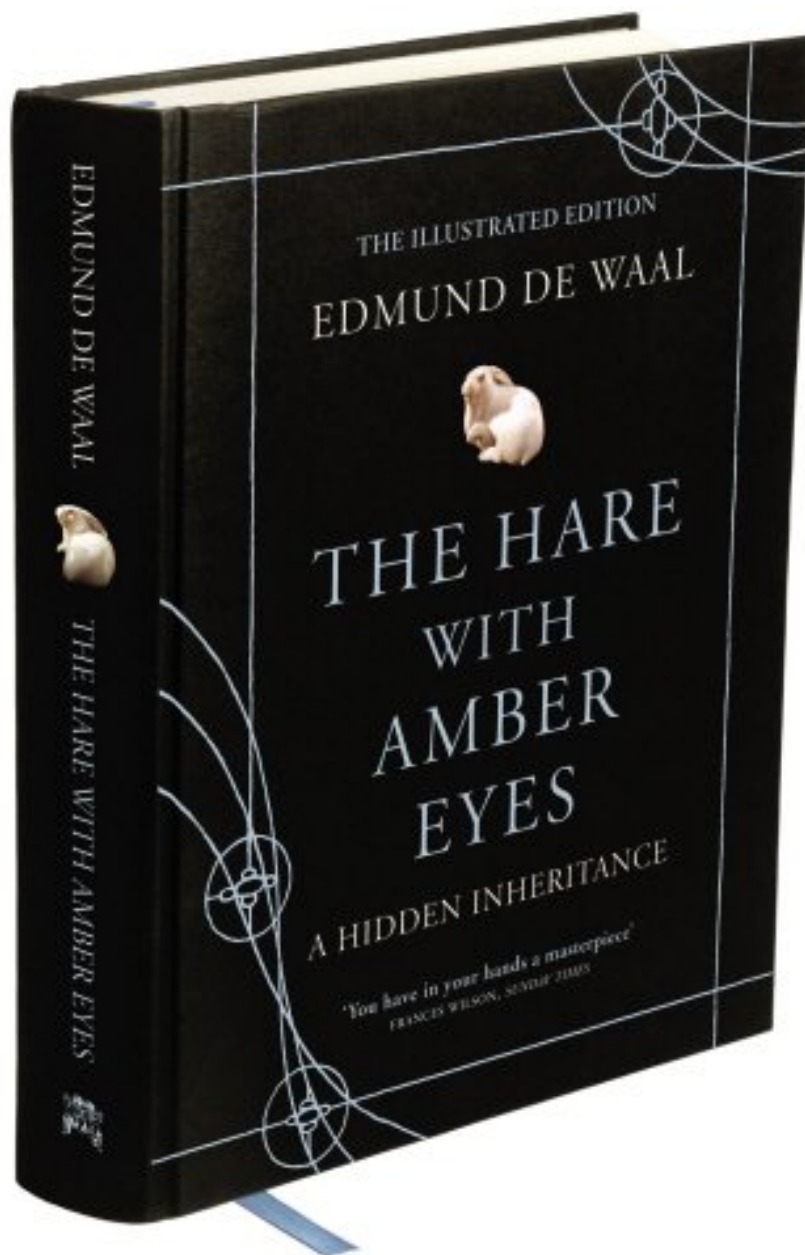


THE HARE WITH AMBER EYES: A HIDDEN INHERITANCE. EDMUND DE WAAL BY EDMUND DE WAAL



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About the Author

Edmund de Waal is one of the world's leading ceramic artists, and his porcelain is held in many major museum collections. His bestselling memoir, *The Hare with Amber Eyes* won the Costa Biography Award and the RSL Ondaatje Prize. It was also shortlisted for the Duff Cooper Prize, the Jewish Quarterly Wingate Prize, the PEN/Ackerley Prize and the Southbank Sky Arts Award for Literature. It was longlisted for the Orwell Prize and BBC Samuel Johnson Prize. Edmund was named New Writer of the Year at the 2010 Galaxy National Book Awards. www.edmunddewaal.com

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THE HARE WITH AMBER EYES: A HIDDEN INHERITANCE. EDMUND DE WAAL BY EDMUND DE WAAL PDF

This is the definitive illustrated edition of the international bestseller with gorgeous new photography of the celebrated netsuke collection, and sumptuous full-colour images hand-picked by Edmund de Waal from his family archive 264 Japanese wood and ivory carvings, none of them bigger than a matchbox: Edmund de Waal was entranced when he first encountered the collection in his great-uncle Iggy's Tokyo apartment. When he later inherited the 'netsuke', they unlocked a story far larger and more dramatic than he could ever have imagined. From a burgeoning empire in Odessa to fin de siècle Paris, from occupied Vienna to post-war Tokyo, Edmund de Waal traces the netsuke's journey through generations of his remarkable family against the backdrop of a tumultuous century.

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Most helpful customer reviews

29 of 29 people found the following review helpful.

It's not everyone's cup of tea, but I loved this book.

By Lolly

My sister and I have different taste in most things. When I told her how much I enjoyed reading this book, she told me she couldn't get past the first chapter. She loves plot driven books and this isn't that. I on the other hand prefer atmospheric books with interesting characters, which is precisely what this is.

The author is not an historian and the less compelling parts of the book stem from news paper research and official documents. The book really came alive for me when the author drew from family correspondence and used his artist's eye to describe the objects, homes and daily lives of his relatives. The forces in the world that affect the Ephrussi family, like the Dreyfus Affair, the Nazi occupation and World War Two, are dealt with in a serious, but secondary way. The art and intimacies of the family take center stage. This book took me to the salons of 19th century Paris, the palaces and dressing rooms of turn of the century Vienna and expatriate life in Japan. It is strikingly relevant at this moment in history to watch how possessions can fall away for various reasons, and leave memories and family mythologies in their place.

283 of 288 people found the following review helpful.

Remembrance of time past

By R. G. Saunders

This is a mesmerising many-layered book. The fascinating narrative of the fabulously wealthy Jewish Ephrussi family moves through the decades from commercial Odessa to the Paris of the Impressionists and artistic salons to the brutal destruction of the Anschluss of 1938 in Vienna and a familial diaspora over three continents. Parallel to this, we follow with the author his own emotive journey to reclaim the lives lived in the vanished rooms of his forbears. This he does sensitively and successfully, imagining his way there through archives, letters and contemporary fiction. He visits all the great houses and, in Odessa, tasting the dust of the demolished palace rooms, he rejoices in the survival of the Ephrussi family emblem on a last remaining banister.

Such evocative writing and small discovered detail make this a story we want to follow with him and we find that this is not, after all, a tale of acquisition but of loss. The 264 tiny Japanese carvings (netsuke) bought in the 1870s in Paris are all that now remain of the family possessions. We also come to understand another loss: the Ephrussis no longer felt defined by their Jewish origins: artists and socialites passed through their grand salons. It is shocking to discover that even those who enjoyed their patronage were casually anti-Semitic. It is hard to read the vivid account of the abrupt violence of the Nazis as they took (almost) every precious possession from them, leaving them, in the end, only their Jewishness.

The netsuke are the beginning and happy ending of the story. Their exquisite detail is emblematic of this beautifully crafted book and its touching story of the individuals through whose hands they passed. One or other of them seems, like a rosary, to accompany the writer in his travels: a constant reminder to keep faith with his past.

559 of 579 people found the following review helpful.

How do you write a sad story without nostalgia?

By M. E. Llorens

Imagine you are the descendant of one of those families of 19th-century Jewish financiers who spread around the major capitals of Europe to forge a continental empire. Along the way, the family comes to feature an art collector who served as a patron for the Impressionists and inspired Proust's Swann. A later generation includes one of the first women to attend university in the early twentieth century; she graduates as a lawyer, becomes a writer and corresponds with Rilke. Imagine that the family's wealth disappears in the blink of an eye when Germany annexes Austria. That is in a nutshell the story of the Ephrussi clan, which

Edmund De Waal chronicles in "The Hare with Amber Eyes." That is only a peek at the material that the author had at his disposal, which should have made the work relatively simple to write. But the author set himself a challenge. He refused to produce a straightforward history: "It could write itself, I think, this kind of story. A few stitched-together wistful anecdotes, more about the Orient-Express, of course, a bit of wandering around Prague or somewhere equally photogenic, some clippings from Google on ballrooms in the Belle Epoque. It would come out as nostalgic. And thin."

Instead of a predictable tale from Mitteleuropa about lost grandeur, the author takes a (slightly Proustian) shortcut that leads to unexpected and sometimes deeply moving places. One of the illustrious ancestors collected tiny but incredibly intricate Japanese carvings called netsuke used in early modern Japan as toggles for purse strings. The book traces the story of these sculptures as they are passed down from one generation of Ephrussi to the next. Along the way, the author interrogates subtle ways in which the netsuke's meaning shifts when they move from Third Republic Paris to Harry Lime's Vienna and beyond. Through this device, De Waal manages to both narrate the story of the rise and fall of the Ephrussi and also sketch the myriad objects they owned and collected during their century and a half of eminence. The book manages to write an elegant history not just of people but also of the places they inhabited and the things they loved and touched. Nothing thin about that.

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