



The Tale of Genji: A Reader's Guide (Tuttle Classics)

William J. Puette

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"Those who wish to deepen their acquaintance with Murasaki's wondrous world will certainly find Puette's guide most helpful." —*The Japan Times*

This is the most complete reader's guide available on Japan's highly revered novel, the eleventh-century classic, *The Tale of Genji*, by Murasaki Shikibu, referred to by Nobel Laureate Yasunari Kawabata as the "highest pinnacle of Japanese literature." Written specifically to accompany the translation of the work by Arthur Waley and Edward G. Seidensticker, this guide offers detailed summaries and thematic commentaries, as well as cross-referenced notes on the novel's many characters. It also charts the essential progress of *The Tale of Genji* and introduces the reader to the more subtle complexities, literary devices, and conventions of Lady Murasaki's Heian Japan.

No longer does the reader have to try and guess the novel's cultural and historical milieu. The author presents brief, illustrated essays on historical, philosophical, and cultural features of the novel, and discusses such relevant aspects as the balance between the tenets of Shintoism and Buddhism, the pervasive concepts of *karma* in human relationships, and the poetic aspects of *aware*. Both general readers and literature students will find the background information contained in this "companion" indispensable to their reading and interpretation of this complex novel.

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