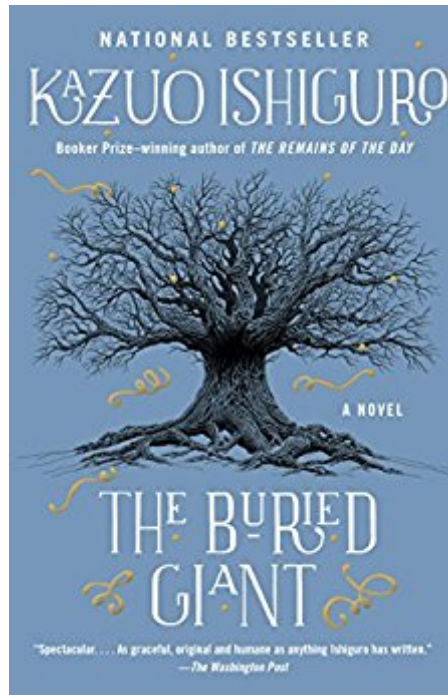


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The Buried Giant: A Novel (Vintage International)



Synopsis

From the author of *Never Let Me Go* and the Booker Prize-winning *The Remains of the Day* — The Romans have long since departed and Britain is steadily declining into ruin. But, at least, the wars that once ravaged the country have ceased. Axl and Beatrice, a couple of elderly Britons, decide that now is the time, finally, for them to set off across this troubled land of mist and rain to find the son they have not seen for years, the son they can scarcely remember. They know they will face many hazards — some strange and otherworldly — but they cannot foresee how their journey will reveal to them the dark and forgotten corners of their love for each other. Nor can they foresee that they will be joined on their journey by a Saxon warrior, his orphan charge, and a knight — each of them, like Axl and Beatrice, lost in some way to his own past, but drawn inexorably toward the comfort, and the burden, of the fullness of a life — memories. Sometimes savage, sometimes mysterious, always intensely moving, Kazuo Ishiguro's first novel in a decade tells a luminous story about the act of forgetting and the power of memory, a resonant tale of love, vengeance, and war. From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

File Size: 4935 KB

Print Length: 353 pages

Publisher: Vintage (March 3, 2015)

Publication Date: March 3, 2015

Language: English

ASIN: B00N6PCXME

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #22,758 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #23 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Metaphysical #39 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Metaphysical & Visionary #97 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Literary Fiction > Action & Adventure

Customer Reviews

Brief summary and review, no spoilers. This novel takes place in England and the time period is right

after the reign of the legendary King Arthur - which is all somewhat deliberately vague. The storyline centers around the travels of 5 main characters. The first two characters we meet - and indeed in many ways the central two characters - are an elderly couple who leave their village in search of their son. Their memories are fading and they are not sure where their son is or even what he looks like anymore. Their reason for leaving their village are hazy as well; ostensibly something to do with their being denied a candle by other villagers. The other characters are a young boy, a brave warrior and a valiant old knight. So much of the storyline is dreamlike and vague and I believe your ultimate enjoyment and satisfaction of this novel is based on the premise that the less you know the better, so I will only say a bit more without causing any spoilers. We know that the characters all unite at some point. We know that they are all on different missions. Their goals are seemingly unclear but will become clear at the end. I loved this book. At the same time I have to say that it was not a quick read for me and there were points up until midway when I thought about giving up on it. Part of this was that I am not usually a fan of books that are somewhat "dreamlike" or surreal and I usually like my stories more straight-forward and grounded. There are lots of points in this book where you feel your own memory is fading; indeed what it might be like to have dementia. That Ishiguro pulls this off so effectively is impressive but daunting for the reader.

Kazuo Ishiguro is a master stylist, with books that range from futuristic, sci-fi, surrealistic and post-colonial. So it is no surprise that his new novel is unlike anything he has written before. Like its predecessors, this novel concentrates on memories: their power to silence, distort, and forever haunt, with characters that are often alienated and searching. Yet the book is distinctly an adventure fable, integrating an ancient British civilization tale with a fantastical element. The two questions are: is it good? And is it satisfying? The answer to the first question is absolutely yes. All the trademarks of Ishiguro - his masterful prose, his characters' search for meaning and his feats of imagination are all well on display. The answer to the second question is far more subjective and will very much depend on what each individual reader enjoys. The novel takes us into post-Arthurian Britain, populated with those mythic heroes, including a still-living Sir Gawain, yet there's a twist here: A mist has fallen on Britain, forcing the isle into a collective loss of memory. ("It's queer the way the world's forgetting people and things from only yesterday and the day before that. Like a sickness come over us all.") Axl and Beatrice (and are we sure these are even their names?) are an elderly couple who visit their adult son, of whom they have only the scantest of remembrances. During their journey, they encounter an honorable knight, a warrior on a quixotic quest, a young boy, a sinister hidden dragon, an evil monk and more, each holding a key to their quest. At its core, *The Buried*

Giant is a fantastical fable, an old-fashioned adventure story with thrills a-plenty. But scratch the surface and you get more.

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