



The Scarlet Gang of Asakusa

Yasunari Kawabata

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In the 1920s, Asakusa was to Tokyo what Montmartre had been to 1890s Paris and Times Square was to be to 1940s New York. Available in English for the first time, *The Scarlet Gang of Asakusa*, by Nobel Prize winner Yasunari Kawabata, captures the decadent allure of this entertainment district, where beggars and teenage prostitutes mixed with revue dancers and famous authors. Originally serialized in a Tokyo daily newspaper in 1929 and 1930, this vibrant novel uses unorthodox, kinetic literary techniques to reflect the raw energy of Asakusa, seen through the eyes of a wandering narrator and the cast of mostly female juvenile delinquents who show him their way of life. Markedly different from Kawabata's later work, *The Scarlet Gang of Asakusa* shows this important writer in a new light. The annotated edition of this little-known literary gem includes the original illustrations by Ota Saburo. The annotations illuminate Tokyo society and Japanese literature, bringing this fascinating piece of Japanese modernism at last to a wide audience.

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