



The Man with the Compound Eyes: A Novel

Wu Ming-Yi

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When a tsunami sends a massive island made entirely of trash crashing into the Taiwanese coast, two very different people—an outcast from a mythical island and a woman on the verge of suicide—are united in ways they never could have imagined. Here is the English-language debut of a new and exciting award-winning voice from Taiwan, who has written an “astonishing” novel (*The Independent*) that is at once fantasy, reality, and dystopian environmental saga.

Fifteen-year-old Atile’i—a native of Wayo Wayo, an island somewhere in the Pacific—has come of age. Following the custom of his people, he is set adrift as a sacrifice to the Sea God but, unlike those who have gone before him, Atile’i is determined to defy precedent and survive. His chances seem slim, but just as it appears that hope is lost, Atile’i comes across a sprawling trash vortex floating in the ocean and climbs onto it.

Meanwhile, on the east coast of Taiwan, Alice, a college professor, is overcome with grief. Her husband and son are missing, having disappeared while hiking in the mountains near their home. Alice is so distraught that she decides to end her own life. But her plans are interrupted by a violent storm that causes the trash vortex to collide with the Taiwanese coast, bringing Atile’i along with it. Alice and Atile’i subsequently form an unlikely friendship that helps each of them come to terms with what they have lost. Together they set out to uncover the mystery of Alice’s lost family, following their footsteps into the mountains. Intertwined with Alice and Atile’i’s story are the lives of others affected by the tsunami, from environmentalists to Taiwan’s indigenous peoples—and, of course, the mysterious man with the compound eyes.

A work of lyrical beauty that combines magical realism and environmental fable, *The Man with the Compound Eyes* is an incredible story about the bonds of family, the meaning of love, and the lasting effects of human destruction.

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