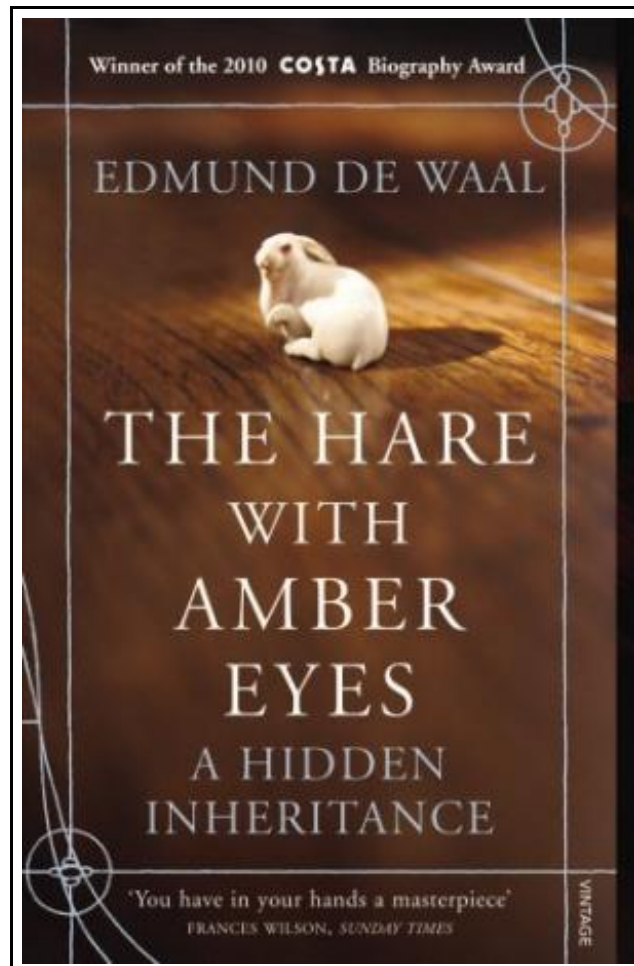


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VINTAGE, United Kingdom, 2011. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 198 x 129 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. 264 wood and ivory carvings, none of them larger than a matchbox: potter Edmund de Waal was entranced when he first encountered the collection in the Tokyo apartment of his great uncle Iggie. Later, when Edmund inherited the netsuke , they unlocked a story far larger than he could ever have imagined. The Ephrussi came from Odessa, and at one time were the largest grain exporters in the world; in the 1870s, Charles Ephrussi was part of a wealthy new generation settling in Paris. Marcel Proust was briefly his secretary and used Charles as the model for the aesthete Swann in *Remembrance of Things Past*. Charles passion was collecting; the netsuke, bought when Japanese objects were all the rage in the salons, were sent as a wedding present to his banker cousin in Vienna. Later, three children - including a young Ignace - would play with the netsuke as history reverberated around them. The Anschluss and Second World War swept the Ephrussi to the brink of oblivion. Almost all that remained of their vast empire was the netsuke collection, smuggled out of the huge Viennese palace (then occupied by Hitler s theorist on the Jewish Question), one piece at a time, in the pocket of a loyal maid - and hidden in a straw mattress. In this stunningly original memoir, Edmund de Waal travels the world to stand in the great buildings his forebears once inhabited. He traces the network of a remarkable family against the backdrop of a tumultuous century. And, in prose as elegant and precise as the netsuke themselves, he tells the story of a unique collection which passed from hand to hand - and which, in a twist...

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