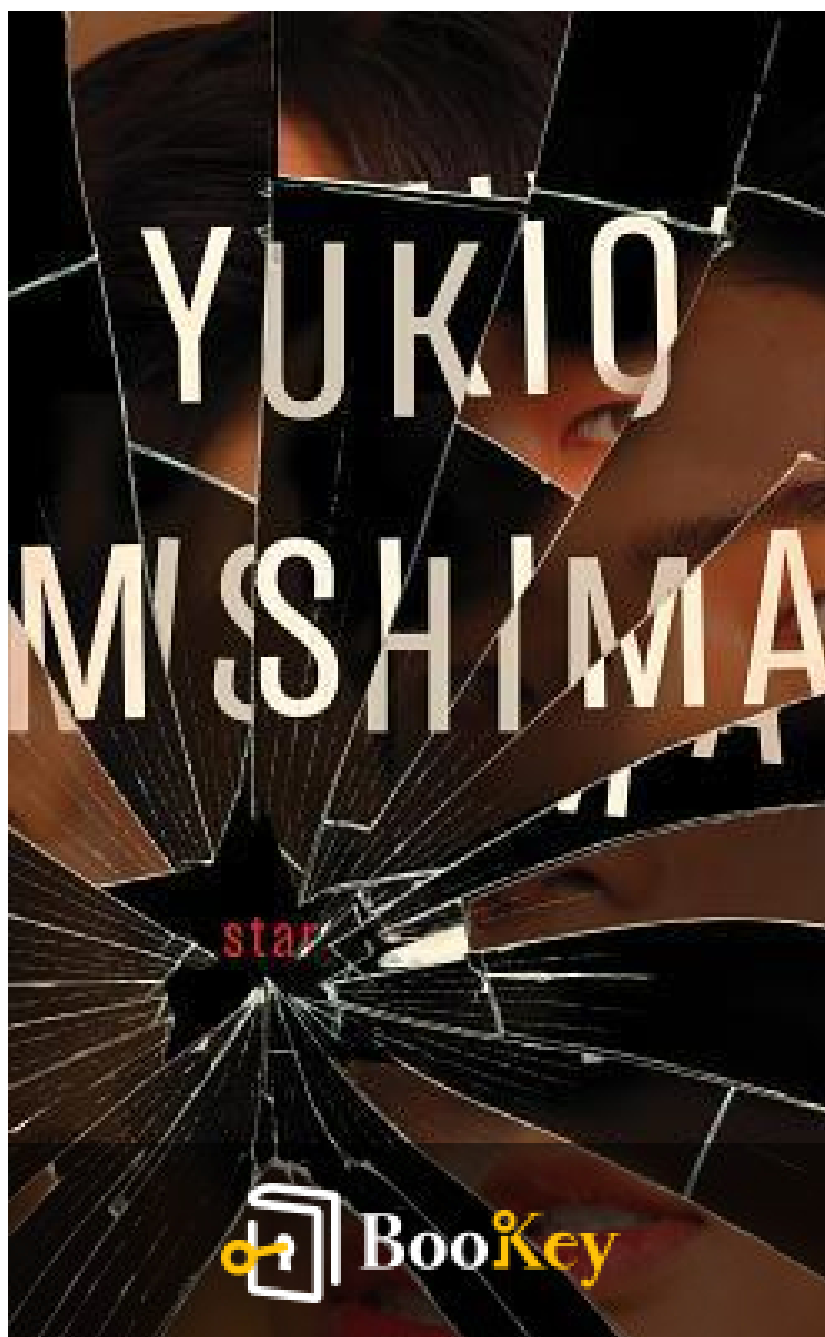


Star PDF (Limited Copy)

Yukio Mishima



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Star Summary

The Struggle Between Art and Identity.

Written by Books OneHub

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About the book

In Yukio Mishima's poignant novella "Star," the complexity of a life split between the mundane realities of existence and the fervent yearning for artistic transcendence takes center stage. Through the richly drawn character of an aspiring actor grappling with his identity, Mishima intricately weaves themes of fame, illusion, and the pursuit of beauty, revealing the stark contrasts between societal expectations and individual desires. As the protagonist navigates the tumultuous waters of ambition and self-discovery, readers are invited to explore the deeper philosophical questions of what it means to truly live and create in a world that often values surface over substance. Delve into this evocative narrative that challenges the boundaries of art and existence, and discover how the search for authenticity can illuminate the darkest corners of the human soul.

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About the author

Yukio Mishima, born Kimitake Hiraoka in 1925, is a prominent Japanese author, playwright, and nationalist whose multifaceted career spanned literature, theater, and philosophy, painting him as one of the most influential figures in 20th-century Japan. Renowned for his lyrical prose and complex characters, Mishima explored themes of beauty, death, and the conflict between traditional Japanese values and modernity in works like "Confessions of a Mask" and "The Temple of the Golden Pavilion." His life was as enigmatic as his writing; a fervent advocate for samurai ideals and the revival of the Japanese imperial spirit, Mishima's dramatic public persona culminated in a ritual suicide in 1970, leaving behind a legacy that continues to provoke discussion and analysis about art, identity, and national culture.

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Chapter 1 Summary: 1

In the opening chapter of "Star," we are introduced to Rikio Mizuno, a young actor at the height of his fame. The scene is set with a lively crowd of fans yearning for Rikio's attention, dressed in a striking uniform he designed himself. This uniform, adorned with a straw hat and an open short-sleeved shirt, symbolizes the idolization he has attained among youthful admirers. However, beneath this glamorous facade, Rikio grapples with the fleeting nature of youth and the toll of relentless work.

At just twenty-three, he feels the weight of exhaustion from months of endless shooting and sleepless nights, realizing that his youthful vigor is waning. The lively and impassioned crowd contrasts sharply with Rikio's increasing self-awareness and disillusionment with fame. He reflects that he has long disconnected from ordinary dreams, considering the world of film and celebrity as not truly his own.

Rikio's assistant, Kayo Futoda, is a constant presence in his life, both caring and pragmatic. While she appears bumbling and flawed, with silver teeth and a messy bun, Kayo is his unwavering support. Their relationship is intimate yet devoid of typical romance; instead, they share a bond built on mutual understanding and a comical defiance against the expectations of their world. Rikio finds solace in their mockery of the "real" world, one that seems distant and superficial.



The chapter dives deeper into their intimacy, showcasing a playful yet poignant dynamic. Kayo teases Rikio, calling him her “Little White Lily Bud,” both complimenting and poking fun at his insecurities. They share a secretive relationship, enjoying their shared rebellion against societal norms as they navigate their roles in a superficial industry.

As filming continues, the setting becomes a busy suburb under the cascading sunlight, where Rikio carries the burden of performance as the camera captures his every move. Director Takahama's meticulousness contrasts with Rikio's wavering confidence as they prepare for a scene that involves juggling natural elements—a testament to Rikio's struggle to stay grounded in his role amidst the chaos of fame.

Despite his celebrity status, Rikio feels alienated, exhausted by the shrill cries of fans and the constant scrutiny. While he longs for a deeper connection to his life and work, the reality of his situation leaves him feeling like a prisoner to his image. As he succumbs to fatigue and the relentless demands of filming, we witness a young man caught between the intoxicating allure of fame and the haunting realization of its ephemeral nature.

Overall, the chapter beautifully encapsulates themes of identity, the superficiality of fame, and the complex intricacies of personal relationships,



particularly through the lens of Rikio and Kayo’s unconventional bond. The reader is drawn into Rikio’s internal conflicts as he navigates both his public persona and private vulnerabilities, setting an engaging stage for the journey that lies ahead.

Aspect	Summary
Main Character	Rikio Mizuno, a young actor at the height of his fame.
Setting	Lively crowd of fans; busy suburb under sunlight; filming set.
Symbolism	Rikio's self-designed uniform symbolizes idolization; the straw hat and open shirt highlight his youthful appeal.
Rikio's Internal Conflict	Struggles with the fleeting nature of youth, exhaustion from fame, and feelings of disconnection from ordinary dreams.
Relationship with Kayo Futoda	Kayo is Rikio's pragmatic assistant and confidante; their bond is intimate but not romantic, characterized by playful teasing.
Themes	Identity, superficiality of fame, personal relationships, and the contrast between public persona and private vulnerabilities.
Filming Dynamics	Rikio feels pressure under director Takahama's meticulousness as he juggles the demands of fame.
Overall Impact	Chapter sets the stage for Rikio's journey amidst the allure of fame and its haunting reality.

Critical Thinking

Key Point: The fleeting nature of fame and youth.

Critical Interpretation: Reflect on the transient essence of life; just like Rikio Mizuno, you might find yourself at the peak of your own passions, surrounded by admiration yet feeling isolated. Embrace the understanding that youth and fame are ephemeral, and seek deeper connections beyond superficial accolades. In recognizing the weight of your own aspirations, allow this awareness to inspire you to cherish genuine relationships and pursue authenticity in your journey, rather than getting lost in the façade of public perception.



Chapter 2 Summary: 2

In this chapter from "Star" by Yukio Mishima, we delve into the life of a young actor whose world is filled with absurdity and melancholy. Kayo, an assistant, joyfully sorts through fan letters, never failing to stop at the most ridiculous, often sexual, comments from fans. Their playful banter highlights the innocence of their relationship as they craft fictional tales of first loves, emphasizing the actor's carefully curated public image. Despite his attempts to paint a rougher, more troubled past, he reveals his true self—a sensitive artist who preferred nature over conflict, accepting the internal struggle of his youth.

As his twenty-fourth birthday approaches, the protagonist prepares for a dinner with friends, yet he revels in his star persona by consciously choosing to remain absent from social responsibilities, believing that a true star's allure lies in their mystery and absence. He envisions himself as a phantom racing through life, evoking vibrant imagery of a speeding car leaving an impression on the night, suggesting a profound disconnection from reality.

During filming, an unexpected incident occurs that hints at dark undercurrents in the glamorous world of cinema. While shooting a poignant scene of revenge intertwined with love, a new actress, Yuri Asano, breaks through the set's boundaries, mistakenly believing that a desperate leap into the spotlight would secure her a role. The scene unfolds comically and



tragically, showcasing the callousness and unpredictability of the film industry. Yuri's impulsive actions lead her to overdose on drugs, sparking chaos behind the scenes as the crew rushes to assist her.

The protagonist, witnessing Yuri's overdose, feels a mixture of horror and empathy. The chapter crescendos with the chaotic yet intimate moments as the crew reacts to Yuri's revival, sharply contrasting the starkness of life and death with the farcical nature of the film industry. In the end, the PR Office spins the grim reality into a romanticized tragedy, casting Yuri's actions as a testament to unrequited love for the actor.

Kayo, undeterred by the gravity of the situation, finds humor in the absurdity, initiating a frantic and comedic imitation of Yuri's distress. Their laughter serves as a poignant reminder of how art often reflects tragedy and absurdity, pulling the protagonist deeper into his emotional entanglements. This chapter weaves themes of identity, the contrast between public persona and private reality, and the often blurred lines of tragedy and farce, encapsulating the deep complexities of fame and the fragile human condition.



Chapter 3: 3

In Chapter 3 of "Star" by Yukio Mishima, the struggles of fame and the complex emotions surrounding it take center stage, particularly through the lens of the protagonist's interactions with the enigmatic Yuri Asano. The chapter opens with a reflection on the isolating nature of being a star. The narrator experiences a haunting mix of fascination and sorrow as he recalls Yuri's dramatic suicide attempt, vividly imagining her pain and strength as she was revived. This moment becomes a spectacle, illustrating how her suffering, while profound, is also paradoxically captivating to those watching.

Amid the backdrop of film production, the narrator navigates the chaotic environment of a shoot. He describes the relentless pace of the film industry — long hours, exhausting schedules, and the wear on his body — exacerbated by a troubling health issue hinted at by blood in the toilet, which he keeps to himself. This physical struggle symbolizes the toll that fame takes on one's well-being. The excitement of a rising star is underscored by interactions with a cynical yet friendly producer, who reveals the absurdity

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Chapter 4 Summary: 4

In this captivating chapter from "Star" by Yukio Mishima, we delve into the complexities of fame, identity, and personal despair through the eyes of an unnamed protagonist. The chapter opens with him reflecting on a tradition: hanging life-size posters of himself from his latest film by the door. Each poster showcases his image in a striking suit and a gold skull pendant, illustrating the careful marketing and image-crafting that surrounds his celebrity status. Yet, there's a hint of irony; despite his outward smiles, he often feels exhausted and disengaged from the persona he projects.

The narrative progresses as he grapples with both the highs and lows of his career. A memorable scene unfolds when he encounters a group of enthusiastic schoolgirls who cheekily pinch him on the thigh, highlighting the absurdity and invasiveness of fame. The film's final scene is meant to capture a poignant moment at Shinobazu Pond, but the weather delays the shoot. Here, the tension deepens with a pivotal revelation from Neriko, a character who confesses that her deceased brother was indirectly responsible for the protagonist's past incarceration. This revelation not only shocks him but also paints a grim picture of the criminal underworld he has been part of.

As filming wraps up, our protagonist's emotions shift. He notices a lack of recognition at a high-society party, where aristocrats barely acknowledge his fame. This situation triggers feelings of isolation and bittersweet realization



about his place in society. The contrast between his public persona and personal feelings becomes ever clearer, especially during discussions with Kayo, who portrays a candid, brash perspective on life and death. Their witty banter reveals deeper existential reflections, as Kayo encourages him to embrace his mortality rather than chase an idyllic but seemingly futile existence.

Their late-night conversation takes a darker turn as the protagonist expresses a growing urge for death—an impulse he associates with the fatigue of relentless fame and societal expectations. In response, Kayo offers a blend of humor and harsh reality, urging him to accept his existence without romanticizing it or seeking grand gestures. Her insights serve as both a caution and a challenge, emphasizing the importance of authenticity amidst the artifice of celebrity life.

By the close of the chapter, the protagonist's internal struggles and complex relationship with Kayo reveal a profound exploration of the human condition. He is caught in a cycle of yearning for genuine connection while being trapped by the superficiality of fame. Kayo's final remarks about the masks worn by stars serve as a haunting reminder that the quest for visibility often conceals the essence of who they are. In this vivid portrayal of a star's life, Mishima crafts a rich narrative about the interplay between illusion and reality, ultimately capturing the poignant sorrow that accompanies the pursuit of admiration and the fear of obscurity.

Theme	Description
Fame and Identity	The protagonist hangs life-size posters of himself, reflecting on the irony of his celebrity status and the exhaustion it brings.
Public vs. Private Self	Despite the smiles and fame, he feels emotionally disconnected and exhausted from the persona he has created.
Interactions with Fans	He experiences the absurdity and invasiveness of fame when schoolgirls cheekily pinch him.
Revelation and Impact	Neriko reveals a connection between her deceased brother and the protagonist's past incarceration, deepening the narrative's tension.
Society and Isolation	At a high-society party, he feels unnoticed and isolated, provoking existential reflections on his role in society.
Conversations with Kayo	Kayo's candid perspective challenges the protagonist to confront his mortality and the authenticity of his existence.
Existential Reflections	The protagonist expresses a desire for death, tied to the fatigue of fame and social expectations.
Authenticity vs. Artifice	Kayo emphasizes the need for authenticity in life, contrasting with the superficiality of fame.
Final Insights	The chapter ends with reflections on the masks worn by stars, highlighting the sorrow of seeking admiration while fearing obscurity.



Critical Thinking

Key Point: The importance of authenticity amidst societal expectations

Critical Interpretation: This chapter invites you to reflect on your own life and the masks you wear in social contexts. It challenges you to embrace authenticity rather than conforming to external pressures for validation. Recognizing the differences between your true self and the persona you project can be liberating. Much like the protagonist's struggle with the isolation fame brings, you might find freedom in admitting your vulnerabilities and cultivating deeper connections with those around you. Embracing your authentic self can lead to a more fulfilling life, where genuine relationships replace the superficiality often glorified in society.



Chapter 5 Summary: 5

In Chapter 5 of "Star" by Yukio Mishima, the atmosphere shifts as the protagonist, refreshed from the filming's completion, revels in the first hint of summer's brightness. Rather than taking a day off, he chooses to visit the barber for an early morning haircut, showcasing his masochistic tendencies. As he walks toward the barber shop, he observes the lively studio environment, with extras and crews bustling about, embodying the vibrant yet transient nature of film life.

Upon arriving at the barber, he momentarily drifts into a sleepy reverie, tangled in thoughts about Kayo, his colleague. He questions her existence in a surreal moment of introspection, pondering the nature of reality—could it be that if Kayo wasn't truly present, neither was he? This existential musing is suddenly interrupted when he meets Aijiro Kokura, a legendary figure in the film industry, whose handsome visage now carries the inevitable marks of aging. Kokura's charm and past allure are juxtaposed with a hint of sadness as his once-glorious beauty wanes, revealing the harsh reality of time's passage.

The protagonist's fascination with Kokura underscores the theme of fleeting youth and the fear of aging. Despite Kokura's iconic status, his physical deterioration becomes a source of anxiety for the young star as he confronts his own mortality reflected in Kokura's once-majestic features. Just when he



grapples with feelings of despair, Kayo appears, embodying warmth and reality, revitalizing his spirit with an affectionate whisper, promising him enduring admiration despite the passage of time.

This chapter beautifully intertwines themes of existence, identity, and the painful acceptance of aging while also highlighting the fleeting moments of personal connections that offer solace amidst the stark realities of life.

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