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Al Khaleej and beyond Reflections of two artists



Peter Lawrence and Mike Shepley

Al Khaleej and beyond – Reflections of two artists
By Peter Lawrence & Mike Shepley
Motivate Publishing
Reviewer: Preethi Janice D'Sa
★★★★☆

When I first breezed through *Al Khaleej and beyond – Reflections of two artists*, I was whisked back to my childhood, spent in Abu Dhabi.

This book is a compilation of paintings and anecdotes on the authors' travels within the Emirates, the Pearls of the Gulf and Mashreq countries. The vast experience of Peter Lawrence and Mike Shepley, combined with the unique Middle East heritage, has permeated their art.

The book cleverly portrays the contrasting and sometimes complementing work of Peter and Mike. I think it is brilliant that

"I was whisked back to my childhood, spent in Abu Dhabi"

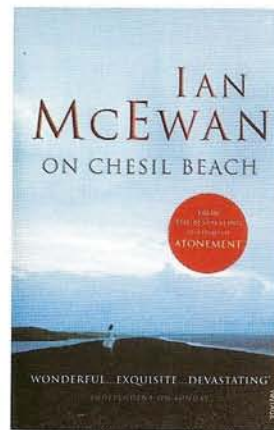


artists can paint the same scene and come up with such different yet vibrant interpretations.

It is obvious, through the anecdotes, that ecological conservation is an important issue to the artists. Many paintings capture scenes that have now disappeared. The artists have also touched upon ongoing preservation projects such as the Shuamiri Reserve for the Arabian oryx and the Ramsar site for visiting flamingos.

The book is sponsored by business consultancy MWH. As David Nickols, MWH President says, "This book is a wonderful opportunity for MWH to celebrate its long association with the region through an artistic initiative."

More information on the book can be obtained on www.arte.ae



On Chesil Beach
Ian McEwan
Vintage Books

Reviewer: Ciaran Jennings
★★★★☆

A story about a newly-married couple's disastrous wedding night was perhaps not the best book to take on honeymoon.

This slight novel is an uneasy black comedy set in England



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in 1962 and charts the love story of Edward and Florence, he a history graduate and she a violinist. As ever for McEwan, this is an intense read, so perhaps not a book for the beach.

There is something almost mathematical in how the book is written, how the circumstances, emotions and motivations add up to a cataclysm for them both. This slightly clinical style can make it difficult to care for either of the main characters as the effect is akin to looking at them under a microscope.

At its heart it is a psychodrama between the two, which builds and builds to a dramatic climax. Underlying this are McEwan's sharp observations of post-war Britain, its class conflicts and repressive atmosphere. The social expectations of the time become a crushing force on his protagonists.

It's this historical context that makes or breaks the book. For children of the Seventies and Eighties there's little here to recognise in England, though for those who lived the Fifties and Sixties, this book will provide a wholly unsentimental critique of what McEwan seems to feel is a forgotten time.