

Kitchen Banana Yoshimoto

Young author Aki Fujino appeared poised to making it big in the world of publishing. Her debut title UTSUBORA was being pitched about to a number of editors and at least one person felt it was set to propel her into stardom. However, before she could ever have her book published, the young woman was found dead. Some believe it was a suicide, but those close to her feel there is something more sinister involved in this young talent's death. Aki's death has become something straight out of a mystery. Much like the story behind UTSUBORA, there is something more to Aki, Sakura and their relationship with an author named Mizorogi than meets the eye. And it is possible that the only way to solve this mystery may be to uncover all their secrets.

Kitchen juxtaposes two tales about mothers, transsexuality, bereavement, kitchens, love and tragedy in contemporary Japan. It is a startlingly original first work by Japan's brightest young literary star and is now a cult film. When Kitchen was first published in Japan in 1987 it won two of Japan's most prestigious literary prizes, climbed its way to the top of the bestseller lists, then remained there for over a year and sold millions of copies. Banana Yoshimoto was hailed as a young writer of great talent and great passion whose work has quickly earned a place among the best of modern literature, and has been described as 'the voice of young Japan' by the Independent on Sunday. Deliver on flavor, save on time, with this family-friendly cookbook. This latest addition to our bestselling ring-bound cookbook series revolutionizes quick cooking with more than 750 recipes that can be ready in 45 minutes or less. Most of the recipes require only a handful of ingredients, and clever strategies plus convenience products turn typically time consuming recipes like Easiest-Ever Chicken Pot Pie, Quick Beef Stew and Spinach Lasagna into busy night dinner options. We also provide fast appetizer, brunch, and dessert recipes such as Easy Melted Brie with Honey and Herbs, 25-Minute Egg Roulade with Spinach and Gruyere, and 45-Minute Lazy Man's Tiramisu. Super-fast recipes (ready in 25 minutes or less) include Tomato Florentine Tortellini Soup and Seared Scallops with Lemon, Peas, and Orzo. This comprehensive cookbook answers the age-old question "What's for dinner?" with hundreds of innovative, flavorful, and fast dishes sure to become repeat recipe requests in your house.

Three PlaysGrove Press

David Piper has always been an outsider. His parents think he's gay. The school bully thinks he's a freak. Only his two best friends know the real truth: David wants to be a girl. On the first day at his new school Leo Denton has one goal: to be invisible. Attracting the attention of the most beautiful girl in his class is definitely not part of that plan. When Leo stands up for David in a fight, an unlikely friendship forms. But things are about to get messy. Because at Eden Park School secrets have a funny habit of not staying secret for long, and soon everyone knows that Leo used to be a girl. As David prepares to come out to his family and transition into life as a girl and Leo wrestles with figuring out how to deal with people who try to define him through his history, they find in each other the friendship and support they need to navigate life as transgender teens as well as the courage to decide for themselves what normal really means.

A collection of six short stories incorporates themes of time, healing, and fate, following the adventures of young men and women who struggle to understand confusing

emotions while embarking on journeys of self-discovery. Reprint.

The Rise and Fall of Modern Japanese Literature tells the story of Japanese literature from its start in the 1870s against the backdrop of a rapidly coalescing modern nation to the present. John Whittier Treat takes up both canonical and forgotten works, the non-literary as well as the literary, and pays special attention to the Japanese state's hand in shaping literature throughout the country's nineteenth-century industrialization, a half-century of empire and war, its post-1945 reconstruction, and the challenges of the twenty-first century to modern nationhood. Beginning with journalistic accounts of female criminals in the aftermath of the Meiji civil war, Treat moves on to explore how woman novelist Higuchi Ichiyū's stories engaged with modern liberal economics, sex work, and marriage; credits Natsume Sōseki's satire *I Am a Cat* with the triumph of print over orality in the early twentieth century; and links narcissism in the visual arts with that of the Japanese *I-novel* on the eve of the country's turn to militarism in the 1930s. From imperialism to Americanization and the new media of television and manga, from boogie-woogie music to Yoshimoto Banana and Murakami Haruki, Treat traces the stories Japanese audiences expected literature to tell and those they did not. The book concludes with a classic of Japanese science fiction a description of present-day crises writers face in a Japan hobbled by a changing economy and unprecedented natural and manmade catastrophes. *The Rise and Fall of Japanese Literature* reinterprets the "end of literature"—a phrase heard often in Japan—as a clarion call to understand how literary culture worldwide now teeters on a historic precipice, one at which Japan's writers may have arrived just a moment before the rest of us.

This collection brings together the stories that Kafka allowed to be published during his lifetime. To Max Brod, his literary executor, he wrote: "Of all my writings the only books that can stand are these."

"A beautiful translation...Yoshimoto deploys a magically Japanese light touch to emotionally and existentially tough subject matter: domestic disarray, loneliness, identity issues, lovesickness...[a] nimble narrative." *ELLE* In *Moshi Moshi*, Yoshie's much-loved musician father has died in a suicide pact with an unknown woman. It is only when Yoshie and her mother move to Shimokitazawa, a traditional Tokyo neighborhood of narrow streets, quirky shops, and friendly residents that they can finally start to put their painful past behind them. However, despite their attempts to move forward, Yoshie is haunted by nightmares in which her father is looking for the phone he left behind on the day he died, or on which she is trying—unsuccessfully—to call him. Is her dead father trying to communicate a message to her through these dreams? With the lightness of touch and surreal detachment that are the hallmarks of her writing, *Banana Yoshimoto* turns a potential tragedy into a poignant coming-of-age ghost story and a life-affirming homage to the healing powers of community, food, and family.

Fiction. *Asian & Asian American Studies*. *Short Stories*. A young translator living in Toronto frequently travels abroad—to Hong Kong, Macau, Prague, Tokyo—often with his unnamed lover. In restaurants and hotel rooms, the couple begin telling folk tales to each other, perhaps as a way to fill the undefined space between them. Theirs is a comic and enigmatic relationship in which emotions are often muted and sometimes masked by verbal play and philosophical questions, and further complicated by the woman's frequent unexplained disappearances. *YOU ARE EATING AN ORANGE*.

YOU ARE NAKED. is an intimate novel of memory and longing that challenges Western tropes and Orientalism. Embracing the playful surrealism of Haruki Murakami and the atmospheric narratives of filmmaker Wong Kar-wai, Sheung-King's debut is at once lyrical and punctuated, and wholly unique, and marks the arrival of a bold new voice in Asian-Canadian literature. Sheung-King has written a wonderfully unexpected and maverick love story but also a novel of ideas that hopscoches between Toronto, Macau, Hong Kong, Tokyo, and Prague. It is enchanting, funny, and a joy to read.-Kyo Maclear

One cold fall day, high school junior Liz Emerson steers her car into a tree. This haunting and heartbreaking story is told by a surprising and unexpected narrator and unfolds in nonlinear flashbacks even as Liz's friends, foes, and family gather at the hospital and Liz clings to life. This riveting debut will appeal to fans of *Before I Fall*, by Lauren Oliver, and *13 Reasons Why*, by Jay Asher. "On the day Liz Emerson tries to die, they had reviewed Newton's laws of motion in physics class. Then, after school, she put them into practice by running her Mercedes off the road." Why did Liz Emerson decide that the world would be better off without her? Why did she give up? The nonlinear novel pieces together the short and devastating life of Meridian High's most popular junior girl. Mass, acceleration, momentum, force—Liz didn't understand it in physics, and even as her Mercedes hurtles toward the tree, she doesn't understand it now. How do we impact one another? How do our actions reverberate? What does it mean to be a friend? To love someone? To be a daughter? Or a mother? Is life truly more than cause and effect? Amy Zhang's haunting and universal story will appeal to fans of Lauren Oliver, Gayle Forman, and Jay Asher.

A great story can lead a reader on a journey of discovery—especially if it's presented in two languages! Beautifully illustrated in a traditional style, *Japanese Stories for Language Learners* offers five compelling stories with English and Japanese language versions appearing on facing pages. Taking learners on an exciting cultural and linguistic journey, each story is followed by detailed translator's notes, Japanese vocabulary lists, and grammar points along with a set of discussion questions and exercises. The first two stories are very famous traditional Japanese folktales: *Urashima Taro* (Tale of a Fisherman) and *Yuki Onna* (The Snow Woman). These are followed by three short stories by notable 20th century authors: *Kumo no Ito* (The Spider's Thread) by Akutagawa Ryunosuke (1892-1927) *Oborekaketa Kyodai* (The Siblings Who Almost Drowned) by Arishima Takeo (1878-1923) *Serohiki no Goshu* (Gauche the Cellist) by Miyazawa Kenji (1896-1933) Reading these stories in the original Japanese script—and hearing native-speakers read them aloud in the accompanying free audio recording—helps students at every level deepen their comprehension of the beauty and subtlety of the Japanese language. Learn Japanese the fun way—through the country's rich literary history.

This fabulous anthology is sure to be a core text for history of medicine and social science classes in colleges across the country. In order to demonstrate how medical research has influenced Western cultural perspectives, the editors have collected original works from 61 different authors around nine major themes (among them "Anatomy and Destiny," "Psyche and Soma," and "The Construction of Pain, Suffering, and Death"). The authors range from Aristotle, the Bible, and Louis Pasteur, to Masters and Johnson, Ernest Hemingway, and Simone de Beauvoir. The primary sources

selected to illustrate the themes are well chosen and contrast with each other nicely. However, the brief background material for the selections center around the authors and offer little or no discussion about the selections' relevance to the topics at hand. This book would be best read in a class or group where the texts' meaning in relation to each other can be discussed, but the book can stand alone if the reader is prepared to do some critical thinking.

Three extraordinary novellas narrate the individual stories of three women, all bewitched into a spiritual sleep--a sleepwalker mourning a lost love, a woman unable to remain awake who is involved in an affair with a man whose wife is in a coma, and a woman whose dreams are haunted by a woman she once confronted in a love triangle. Reprint. 50,000 first printing.

This thoughtful book provides a concise introduction to North Korea. The authors trace the country's history from its founding in 1948 and describe its current political, economic, social, and cultural life under the continued stranglehold of the Kim family. A new collection of short stories set in the Alentejo province of Portugal features a range of colorful characters, linked by a vivid sense of place and time, including Teresa, a beautiful young girl from the village engaged to a suitable man, who yearns to see the world, and Vasco, a café owner who is losing business to the new Internet café down the road. By the author of *Brick Lane*. Reprint. 60,000 first printing.

Shortlisted for the 2013 Man Asian Literary Prize, *Strange Weather in Tokyo* is a story of loneliness and love that defies age. Tsukiko, thirty-eight, works in an office and lives alone. One night, she happens to meet one of her former high school teachers, "Sensei," in a local bar. Tsukiko had only ever called him "Sensei" ("Teacher"). He is thirty years her senior, retired, and presumably a widower. Their relationship develops from a perfunctory acknowledgment of each other as they eat and drink alone at the bar, to a hesitant intimacy which tilts awkwardly and poignantly into love. As Tsukiko and Sensei grow to know and love one another, time's passing is marked by Kawakami's gentle hints at the changing seasons: from warm sake to chilled beer, from the buds on the trees to the blooming of the cherry blossoms. *Strange Weather in Tokyo* is a moving, funny, and immersive tale of modern Japan and old-fashioned romance.

The "sublimely awkward and hilarious" (*Chicago Tribune*), National Book Award "5 Under 35"-garnering first novel from the acclaimed author of *The New Me--now* in a new edition Twenty-four-year-old Megan may have her whole life ahead of her, but it already feels like a dead end, thanks to her dreadful job as a gastroenterologist's receptionist and her heart-clogging resentment of the success and happiness of everyone around her. But no one stokes Megan's bitterness quite like her coworker, Jillian, a grotesquely optimistic, thirty-five-year-old single mother whose chirpy positivity obscures her mounting struggles. Megan and Jillian's lives become increasingly precarious as their faulty coping mechanisms--denial, self-help books, alcohol, religion, prescription painkillers, obsessive criticism, alienated boyfriends, and, in Jillian's case, the misguided purchase of a dog--send them spiraling toward their downfalls. Wickedly authentic and brutally funny, *Jillian* is a subversive portrait of two women trapped in cycles of self-delusion and self-destruction, each more like the other than they would care to admit.

After losing her delicate younger sister to suicide, a Japanese-American woman incurs

a case of amnesia and embarks on an emotional journey of recovery, aided by her clairvoyant kid brother. By the author of Kitchen. Reprint.

From the award-winning, best-selling author comes a rollicking novel with a dark undertow, set around three unforgettable individuals and a doomed movie set. A producer. A novelist. An actress. It's summer 1968--a time of war and assassinations, protests and riots. While the world is reeling, our trio is involved in making a disaster-plagued, *Swingin' Sixties* British movie in sunny Brighton. All are leading secret lives. As the movie shoot zigs and zags, these layers of secrets become increasingly more untenable. Pressures build inexorably. The FBI and CIA get involved. Someone is going to crack--or maybe they all will. From one of Britain's best loved writers comes an exhilarating, tender novel--by turns hilarious and heartbreaking--that asks the vital questions: What makes life worth living? And what do you do if you find it isn't?

Olivia (Vee), is now captain of her own spaceship, an Explorer Vessel which set out seven years earlier on a deep space mission. She and her twin brother Aidan are heading alone back to Earth following the virus that wiped out the rest of the ship in its entirety three years earlier -- including their parents. Nathan is part of a community heading in the opposite direction. A violent war is spreading through space so they're heading for a peaceful patch from where they will plan an uprising. But on their journey, Nathan's ship is attacked and most of the community killed. Only a few survive, thanks to Vee and Aidan, who rescue them, bringing them on board their ship. Nathan and Vee are instantly attracted to each other, and in the midst of all the dramas and hostilities of this newly occupied ship, they fall head-over-heels in love. But not everyone is happy with their relationship. Someone is sowing rumours of Nathan's infidelity, Vee's flaws, and putting the lives of everybody on board at risk . . .

"Cats, books, young love, and adventure: catnip for a variety of readers!" --Kirkus
"Bibliophiles will dote on this charming import from Japan, smoothly translated by Louise Heal Kawai." -- Library Journal
From the #1 bestselling author in Japan comes a celebration of books, cats, and the people who love them, infused with the heartwarming spirit of *The Guest Cat* and *The Travelling Cat Chronicles*. Bookish high school student Rintaro Natsuki is about to close the secondhand bookstore he inherited from his beloved bookworm grandfather. Then, a talking cat appears with an unusual request. The feline asks for—or rather, demands—the teenager's help in saving books with him. The world is full of lonely books left unread and unloved, and the cat and Rintaro must liberate them from their neglectful owners. Their mission sends this odd couple on an amazing journey, where they enter different mazes to set books free. Through their travels, the cat and Rintaro meet a man who leaves his books to perish on a bookshelf, an unwitting book torturer who cuts the pages of books into snippets to help people speed read, and a publishing drone who only wants to create bestsellers. Their adventures culminate in one final, unforgettable challenge—the last maze that awaits leads Rintaro down a realm only the bravest dare enter . . . An enthralling tale of books, first love, fantasy, and an unusual friendship with a talking cat, *The Cat Who Saved Books* is a story for those for whom books are so much more than words on paper. Translated from the Japanese by Louise Heal Kawai.

The author of *Lizard*, *Amrita*, *Asleep* and *Goodbye Tsugumi* offers two novellas, one about a young woman's dream about an ex-lover while on a hiking trip, and the other

about the sister of a woman lying in a coma. Reprint.

"gourmet boom" of the 1980s and 1990s concealed: the dangers of a market economy, environmental destruction, and continuing gender biases.

After her mother's death, Chihiro moves to Tokyo hoping to get over her grief and meets Nakajima, a young man battling his own demons.

In the current international climate where North Korea takes center stage, "Forgotten Reflections" weaves an inspirational tale of family, lost memories, folklore and an unforgotten history, spanning three generations as South Korea rises from the ashes. DARE TO DREAM IN THE MIDST OF WAR. 1945. Rice fields seem endless in a quaint farming village of South Korea, yet Iseul and the villagers have been on the verge of starvation for as long as they can remember. Their Japanese colonizers have taken every last grain with them as they are finally ousted from the Peninsula. In the newly independent Korea, Iseul and Jung-Soo dream of what their future might bring. Yet, war is on the horizon and Iseul has fallen for an alleged North Korean communist spy. Men are conscripted and rice is taken to feed the growing army as the Korean Peninsula is thrust into an international war that would determine if the strategic region will fall into the communist or democratic realm. With nothing but the news of death and hunger awaiting the village of women, children, and the aged, Iseul musters up whatever hope she has left to bring the village together to make paper. Soon, the village once known for its rice, becomes famous for its paper, becoming a beacon of hope for the battle-worn soldiers awaiting letters from their loved ones. Spies continue to roam South Korea, turning neighbors and families against one another. For years, Jung-Soo has been suspicious of his father's allegiances. With a series of mysterious revelations about his father, Jung-Soo is forced to choose between his tainted communist past, and the future he hopes to have with Iseul after the war. "Breathtaking, sad and beautiful. Truly gorgeous and a must-read for lovers of literature and historical fiction." - Rebecca Charlton "A touching story, not only about love or the Korean War, but also about our own identities and (re)unification in different forms." - Utopia State of Mind "A story about a grandmother's secret life and what she sacrificed to make a better life for her children." -- Niyati Mavinkurve

BüKs are inexpensive pamphlets, each containing one provocative essay, short story, portfolio of pictures, collection of poems, or other surprising entertainment, readable in the time it takes to drink a cup of coffee.

'What is remarkable about Alan Ayckbourn's comedy is that it contrives to be simultaneously hilarious and harrowing. Literally, it is agonisingly funny' Daily Telegraph In Three Plays Ayckbourn's perfectly pitched dialogue slices into the soul of suburbia. The settings are simple - a kitchen, a bedroom, a party - but the relationships between the husbands and wives are more complicated. Fraught relationships are exposed with humour, bathos and a sharp understanding of human nature.

IPPY Award Winner From nonsense to lessons learned, these 45 rhymes include

the very well known (Itsy Bitsy Spider) and the somewhat familiar (Hickety, Pickety, My Black Hen). The truly fantastic pictures speak more than a thousand words as artist Scott Gustafson riffs in paint on themes present and imagined in each verse. Nursery rhymes are classic, and so are some of the artist's interpretations. But other paintings are surprises, like an anthropomorphic baking bear, a pelican sea captain, and Peter Piper as a pug on two legs. Welcome to a world where "There Was a Crooked Man" is not about a hunchbacked senior but rather a madcap, double-jointed dandy who might be "crooked" in more ways than one. Jack (Be Nimble) is a leaping cricket and Yankee Doodle a fun-loving chipmunk on a fullsize horse. Scott Gustafson's unique style, influenced by legendary book illustrators Arthur Rackham and N. C. Wyeth, makes this a volume to be treasured by children and illustrated-book lovers of all ages.

From the beloved World Fantasy Award-winning author of *Witchmark* comes a sweeping, romantic new fantasy set in a world reminiscent of Regency England, where women's magic is taken from them when they marry. A sorceress must balance her desire to become the first great female magician against her duty to her family. Beatrice Clayborn is a sorceress who practices magic in secret, terrified of the day she will be locked into a marital collar that will cut off her powers to protect her unborn children. She dreams of becoming a full-fledged Magus and pursuing magic as her calling as men do, but her family has staked everything to equip her for Bargaining Season, when young men and women of means descend upon the city to negotiate the best marriages. The Clayborns are in severe debt, and only she can save them, by securing an advantageous match before their creditors come calling. In a stroke of luck, Beatrice finds a grimoire that contains the key to becoming a Magus, but before she can purchase it, a rival sorceress swindles the book right out of her hands. Beatrice summons a spirit to help her get it back, but her new ally exacts a price: Beatrice's first kiss . . . with her adversary's brother, the handsome, compassionate, and fabulously wealthy Ianthe Lavan. The more Beatrice is entangled with the Lavan siblings, the harder her decision becomes: If she casts the spell to become a Magus, she will devastate her family and lose the only man to ever see her for who she is; but if she marries—even for love—she will sacrifice her magic, her identity, and her dreams. But how can she choose just one, knowing she will forever regret the path not taken?

One evening some friends were gathered at the home of one of our most celebrated writers. Having dined sumptuously, they were discussing murder—apropos of what, I no longer remember probably apropos of nothing. Only men were present: moralists, poets, philosophers and doctors—thus everyone could speak freely, according to his whim, his hobby or his idiosyncrasies, without fear of suddenly seeing that expression of horror and fear which the least startling idea traces upon the horrified face of a notary. I—say notary, much as I might have said lawyer or porter, not disdainfully, of course, but in order to define the average French mind. With a calmness of spirit as perfect

as though he were expressing an opinion upon the merits of the cigar he was smoking, a member of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences said: "Really—I honestly believe that murder is the greatest human preoccupation, and that all our acts stem from it.. " We awaited the pronouncement of an involved theory, but he remained silent. "Absolutely!" said a Darwinian scientist, "and, my friend, you are voicing one of those eternal truths such as the legendary Monsieur de La Palisse discovered every day: since murder is the very bedrock of our social institutions, and consequently the most imperious necessity of civilized life. If it no longer existed, there would be no governments of any kind, by virtue of the admirable fact that crime in general and murder in particular are not only their excuse, but their only reason for being. We should then live in complete anarchy, which is inconceivable. So, instead of seeking to eliminate murder, it is imperative that it be cultivated with intelligence and perseverance. I know no better culture medium than law." Someone protested. "Here, here!" asked the savant, "aren't we alone, and speaking frankly?" "Please!" said the host, "let us profit thoroughly by the only occasion when we are free to express our personal ideas, for both I, in my books, and you in your turn, may present only lies to the public." The scientist settled himself once more among the cushions of his armchair, stretched his legs, which were numb from being crossed too long and, his head thrown back, his arms hanging and his stomach soothed by good digestion, puffed smoke?rings at the ceiling: "Besides," he continued, "murder is largely self?propagating. Actually, it is not the result of this or that passion, nor is it a pathological form of degeneracy. It is a vital instinct which is in us all—which is in all organized beings and dominates them, just as the genetic instinct. And most of the time it is especially true that these two instincts fuse so well, and are so totally interchangeable, that in some way or other they form a single and identical instinct, so that we no longer may tell which of the two urges us to give life, and which to take it—which is murder, and which love. I have been the confidant of an honorable assassin who killed women, not to rob them, but to ravish them. His trick was to manage things so that his sexual climax coincided exactly with the death?spasm of the woman: 'At those moments,' he told me, 'I imagined I was a God, creating a world!'"

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Relates the experiences of two free-spirited young women in contemporary Japan. Since the death of his wife seven years ago, documentary maker Aoyama has not dated anyone else. Now even his teenage son, Shige, thinks that he should remarry and his best friend Yoshikawa comes up with a plan: to hold fake film auditions from which, he can choose a new bride. Of the thousands who apply, it is a beautiful ballerina, Yamasaki Asami, who captivates Aoyama. Infatuated by her fragile nature and nervous smile, he ignores his increasing sense of unease, putting aside his doubts about his new love, until it may be too late... In Audition, Ryu Murakami delivers his most subtly disturbing novel yet, confirming him as Japan's master of the psycho-thriller.

In 2007 Goth Sophie Lancaster was murdered just for looking different - inspired by her story, HATE is a hard-hitting real-life thriller about friendship, courage, loss, forgiveness and about

our society and communities.

In this “witty, perceptive novel”, a young woman moves to Tokyo and encounters the world of university enrollment and impending adulthood (Elle). Banana Yoshimoto’s novels of young life in Japan have made her an international sensation. Goodbye Tsugumi is an offbeat story of a deep and complicated friendship between two female cousins that ranks among her best work. Maria is the only daughter of an unmarried woman. She has grown up at the seaside alongside her cousin Tsugumi, a lifelong invalid, charismatic, spoiled, and occasionally cruel. Now Maria’s father is finally able to bring Maria and her mother to Tokyo, ushering Maria into a world of university, impending adulthood, and a “normal” family. When Tsugumi invites Maria to spend a last summer by the sea, a restful idyll becomes a time of dramatic growth as Tsugumi finds love and Maria learns the true meaning of home and family. She also has to confront both Tsugumi’s inner strength and the real possibility of losing her. Goodbye Tsugumi is a beguiling, resonant novel from one of the world’s finest young writers.

"N.P." is the title of the latest work, written in English, by a celebrated Japanese writer, but whenever anyone tries to translate the work into Japanese, death gets in the way

A powerful story of passion and friendship, the nature of love and the taboos surrounding it. N.P. is the last collection of stories by a celebrated Japanese writer, written in English while she was living in Boston.

A shape-shifter arrives at Tokyo harbour in human form, set to embark on an unstoppable rampage through the city’s train network... A young woman is accompanied home one night by a reclusive student, and finds herself lured into a flat full of eerie Egyptian artefacts... A man suspects his young wife’s obsession with picnicking every weekend in the city’s parks hides a darker motive... At first, Tokyo appears in these stories as it does to many outsiders: a city of bewildering scale, awe-inspiring modernity, peculiar rules, unknowable secrets and, to some extent, danger. Characters observe their fellow citizens from afar, hesitant to stray from their daily routines to engage with them. But Tokyo being the city it is, random encounters inevitably take place – a naïve book collector, mistaken for a French speaker, is drawn into a world he never knew existed; a woman seeking psychiatric help finds herself in a taxi with an older man wanting to share his own peculiar revelations; a depressed divorcee accepts an unexpected lunch invitation to try Thai food for the very first time... The result in each story is a small but crucial change in perspective, a sampling of the unexpected yet simple pleasure of other people’s company. As one character puts it, ‘The world is full of delicious things, you know.’

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