

One Hot Summer in Kyoto

John Haylock

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Hot and sticky describes the ancient Japanese city of Kyoto in summer. And that is just the situation Peter Meadowes finds himself in when he flees to Kyoto for his summer vacation. During the rest of the year the middle-aged Meadowes teaches in Tokyo, a circumstance which conveniently enables him to leave his commanding wife (who hates Japan) back in England.

In the old capital Meadowes also expects to find relief from Noriko, his grim Japanese mistress. But in the small wood-and-paper Japanese house he has rented, he finds something unexpected: another woman to desire. Kazumi is seductive, yet she always manages to slip away. Then Noriko arrives, oddly possessive but sharing giggles with Kazumi—perhaps about Meadowes's prowess? Next on the scene is Miss Goto, polite, apologetic, a serious lover of theater who turns an elaborately staged seduction into a comedy of errors. When wife Monica shows up from England, Meadowes must choose...and fast.

John Haylock's novel vividly evokes the languid torpor of summer in the fabled city of temples and gardens. Yet hidden within this steamy farce about obsessive lust is an underbelly of duplicity, discontent, and fear. When making his choice, Peter Meadowes confronts the love-hate relationship that afflicts the typical gaijin—foreigner—in Japan. Remaining in Japan may be impossible, but escaping only creates the desire to return.

John Haylock was educated at Cambridge University and spent 14 years in Japan as a teacher and writer.



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