



Manazuru

By Hiromi Kawakami

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Twelve years have passed since Kei's husband, Rei, disappeared and she was left alone with her three-year-old daughter. Her new relationship with a married man—the antithesis of Rei—has brought her life to a numbing stasis, and her relationships with her mother and daughter have spilled into routine, day after day. Kei begins making repeated trips to the seaside town of Manazuru, a place that jogs her memory to a moment in time she can never quite locate. Her time there by the water encompasses years of unsteady footing and a developing urgency to find *something*.

Through a poetic style embracing the surreal and grotesque, a quiet tenderness emerges from these dark moments. *Manazuru* is a meditation on memory—a profound, precisely delineated exploration of the relationships between lovers and family members. Both startlingly restless and immaculately compact, *Manazuru* paints the portrait of a woman on the brink of her own memories and future.

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Manazuru By Hiromi Kawakami Bibliography

- Rank: #1905079 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Counterpoint
- Published on: 2010-09-14
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x 5.75" w x 1.00" l, .80 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 224 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In Kawakami's first novel to be translated into English, a woman fades in and out of the present as she visits the beach town of Manazuru, in the shadow of Mt. Fuji. Kei's husband disappeared when their daughter, Momo, was three. Momo is now 12 and lives with Kei and Kei's mother in Tokyo. Moments shared among the women are pleasant but awkward, due to three generations of unspoken resentment. Some jarring transitions aside, Kawakami's handling of temporal space feels authentic: as Kei kisses her lover in one time and place, the wetness leaves her lips in another; she sits alone on a bench in Tokyo. The real and the fantastical meld as Kei narrowly avoids disaster (she escapes the typhoon that destroys the restaurant where she was dining). Her memories are startlingly vivid, yet their veracity remains uncertain; are the visions she has of her husband with another woman real or imagined? Kawakami has a remarkable ability to obscure reality, fantasy, and memory, making the desire for love feel hauntingly real.

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From [Booklist](#)

The Manazuru of Kawakami's is a dream state as much as a place, a seaside town visited often by the restless narrator, Kei. Kei's husband vanished more than a decade ago, and only now, living in Tokyo with her mother and sullen 16-year-old daughter, is she compelled to put his memory to rest. Kei is haunted not only by her husband but also inexplicably by other shadowlike entities. She is drawn again and again to Manazuru, where she enters a world where time stops, sound evaporates, women hang from trees, boats spark into flame and disappear, and ghosts come and go like smoke. Yet the fantasy has purpose as a manifestation of Kei's sense of displacement, and of her estrangement from her daughter and mother. The action convincingly moves in waves between Kei's past and present, the surreal and the everyday. Part ghost story, part meditation on life and death, family and self, this slim novel is captivating and suspenseful, and sure to satisfy not only fans of ghost fiction but all readers. --Annie Tully

Review

Praise for *Manazuru*

"A meditative novel written in clipped but poetic prose, *Manazuru* is well worth reading. The story of Kei will linger in your own memory long after you finish." —*Asian Review of Books*

Users Review

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