



# Naomi

By Junichiro Tanizaki

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## Naomi By Junichiro Tanizaki

Junichiro Tanizaki's *Naomi* is both a hilarious story of one man's obsession and a brilliant reckoning of a nation's cultural confusion.

When twenty-eight-year-old Joji first lays eyes upon the teenage waitress Naomi, he is instantly smitten by her exotic, almost Western appearance. Determined to transform her into the perfect wife and to whisk her away from the seamy underbelly of post-World War I Tokyo, Joji adopts and ultimately marries Naomi, paying for English and music lessons that promise to mold her into his ideal companion. But as she grows older, Joji discovers that Naomi is far from the naïve girl of his fantasies. And, in Tanizaki's masterpiece of lurid obsession, passion quickly descends into comically helpless masochism.

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## Naomi By Junichiro Tanizaki Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The Westernization of a Japanese bar girl spells trouble for her husband. "Charm, lucidity, fascination with perverse passion and relentless emotional honesty . . . are all here in subtle force," said PW.

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From Library Journal

Naomi is the first English translation of Tanizaki's first important novel (originally serialized in Japanese in 1924-25). It is a subtle adaptation to a Japanese setting of the basic story in Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*. Joji, the narrator, finds Naomi, a girl half his age, working in a cafe. He takes her to live with him, tries to groom her (with English and music lessons), indulges her whims, encourages her "Western" ways, and eventually marries her. She becomes a torment to him, but he is so obsessed with her that he tolerates even her infidelities as long as she will stay with him. The recurrent theme in Tanizaki's novels of the danger in sexual fascination may here represent a self-criticism of his youthful preoccupation with things Western. L. M. Lewis, Social Science Dept., Eastern Kentucky Univ., Richmond

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Review

"In a class with *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *Lolita*. . . . Powerfully erotic, directly funny, a great novelist's masterpiece."

—*Booklist*

"Joji [is] exquisitely drawn, his uncomprehending guilelessness the perfect tool for the author's deft cross-cultural thrusts."

—*The Washington Post Book Review*

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**Ann Gross:**

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