

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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★ **90-Day Geisha: My Time as a Tokyo Hostess.**

Haywood, Chelsea (Author)

Dec 2009. 320 p. Pegasus, hardcover, \$25.00. (9781605980713). 952.

When night falls on Tokyo's Roppongi district, harried businessmen find a welcome respite from the relentless pressures of work. Here alcohol flows freely, drugs are easy to obtain, and, for a price, they can forget their cares in the company of a lovely young woman—or two or three. Canadian fashion model Haywood finds herself immersed in this surreal world when she begins a three-month stint as a Tokyo hostess. Being a hostess isn't about sex; these coveted women are prized for their engaging personalities, conversational skills, and willingness to sing karaoke (sometimes very badly). Of course, it doesn't hurt to be drop-dead gorgeous, which Haywood certainly is. Her very understanding husband (also a model) isn't bothered by the fact that his wife is surrounded by men who aggressively ogle her and ply her with drinks. Among them: Nori, a moody, possessive gastroenterologist; Koji, an obsessive, foulmouthed Oxford PhD; and cool, handsome and super-rich Yoshi, who brings out lustful feelings Haywood tries desperately to deny. Is it worth risking her marriage for a man who considers her little more than a commodity? Like Karin Muller's *Japanland* (2005) and Lea Jacobson's *Bar Flower* (2008), Haywood's candid, lively debut celebrates the cultural complexities of modern-day Japan.

— *Allison Block*