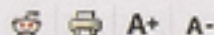



Book review - 90-Day Geisha, Chelsea Haywood

PETER C. PUGSLEY
20/10/2008 11:30:00 AM



Young Canadian model-turned-writer Chelsea Haywood has written an extremely entertaining debut book. She is quick to clarify the geisha issue though, stating that her aim is to use her 90-day visa (hence the title) to work as a hostess in Tokyo, a role which has "very little to do with sex, quite a lot to do with psychology and nothing to do with prostitution". In fact, Haywood arrives in Japan with her new (Australian) husband in tow. She neatly hooks the reader, teasing us through her adventures in the oh-so-different cultures of urban Japan.

Haywood takes us into a nocturnal environment of warm hand-towels, the constant fog of cigarette smoke and a never-ending flow of unflappably polite salarymen with their barrage of broken-English compliments. "Berry beautiful and berry crever. So smart-oi!" declares one of Haywood's customers. Such replications of J-speak (Jinglish?) are slightly unnerving – like laughing at the politically incorrect Benny Hill – yet the book would suffer without it. Wise beyond her years, but with the foolish abandon of the young, Haywood dabbles in hard drugs (tut-tut!), almost succumbs to the advances of a favourite customer and generally drinks herself silly. Luckily, her 90 days is up before she gets into any real trouble. Haywood's exploits make for fun reading. Ebury Australia, RRP \$34.95.

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