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College student Michael Holden wakes up in an impossible reality: mid-nineteenth century Japan, face to face with Shinjaro Kaminishi, a living, breathing samurai warlord Michael has seen in a dream. Imprisoned by the warlord and interrogated about the future, Michael has no idea if what he's experiencing is real... and then he finds himself back in present-day America.

Shinjaro's commanding presence and smoldering sexuality draw Michael again and again to the past, where dangerous information is revealed and Shinjaro's life is threatened. Through the mists of time and in the reality of modern Japan, Michael searches for the truth—and for the man who now owns his heart—Shinjaro Kaminishi.

Kaminishi Details

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Author : Jan Suzukawa

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From Reader Review Kaminishi for online ebook

Magda says

Here's a book with some great surrounding, hot sex scenes, but unfortunately not very interesting plot.

I received this copy from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

I know what you might think, I wrote I won't be reviewing romances, etc. But it's JAPAN! It's kind of my weakness :D. If some random person walked through my door right now and told me - you and I are going to Japan right now - I'm in! Imagine all the manga :D the lovely places you could see, the food!

But, let's go back to the book.

Kaminishi is basically a love story. A young student, Michael, somehow finds himself in mid-nineteenth century Japan. And what's better - he finds the man whose face he was drawing and dreaming about.

There are some things I really liked in this book. First of all - the place (yes, I know we've established that already) but it goes in pair with the time. All the descriptions of Edo age Japan. the cultural references, a bit of language here and there it all makes a perfect atmosphere for the story. You almost feel you're in there.

As for the modern Japan, because you'll find it there too, it was also nice to get a feel of this country just as it is now.

As for the disadvantages of this book - I was disappointed with the lack of plot. Well. there were hints of the plot that was promised in the book blurb, but I was so distracted with all the sex scenes that I couldn't really concentrate on the main plot. Or maybe the scenes were the main plot? That would explain a lot ;). But then again, what was I expecting from a book which description has this:

"Lord Shinjir?"s commanding presence and smoldering sexuality draw Michael again and again to the past"

Plus the whole blurb pretty much describes all that's happening in the book minus the scenes.

So if you're a fan of more or less plotless stories with a lot of hot moments, or if you really like Japan and you wish to find yourself there for just a moment - here's something you might check out, but I won't recommend it. And yet I'm still going to read the second story... it's just 120p, so I think I can do it... my weak mind wants to read about Japan :P

PS: Goodreads description has a mistake in name... it's Shinjiro, not Shinjaro ;P.

Aleksandra says

I was deeply disappointed by this book. I came across it accidentally, so I didn't have any expectations beforehand, it's just that it's a very poorly written book. It had all the cliches inherent in bad fanfiction (and as someone who's been reading fanfiction for many, many years, I can tell you that there are hundreds of fanfics far more original and intriguing than this book!). It reminded me of Twilight in many ways, with the

exception that you have a daimyou instead of a vampire. And, possibly the worst thing of all, I was absolutely appalled by the brutal abuse of the Japanese language presented in this book. I wonder what was going through the author's mind... My advice is to stay far away from this one.

ConsultingStag says

Insight of 19th century Japan with smexy times and a tad bit of fantasy.

3.5 Stars for this piece of romance through time and space with so many beautiful historical details.

This review is also featured on my blog. Drop by if you have time so we can have a nice cup of tea
<http://strawberrygeek-reads.blogspot.de>

I received a free ARC in exchange for a honest review.

The expectations I had for this book weren't high though I hoped that it wouldn't totally disappoint. Glad to say it didn't disappoint. Quite the opposite was the case!

The stories that actually try to portrait slice-of-life of a specific historic time sound and accurate are few and even fewer are those that give the reader a huge amount of detail about the time they play in.

Though I know a bit about japanese customs and traditions and can say that everyone was correct as far as I know but I'm no student of the culture. From other reviews I gathered that readers have trouble understanding some things because customs or objects lack explanation or translation. Thinking back I would say that there are a few scenes only people with a bit of japanese knowledge will understand right away which is a bit sad. The book has so many details that it would be lovely for people who want to know more about japanese customs but lacks explanation.

Okay, let's get to the story.

It starts with Michael Holden, an american student whom has weird dreams in which he sees a samurai. What Michael doesn't expect is to actually meet the guy when he falls asleep at his desk and wakes to find himself in 19th century Japan. Two whole years before it would be opened once more to foreigners!

Good thing he is a japanese arts student or he'd probably be completely screwed.

Another thing Michael didn't see coming is falling in love with Shinjiro-sama, the samurai (and lord) who seems to be the trigger of Michael being janked through time and space.

But can a love story with over a century parting them really have a happy ending?

The fact that some sentences were actually in japanese was a lovely bonus. Though I understand a good part of it I can't say anything about the grammar and a few transitions from japanese to english felt a bit strained, but I enjoyed it anyway.

There were many smexy times, though I felt that more character depth and detail would have been far better than another go on the matress. If the authir would have given the same amount of attention and detail to the two main characters it would've been perfect and gotten a way higher rating from me.

Alas, Michael as major character felt too flat and his reactions or lack thereof made it impossible for me to connect with him.

Michael appeared too calm and relaxed during scenes that would've warranted action or at least a strong

emotional reaction.

You could probably chop his arm off and he'd be just like:

So yeah, star deduction because of not enough character depth and insight as well as weird behaviour and reactions.

The psychic stuff at the end was a bit too much for my liking. Sure, Michael travels through time and space but aside from that there wasn't really anything supernatural. But don't worry. It's just a tiny bit at the end and you can just ignore it.

Speaking of time and space. The reason why exactly Michael landed there was never explained and the part where future!Shinjiro goes back in time just feels weird at the end because it isn't mentioned again and future!Shinjiro doesn't even remember.

Recommended if you want a novel about 19th century Japan with gay.

Angelia Sparrow says

Not bad, but it had trouble holding my attention. I simply wasn't gripped by the characters or the Japanese setting.

Andessa Zheiddinne says

I like that this story is set in Japan historical background and I like the time traveling idea, but I don't know why I feel like the story is so long like it would never end when in fact it is less than 300 pages long. It kinda feels a bit frustrating. And in the last chapter, there's this part when the old Obaachan feels 'something wet pooling down there' when staring at Shintaro that make me feel just...ewww... Not that sexual feeling is wrong for elderly people, but for 80 something woman to lust after a 30 something man in the train is just a little bit weird for me. But other than that, while not the most outstanding story I've ever read, it's still a good story that I would not easily forget.

Jamie Fessenden says

Nicely done and well-researched, in terms of the time period. I had some minor quibbles with some Japanese phrases, but I'm not fluent in Japanese, so I could be wrong about them. I would also have preferred more of an explanation of the time-travel -- it appeared to be some kind of cosmic destiny, but wasn't really explained, so it felt a bit like it was dangling at the end.

But the romance between our two main characters was nice, and I enjoyed the story quite a bit. The ending was sweet.

DM Cartwright says

I enjoyed the read! I have been a fan of Japanese culture for a long time and can definitely tell the author is highly influenced from reading copious manga and watching anime. There is always a particular something in the cadence of authors who are influenced in such a manner. It was very nostalgic for me. As for the story, it is an interesting concept but I don't feel it was needed to be flipping from a variety of points of view. One of the best pieces of advice I've gotten was to choose your hero and follow him- no one needs to know what everyone else is thinking; it adds to a story

Online Eccentric Librarian says

Well, I gave it a go but had to stop about half way through. The writing just wasn't strong enough to engage or intrigue and I couldn't suspend disbelief at all. Characters were flat, overidealized, and very unrealistic. Situations were overwritten to the point of egregious tell and not show. The story wasn't allowed to unwind at an organic pace and so the flow was choppy, both hurried and excruciatingly slow, and distracting.

This does feel very much like a fan fiction - there's not a lot of originality and honestly the authenticity of 1850s Japan and Japanese are suspect. Reviewed from a copy provided by the publisher.

Aredhel says

I can't decide how I feel about this book. There were many things I liked - especially the way the plot was peppered with Japanese words and expressions and the way the main characters were always true to themselves in their behavior and their way of acting.

However, the story left me with a feeling of..hmm..swift sluggishness. From one hand, the plot plodded along like an old crippled man that couldn't move any faster, but at the same time some scenes (especially the sex scenes) were sooo swift, that it was hard to realize that what you had just read was a sex scene at all! When I read this book I wanted to give it 4 stars, but as time passed by I decided that 3 stars would be enough for it.

Jane says

I would have given this 3 stars because I like the premise, but there were too many things wrong with it. Nothing was explained. The author assumes their readers know Japanese history and culture. And I don't. The author only translated about half of the phrases, and didn't bother to explain common words they kept using! Ex: gaijin means foreigner, but it was never said. Same with oni- demon. And just phrases you would have to guess the meaning.

Another thing is parts of the plot were completely left out from the conclusion! (view spoiler)

Also! I didn't like how whenever he would come back to modern day, it would only be for just a few pages before he went back. I wanted that developed more. He never got control of the ability as I hoped he would, nor did he travel back and forth often enough (in my opinion).

The premise in itself was interesting and something I would have liked very much, but the plot wasn't strong enough. Everything just seemed too easy. (view spoiler). The plot was weak and felt a bit forced. Things came too easily to him.

Simply put, the author did not develop this story enough. It could have been good had it had more details and explanations and if the plot was better-developed. There was more I had to rant on, but that's all I can remember for now.

Colleen says

A fantastic premise, unfortunately not well executed. The key to a successful romantic story is making the reader fall in love with the hero... and this just didn't get there. The narrative was too rooted in the main character's perspective, his romantic interest too stoic and distant, and the focus on their interactions too shallow to ever get really invested in the love story. There is too much telling, too much "in his own head" musing from the main character, and not nearly enough showing, not enough action or interaction between him and his samurai.

And as more of a nit-picky complaint that was nevertheless enough to break the spell of the story, the Japanese words and phrases peppered throughout that deviated from the standard form taught to American students of the language. I have more than a passing understanding of spoken Japanese, but constantly working out the difference between the phrases in the book and my grasp of the language made it hard to immerse myself in the narrative.

Alex Akira says

I was quite captivated by this atmospheric historical fantasy that reveals the story of a modern Californian's mysterious time travels to late Edo Period Japan, where he meets and falls in love with a samurai lord. The author's compelling slice-of-life writing style drew me right into the story and lush descriptions of the two gorgeous men and Tokugawa Era Japan kept me reading well into the night. Steeped in a delicate, poignant fragility that is reminiscent of the airiness of tarashikomi paintings, I found myself almost holding my breath as the romantic proceedings played out.

College student Michael Holden's lucid dreams of Edo Period Japan compel him to paint an image of the beautiful samurai who haunts his sleep. After experiencing a series of dizzy spells, Michael faints and wakes to find himself in ancient Japan. His gaijin (foreign) appearance startles the locals and soon he is a prisoner of the samurai of his dreams, Lord Shinjirō Kaminishi. As the two men try to untangle the reason behind Michael's mysterious appearance they become devoted lovers. But what future can the two possibly have? Not only is Michael a gaijin, he returns to his own time sporadically. Is there any way the two lovers can be together, forever?

A fine mix of smart world-building, sensitivity, and sensuality make this magical "love across time" tale a

stimulating and informative read. The two leading characters transcend the ordinary because they are both charming and relatable. Exquisite Michael Holden is relatable because of his vulnerabilities. Despite being the only child of a socialite mother who set him up with a trust fund and left him to his own devices, he has low self-esteem and is essentially adrift in life. This purposelessness is what allows him to accept and then embrace his spontaneous travels through time; he hopes to find a reason for his life. Beautiful samurai lord Shinjir? holds the lives of his clansmen in his hands. He can't afford to be selfish, but he can be fair and just and displays those traits repeatedly throughout this story. I loved how Shinjir? does not hesitate to act on his attraction to Michael and his quiet acceptance of Japan's less than appetizing future that Michael begrudgingly reveals.

There is a wonderful balance and haunting quality to this story. For me it read a little like "Outlander" (the television series) with the events unfolding in ancient Japan. Told from Michael's point of view, the tale holds more substance than a dream while remaining somewhat ethereal, which only added to its time travel premise and its exotic flavor. The sex is sensual—more lovemaking than lust—steamy, and seductive with playful shows of aggression. The final chapters really ratcheted up the heat factor to "HOT" for me and I can't wait to read the next book in the series. I can't say anything more lest I create spoilers. Well I can say... "Loved it!" Highly recommended for all, but especially for those who like a good Asian culture male/male romance. Kimonos and fundoshi and hot springs...oh my!

Thank you, Jan Suzukawa, for creating this magically delicious "love for all time" saga.

"Captivating, Exotic, Sensual"

NOTE: This book was provided by DSP Publications for the purpose of a review on Rainbow Book Reviews.

Dale Lowry says

This was a well-written story with interesting characters and a plausible historical setting. Not having lived in mid-19th century Japan, I can't say whether everything in it is accurate, but what was presented not contradict my previous knowledge of Japanese history. The characters' understanding of sexuality was definitely in line with things I've read about Japan of that period, with homosexuality not understood as a distinct identity, but most people assumed to be bisexual or fluid. Some readers might be frustrated with the rigid older/younger, lover/beloved, dominant/submissive roles practiced within homosexual relationships in Japan of this era, and also within the main relationship of this book—but for every reader who doesn't like something, there's another reader who will find it a turn on.

The reader should probably go into this knowing that the main character, American Michael Holden, has never been attracted to men and doesn't have a gay identity. His attraction to Shinjaro Kaminishi is immediate and total. Readers who enjoy "gay for you" stories will like that part. Readers who prefer reading about gay-identified characters might be disappointed. However, Michael's attraction makes sense within 19th-century Japanese sexual mores, where a distinct gay identity wasn't part of the culture, but where power dynamics could be an important turn-on a various relationships regardless of gender.

Most of the book takes place in 19th-century Japan, and these are the parts I enjoyed the most. I struggled a little with the ending, which took place in modern times and seemed too brief a wrap up for the time travel

plot. I'm looking forward to reading the next book, where hopefully these questions will be explored in more detail.

Leslie says

Extremely disappointing. So many cultural, historical and language inaccuracies that I gave up without finishing, plus a plodding style and reliance on telling rather than showing. It's rare I feel cheated by a book but this one really disappointed me.

Maria E. says

This book deals with time-travel as well as distance travel. If you are a Korean drama fan, this book will remind you of "Rooftop Prince", "Queen In-Hyun's Man", "Faith", or any other Korean time-travel dramas that were so popular a few years ago. The only difference is that this story takes place mostly in Edo-period Japan instead of Korea, and the travelling is not only across time, but also across continents.

Michael was a college student, from Berkeley, California. He had previously studied Japanese history, culture, and the language. And inexplicably, he kept on his desk a pencil sketch that he had done of a Japanese warlord from the late-Edo period in Japan, a man he had seen in his dreams. While studying for his finals, he became dizzy and blacked out. When he awoke, he was in a completely different time and place - Japan in the Edo period- mid-1800's (1851, to be precise). He was taken prisoner by a group of samurai warriors, suspected of being an assassin, and taken to the presence of a warlord who looks exactly like the man he had drawn, the one from his dream. The warlord's name was Lord Shinjaro.

Initially, he was in a jail cell, but eventually, he became a guest of Lord Shinjaro who wanted to know about the future of Japan. Michael did not wish to tell him because that knowledge might change the course of history. But Lord Shinjaro never dropped the subject, until Michael finally reluctantly told him about Commodore Perry and the black ships who would arrive to Japan in two years' time, which would lead to the fall of the Shogunate and change the face of Japan. In the end, he needn't have worried about changing the course of history. This knowledge doesn't change history, but it does lead to a personal tragedy.

The premise of the story is very interesting, although there were a few loose ends, mainly why did Michael see the present-day Shinjaro in 1851 Japan? This was never again brought up in the story, so I'll assume this will be explained in a future sequel.

I have to give this warning, however:

- 1) There is some violence. Aside from some battles where some unnamed warriors get killed, there are also two gruesome acts of sepukku and beheadings of two main characters.
- 2) This is also a love story between the two men, and some of their sex scenes are a bit detailed.
- 3) The story contains the theme of reincarnation.

If any of these things bother you, then don't read this book.

I won't spoil the ending, but Michael does return to the future and goes to present-day Japan to search for

present-day Shinjaro. It was his love for Shinjaro that prompted him to give up his life in California and move to Japan. I can't say any more without spoiling it, so you'll have to read the book and find out what happens next.

If you like to read about ancient Japan, you will enjoy this book, as long as you keep in mind that this is not a classic like James Clavell's "Shogun". You won't learn very much from this book, but it will keep you entertained for a while.
