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Authenticity: A Real Novel (Honkaku shosetsu)

A true-life saga of a romance across barriers of class and family, and even beyond national boundaries, *Authenticity* is a retelling of Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* in the radically different setting of postwar Japan. It won the Yomiuri



As with Bronte, the author frames her story in multiple observers' voices. The first is that of Mizumura herself. When a young Japanese man named Yusuke appears out of nowhere to relate a compelling tale about Taro Azuma, whom she distinctly remembers from her childhood on Long Island as daughter of an overseas businessman, she sees her protected middle-class life abroad in a new light: "For years, I had considered our move from Japan to New York only as my individual fate, unrelated to the broader sweep of history. Of course, the reality was quite the opposite." Taro's life was dramatically shaped by the legacies of World War II in East Asia. An abandoned child of mixed Chinese origins, he struggles against prejudice in the lean postwar years to eventually become one of the wealthiest Japanese in America. While still in MacArthur's "democratized" Japan, however, the mysterious rich young man meets Yoko, the privileged daughter of an old aristocratic family. But when prying relations uncover Taro's secret background, the lovers are forced to hide their passions. Fumiko, a former maid to Yoko's family, allies Taro and contrives to help the two escape—or so she later confides to our narrator Yusuke.

Love triangles, family drama and international intrigue, characters who bear living witness to the dire puzzle of "dual histories"—

Authenticity presents both an enthralling love story and a playfully sophisticated appropriation of a well-loved novel in the guise of a fascinating portrait of postwar Japan.

*Japanese edition: Shinchosha

[JLPP Translation]

English

no image

Translator: Anne Sherif

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