

## Tokyo Ever After

Emiko Jean

Reviewed by: Elisabeth Suarez, 15

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Izumi Tanaka, a Japanese-American high school girl, has never felt like she fit in anywhere. In her predominantly white, northern California town, Mount Shasta, she definitely stands out. Despite her feelings of being different from others, she enjoys hanging out with her incredibly close friends and supportive single mom. She is super funny and quirky, but really cares for the people she loves. The only thing missing in her life is her father. After searching through her mother's things and using Google, she discovers the startling news that her dad is the prince of Japan!

Soon after her uncovering, she writes a letter to one of her father's friends. Word spreads of the newfound princess and talk circles to the press. Izumi is quickly invited to Japan to stay with the royal family for two weeks. But she is not quite cut out for being royalty. She struggles with the Imperial family's expectations. They hope she learns thousands of years of tradition and customs practically overnight. Not to mention, the language barrier is sometimes difficult and she deeply misses her life in California. At least she has a scowling but handsome bodyguard to keep her mind busy. Her spirits lessen as she realizes she was not "American" enough back home, but now she must prove she is "Japanese" enough with her dad. Can she handle the pressure of being a perfect princess?

*Tokyo Ever After* was very intriguing and charming. It included many parts of skillfully added humor that made Izumi a very loveable and fun character. Her quiriness and impulsiveness drove the book, making you want to turn each page to see what she will do next. The novel does an amazing job describing Japanese customs and the unique culture of Japan. Emiko Jean's description of the nation's beauty really made me want to visit Japan someday. The book also addressed the struggle of growing up in a town where you are a minority, the awkwardness of not being raised within your culture, and the elitism of royalty.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book! The only criticism I have is that the romance felt a bit off. Akio and Izumi don't have much in common and their love seemed rushed at times. He loved her personality very much, but Izumi really only talked about his looks. I also would have liked Izumi and her father's relationship to be developed more. I wish she could have bonded with her family in Japan more. But, in all, *Tokyo Ever After* was a light-hearted novel where the main character is validating, in the sense that she is not perfect and wonderfully ordinary. The ending was well done, with Izumi focusing on what she wanted and her personal growth. I recommend this book for ages fourteen and up.

### Recommended Titles:

American Royals by Katharine McGee

The Princess Diaries by Meg Cabot

A Pho Love Story by Loan Le

Crazy Rich Asians by Kevin Kwan

To All the Boys I've Loved Before by Jenny Han