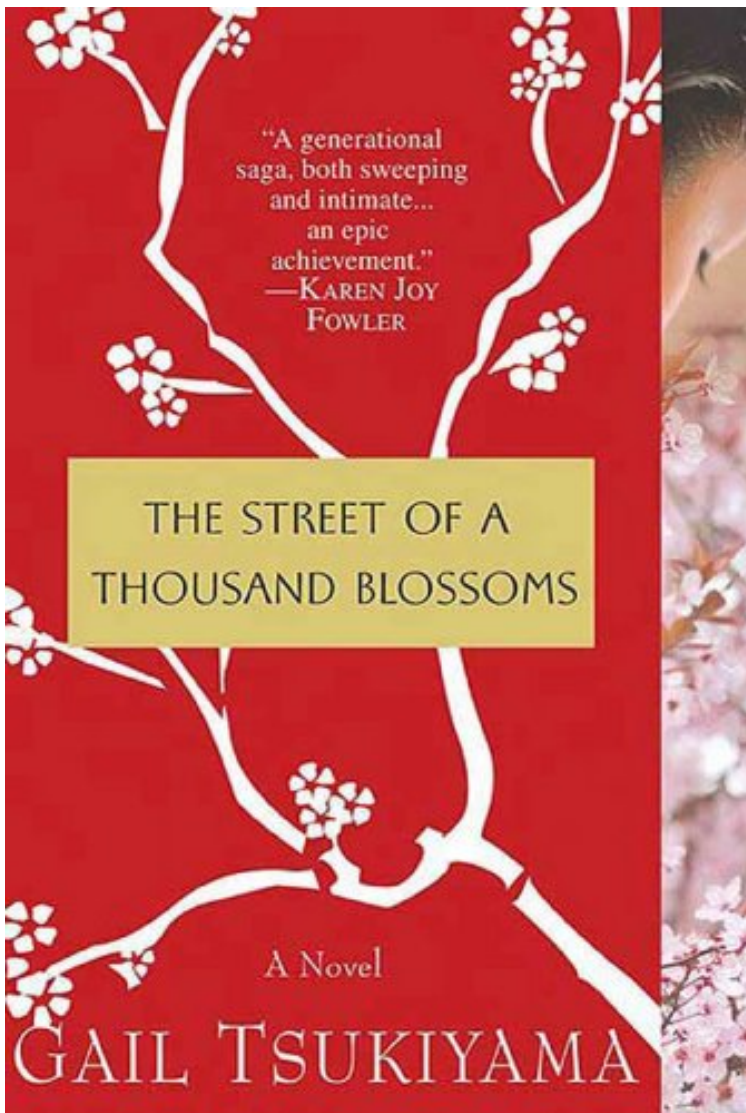


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The Street of a Thousand Blossoms: A Novel



Par Gail Tsukiyama
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteur"Just remember," Yoshio said quietly to his grandsons. "Every day of your lives, you must always be sure what you're fighting for."It is Tokyo in 1939. On the Street of a Thousand Blossoms, two orphaned brothers are growing up with their loving grandparents, who inspire them to dream of a future firmly rooted in tradition. The older boy, Hiroshi, shows unusual skill at the national obsession of sumo wrestling, while Kenji is fascinated by the art of creating hard-carved masks for actors in the Noh theater.Across town, a renowned sumo master, Sho Tanaka, lives with his wife and their two young daughters: the delicate, daydreaming Aki and her independent sister, Haru. Life seems full of promise as Kenji begins an informal apprenticeship with the most famous mask-maker in Japan and Hiroshi receives a coveted invitation to train with Tanaka. But then Pearl Harbor changes everything. As the ripples of war

spread to both families' quiet neighborhoods, all of the generations must put their dreams on hold---and then find their way in a new Japan. In an exquisitely moving story that spans almost thirty years, Gail Tsukiyama draws us irresistibly into the world of the brothers and the women who love them. It is a world of tradition and change, of heartbreaking loss and surprising hope, and of the impact of events beyond their control on ordinary, decent men and women. Above all, *The Street of a Thousand Blossoms* is a masterpiece about love and family from a glorious storyteller at the height of her powers. From Publishers Weekly

In her ambitious sixth novel (*Dreaming Water; The Samurai's Garden*), Tsukiyama tackles life in Japan before, during and after WWII. The story follows brothers Hiroshi and Kenji Matsumoto through the devastation of war and the hardships of postwar reconstruction. Orphaned when their parents were killed in a boating accident, the boys are raised by their grandparents in Tokyo. In 1939, Hiroshi is 11 and dreams of becoming a sumo champion, and soon Kenji will discover his own passion, to become a master maker of Noh masks. Their grandparents,

Yoshio and Fumiko Wada, are vividly rendered; the war years and early postwar years, centered in their home on the street of the novel's title, are powerfully portrayed. Hiroshi and Kenji reach pinnacles of success in their chosen fields as well as in love, and while Tsukiyama's close attention to historical and geographical detail enriches the narrative, she isn't as successful when describing Hiroshi's wrestling career; the matches all begin to blur together. The lingering effects of war, on the other hand, are clear, and these, combined with a nation's search for pride and hope after surrender comprise the novel's oversized heart. (Sept.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Audiofile

A true coming-of-age story, *THE STREET OF A THOUSAND BLOSSOMS* follows Hiroshi and Kenji Matsumoto, orphaned brothers in the tumultuous period before, during, and after WWII in Japan. As the boys face hunger, cruelty, and the death of friends, their innocence is lost--replaced with their honor and pride as grown men. Through the eyes of the boys, Japan is destroyed and rebuilt. Stephen Park narrates with grace, smoothly delivering the many Japanese names and dialogue. While not overtly acting, he gives life to each character, capturing strong Hiroshi and artistic Kenji. A cast of colorful secondary characters gives depth to the novel, creating a rich portrayal of life in mid-century Japan. J.G.K. AudioFile 2008, Portland, Maine-- Copyright AudioFile, Portland, Maine