

Beasts head for home: a novel

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Abe, Kobo (1924-1993),

author.

https://id.oclc.org/worldcat/entity /E39PBJkhKMvYyDygwYx9qFBF8C

Historical fiction Fiction. History. Psychological fiction. Historical fiction. Psychological fiction.

Monografía

"Set in Manchuria in the aftermath of the Asian Pacific War. The central character is Kuki Kyuzo, whose settler parents relocated from Japan to the Manchurian puppet-state as the Japanese empire expanded. Kyuzo's father, a factory technician, dies shortly after he is born. In the course of Japan's defeat and the Soviet Union's occupation of Manchuria, Kyuzo's mother is seriously wounded, forcing him to remain behind with her rather than evacuate with the other Japanese citizens. Her subsequent death leaves Kyuzo alone in the abandoned Japanese settlement, and he is employed as a houseboy by Alexandrov, an officer in the Soviet army. Approximately two years after the end of hostilities, Kyuzo decides to return to Japan. Providing money, a train ticket, and official travel documents, Alexandrov bids Kyuzo farewell. On the train Kyuzo meets Ko, who appears to be a fellow Japanese, much to Kyuzo's relief. The train is attacked, but Kyuzo and Ko manage to escape, fleeing by foot across the harsh Manchurian plains. Kyuzo gradually comes to realize that Ko is in possession of stolen heroin and is being pursued by the Chinese Communists, who are battling the Nationalist forces for control of the mainland. Finally arriving at a city, Kyuzo is betrayed by Ko, who beats him and steals his identity papers and travel documents. Utterly destitute, Kyuzo makes his way to a Japanese repatriation center. The difficulty is that Kyuzo lacks any documents to prove that he is Japanese. Exposure to the elements has left him deeply sunburned, which further casts doubt on his Japanese identity. He wanders the city and meets another Japanese named Okura, who takes an unusual interest in Kyuzo's relationship with Ko"--

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Título uniforme: Kemonotachi wa kokyo mezasu. English

Título: Beasts head for home a novel Abe Kobo; translated by Richard F. Calichman

Editorial: New York Columbia University Press [2017]

Descripción física: 1 online resource (xxvi, 191 pages)

Mención de serie: Weatherhead books on Asia

Nota general: Translated from the Japanese First published in Japanese as Kemonotachi wa kokyo mezasu

Contenido: Frontmatter -- Contents -- Introduction -- Chapter 1. The Rusted Tracks -- Chapter 2. The Flag -- Chapter 3. The Trap -- Chapter 4. Doors

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ISBN: 9780231544665 electronic book) 0231544669 electronic book) 9780231177054 paperback;) acid-free paper) 0231177054 paperback;) acid-free paper) 9780231177047 hardcover;) alkaline paper)

Materia: Japanese fiction Identity (Psychology)- Fiction Roman japonais Identité (Psychologie)- Romans, nouvelles, etc LITERARY COLLECTIONS- Asian- Japanese. Identity (Psychology) Japanese fiction.

Materia Geográfica: Manchuria (China)- History- 1945- Fiction China- Manchuria.

Autores: Calichman, Richard, translator. https://id.oclc.org/worldcat/entity/E39PCjJKJ4qmgwfDKYQ7TYDwRX

Enlace a formato físico adicional: Print version Abe, Kobo, 1924-1993. Beasts head for home. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017 9780231177047 (DLC) 2016041666

Punto acceso adicional serie-Título: Weatherhead books on Asia

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