



The Favorites: A Novel

Mary Yukari Waters

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When Mary Yukari Waters's short-story collection, *The Laws of Evening*, was published, Maureen Corrigan of National Public Radio's *Fresh Air* said that "Waters's empathic imagination is so vivid she makes her reader feel like a silent witness to the small acts of cruelty and surrender that the history books can't record." In her exquisite first novel, Waters explores the complex relationships among three generations of women bound by a painful family history and a culture in which custom dictates behavior.

Fourteen-year-old Sarah Rexford, half-Japanese and half-American, feels like an outsider when she visits her family in Japan. She quickly learns that in traditional Kyoto, personal boundaries are firmly drawn and actions are not always what they appear. Sarah learns of a family secret -- an interfamily adoption arranged in the throes of World War II. Her grandmother gave up one of her daughters to the matriarch of the family, and the two families have coexisted quietly, living on the same lane. While this arrangement is never discussed, it looms over the two households. In this carefully articulated world, where every gesture and look has meaning, Sarah must learn the rules by which her mother, aunts, and grandmother live.

Delicately balancing drama and restraint, Waters captures these women -- their deep passions and tumultuous histories -- in this tender and moving novel about the power and beauty of mother-daughter relationships.

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