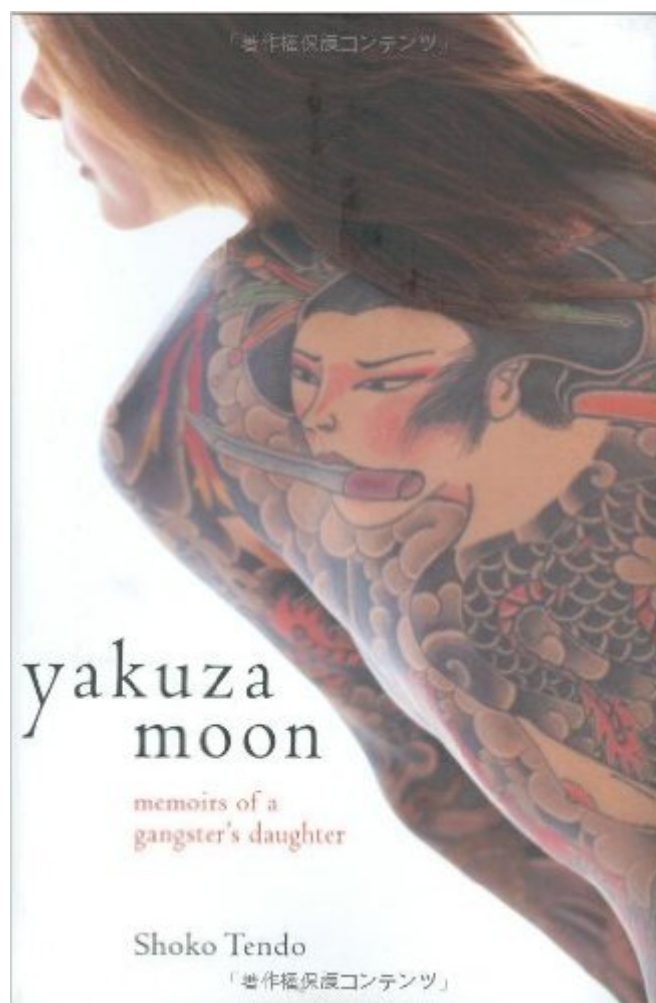


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Yakuza Moon: Memoirs Of A Gangster's Daughter



Synopsis

Yakuza Moon is the shocking, yet intensely moving memoir of 37-year-old Shoko Tendo, who grew up the daughter of a yakuza boss. Tendo lived her life in luxury until the age of six, when her father was sent to prison and her family fell into terrible debt. Bullied by classmates and terrorized at home by a father who became a drunken, violent monster after his release from prison, Tendo rebelled. A regular visitor to nightclubs at the age of 12, she soon became a drug addict and a member of a girl gang. At 15 she was sentenced to eight months in a juvenile detention center. Adulthood brought big bucks and glamour when Tendo started working as a bar hostess during Japan's booming bubble economy of the nineteen-eighties. But among her many rich and loyal patrons there were also abusive clients, one of whom beat her so badly that her face was left permanently scarred. When her mother died, Tendo plunged into such a deep depression that she tried to commit suicide twice. Tendo takes us through the bad times with warmth and candor, and gives a moving and inspiring account of how she overcame a lifetime of discrimination and hardship. Getting tattooed, from the base of her neck to the tips of her toes, with a design centered on a geisha with a dagger in her mouth, was an act that empowered her to start making changes in her life. She quit her job as a hostess. On her last day at the bar she looked up at the full moon, a sight she never forgot. The moon became a symbol of her struggle to become whole, and the title of the book she wrote as an epitaph for herself and her family.

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Customer Reviews

A great read, was hard to put down once I got started. Not at all the type of life you would expect

from a family that was once very powerful. Her childhood bullying, drug use during her teen years, and horrible relationships with men in the past serve as a warning that just because a life style may appear to be glamorous does not mean that it is. Told with shocking truth, Shoko Tendo's memoir is a great read.

My father used to go to Japan on business all the time in the 1980's. He marvelled at how little crime there was compared to New York. But no country is truly crime-free. Even in Japan, there were troubled kids who got in trouble with the police. This book is about that; what happens to Japanese kids from dysfunctional families. *Yakuza Moon* opened my eyes to a whole lot of things I never knew about Japan. The Yakuza aren't folk heroes the way the Italian Mafia are in their neighborhoods. Everyone, including neighbors, teachers, and classmates, despised her father. She's a pariah in her neighborhood, beaten by her father at home, and when her father loses the house (and his standing in the criminal underworld) there's nowhere for her to go. She can't go to school, and has no choice but to work in sleazy bars. The ending is a happy one, fortunately. She does have a career, has a child, tattoos herself (as a way of gaining control of her body) and makes her peace with life. Despite having no education, she does a pretty good job writing this book.

This was supposed to be a weekend business trip filler. It ended up just a 4 hour plane ride and a few more hours in the hotel. I gave it 4 stars though because I couldn't put the book down. But I am a voyeur and this book really delivers on the exhibitionism. This is really just a Jerry Springer story with a happy ending. However, I am a Japanophile, so this book held my interest more than the same story about a girl from say, Hamilton, Ohio would have. I met several girls like the author while living in Japan and I can say the story does ring very true. This is a great, fast read if you are into Japanese culture, otherwise you may find it a bit maudlin.

I absolutely love this book! As a lover of Japanese culture, especially the 'forbidden world,' this book provided insight of what a life was like for a gangster's family. This book isn't about what a life is like for a yakuza... a lot of people mistake that. This is about a woman's life as a yakuza's daughter (as the title states), which was just as interesting to me. You can tell how much the yakuza lifestyle has affected Shoko's family and her own lifestyle. You can see how much her father's lifestyle haunted her in various ways. It's crazy how our families can cause create our path in life - at first, that is. Then you can see how Shoko overcomes her obstacles and created her own path. The way this was written was very straight-forward and raw. It was incredibly refreshing. Actually, I'm going to read

this book again today!

2.5 I think something, literally, got lost in translation. I think the disconnect was just a matter of it being translated from Japanese to English, and perhaps Japanese culture. The writing was at times hard to follow and sometimes down right didn't make sense. For instance, at one point, she says her father was nice, then a few pages later she tells us how he abused and mistreated her. There were also several times where she didn't give enough information, thereby making the story quite confusing. One particular time, she talked about having a miscarriage but went on to abort. That doesn't make sense. If you are miscarrying, you don't need an abortion. The book was interesting, it just left a lot out. At one point she mentioned how close she was to her mom and how close her sister was to her dad. At no point in the story was that ever fleshed out. It came as a complete surprise. There were giant gaps, like the eight-ish months she spent in the school for wayward girls. What happened there? Also, why did a giant tattoo change her life? What about the hostess jobs? I could go on but I'll end with saying it was hard to keep up and follow along with. I appreciate her sharing her story with us. And I'm glad to see she got her life together.

It's like reading the journal of a precocious, difficult teenager, with a bit of sensational Yakuza culture thrown in. It could easily go cheesy, but author is a sweet girl so I never felt she was a lost cause. It's definitely sensational, lots of sex and drugs. It was a great read on a plane flight, quick and entertaining. It's like reading People magazine, I don't really remember what I read but it entertained me in the interim.

This is a great read for anyone who wants to learn more about the families of Yakuza members. Especially if they want to learn more about the women who lived with it. This gives a great insight to a world most people don't think about but should.

I was at first expecting an inside view on Japanese crime and it's hold on Japan, but I found neither. I did find however a very raw story of someone's life, their struggle with addiction, their lives ups and down, and relationships that were far from normal. Tho I did not agree with Shoko's decision of leaving her supportive husband for shallow reasons, but that isn't my place to judge. The book is good, straight forward, and doesn't contain boring fluff. You will more than likely finish it in a day if you read straight through but it is a well spent day.

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