

STAFF PICK

A MAN

NOVEL BY KEIICHIRO HIRANO

The story begins with the death of a man named Daisuke Taniguchi. After his wife tells his estranged family the news, she discovers that the man she was married to is not their son. Her late husband was using Daisuke's name, his identity, his past, his stories, his everything. Although questioning herself whether this all matters now, she seeks the help of a lawyer to find out about the person to whom she was married. Following his investigation to uncover the truth, readers find out who this dead man really was, why he had to or wanted to change his identity, and whether the man he exchanged his identity with still exists. Throughout the book, I kept asking myself what it means to live someone else's life. Would it improve one's life? Would it be possible to erase your past and live as a completely new person? In what circumstances would a person want to change one's identity? What if the person you are with was using someone else's identity? Can you still love this

person? There is one scene where the lawyer is at a bar talking to the bartender whom he met for the first time. Almost impulsively, he introduces himself as Daisuke. He uses Daisuke's stories to talk about himself. Feeling a little guilty, he gets a kick out of it. Is that because he has a past or identity that he does not want to share?

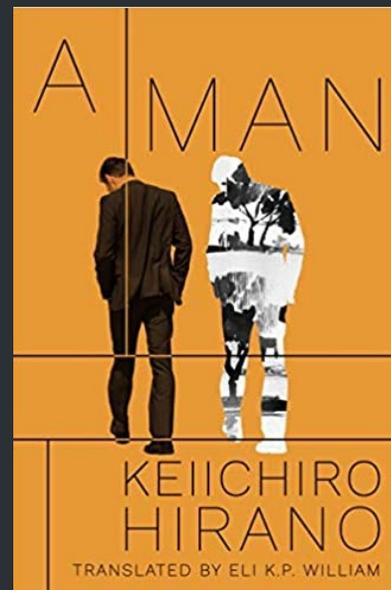
A Man is a mystery with suspense, drama, family relationships, and love and examines the complicated aspects of real-life issues surrounding *zainichi* (ethnic Koreans living in Japan), *koseki* (Japanese family registry) and identity theft. It also touches upon Kanto Massacre (mass murder committed against Korean residents after the 1923 Great Kanto earthquake) and the Murder of James Bulger Case (1993). As such, it challenges its readers to reflect upon their own understanding of prejudice and discrimination against how we come to address "identity".

— Ayumi, Library Manager
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ABOUT AUTHOR

Keiichiro Hirano (平野 啓一郎) is an award-winning and bestselling novelist whose debut novel, *The Eclipse*, won the prestigious Akutagawa Prize in 1998, when he was a twenty-three-year-old university student. A cultural envoy to Paris appointed by Japan's Ministry of Cultural Affairs, he has given lectures throughout Europe. Widely read in France, China, Korea, Taiwan, Italy, and Egypt, Hirano is also the author of *At the End of the Matinee*, a runaway bestseller in Japan, among many other books. His short fiction has appeared in *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Japanese Literature*. *A Man*, winner of Japan's Yomiuri Prize for Literature, is the first of Hirano's novels to be translated into English.

— from Publisher



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