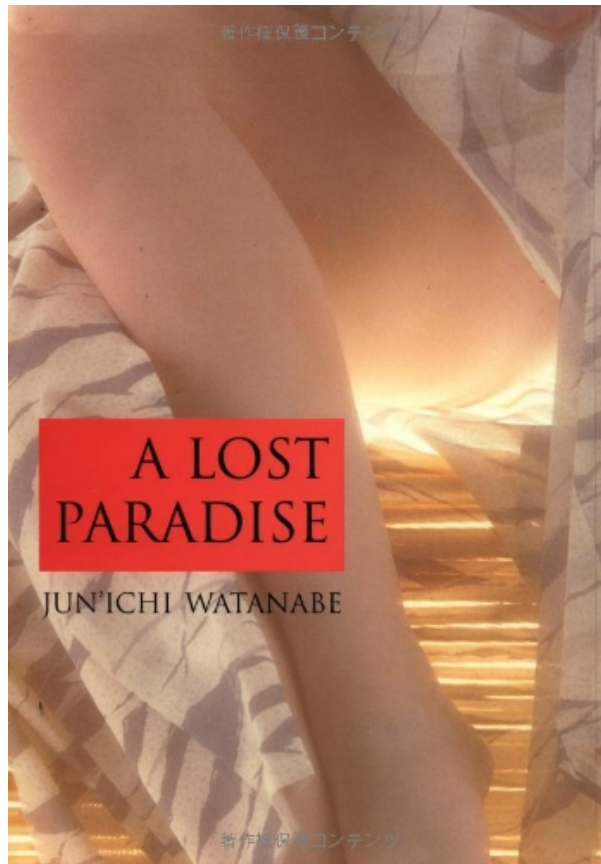
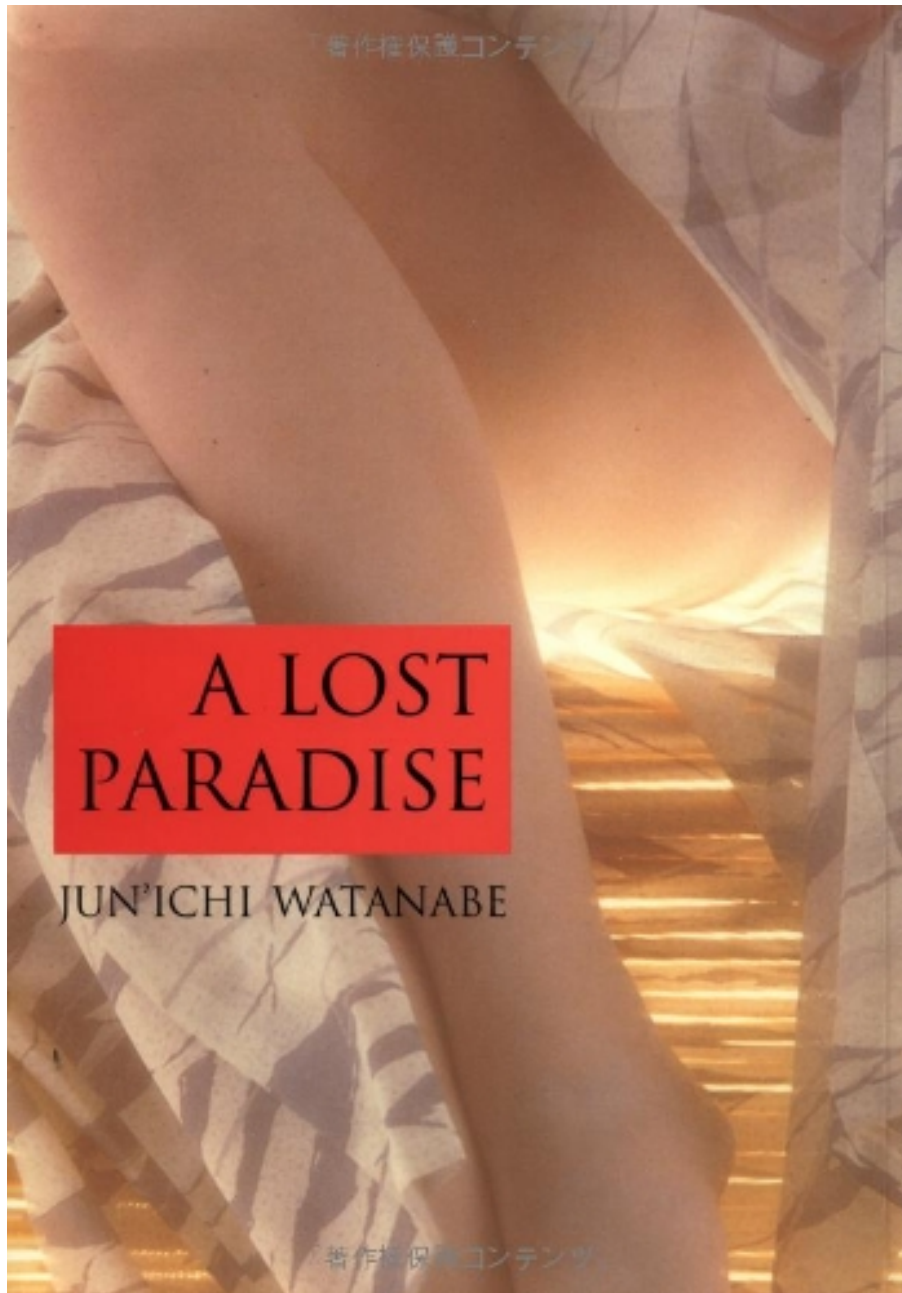


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From Publishers Weekly

There is a story, perhaps an urban legend, of a little girl who, when presented with a baby chick, is so thrilled that in a fit of ecstasy she bites off its head. In Watanabe's excruciatingly beautiful and scary romance, protagonists Kuki and Rinko are enthralled by the true story of a love-maddened woman who strangles her lover, then mutilates him, carrying his severed sexual parts next to her own. They are also fascinated by the story of a couple who at the height of a torrid love affair hang themselves. In earlier centuries, such Japanese love suicides, called *shin ju*, were considered acts of great beauty and nobility. However, this is the 20th century and acts of great beauty no longer fit into everyday life. Kuki, a 55-year-old publishing executive, is stuck in a dead-end job and a boring marriage when he meets Rinko, a childless 37-year-old calligrapher, unhappy and sexually unfulfilled in her marriage to a professor of medicine. Kuki intuitively senses the passionate woman behind Rinko's demure facade and, as the affair develops, the pair's white-hot lovemaking becomes ever more daring and experimental. Their outside lives suffer: Kuki is demoted to an even more demeaning position in his company, while Rinko's family disowns her. Watanabe's use of sight, sound, taste, touch and smell makes the sexual obsession of the lovers a personal, sensuous thing. Readers taste the saké and delicate meals, and feel the velvet texture of cherry blossoms. The couple's freewheeling passion is contrasted with the rigidity of Japanese society, where everyone has a role to play. As their ardent and inflamed lovemaking isolates them even more, the affair spirals out of control, speeding toward an inevitable yet still shocking conclusion. This is a delicate, daring, sexual, sensual reading experience. (Aug.) FYI: A Lost Paradise has sold 2.5 million copies in Japan.

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From Kirkus Reviews

This very popular 1997 Japanese novel, a bestseller that also spawned a successful television series and feature film, is a relentlessly detailed chronicle of the *folie d'amour* that consumes a middle-aged publishing executive and a younger woman, both unhappily married to other spouses, each devoted to histories and images of others before them who gave all for love. Watanabe traces with unerring precision the ways in which his principals' defining traits—Kuki's self-conscious masculinity and habit of command; his lover Rinko's passivity and yearning for some grand passion that will inflame and ennoble her—drive them irreversibly toward a harrowing, inevitable conclusion. A grownup love story and then some, powered by two brilliant characterizations and some unusually acute psychological analysis -- Copyright © 2000 Kirkus

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A steamy tale of sexual obsession and an all-or-nothing love, this sensuous novel contrasts defiantly freewheeling passions against the rigidity of society and the constraints on fulfillment in life and love.

- Sales Rank: #1200040 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Kodansha International (JPN)
- Published on: 2000-08
- Original language: Japanese
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 1.46" h x 6.42" w x 9.23" l,
- Binding: Hardcover
- 376 pages

## Features

- Used Book in Good Condition

## From Publishers Weekly

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"The novel, in short, is a scorcher.... its sex scenes are imaginative and various...." -- Washington Post Book World

#### Most helpful customer reviews

9 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

A look at the Japanese view of love

By Therese C. Vidal

I knew the ending of this book before I bought it, but I still wanted to find out why I had heard so much about it, so I bought it. It is a beautiful story of middle aged love and how two people not from my own culture handle the situation. The story deals with eroticism, love, seduction, and the subsequent quilt of cheating on a spouse. I didn't agree with how the protagonists dealt with their situation but Watanabe delves into their minds and souls so completely that their fate is understandable. The author made me feel as if I was there with them and inside their heads as they enjoyed each and every experience they shared, all the way to the end.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Read it, it will awaken you to life.

By Saleem Gul

Mr. Watanabe has thrown paradise at us in the form of a book. "A Lost Paradise" is a wonderful story of love, passion and obsession. It's well written and well crafted and flows like the waves of a calm ocean gently awaking emotions each time they caress the shore. Mr. Watanabe presents us with a story of Kiko and Rinko who are two souls lucky enough to find that elusive "true love" in each other, only to realize all too quickly its frailty. The perspective of love presented is truly eastern in flavor and that makes it that much more endearing and enticing and exciting. A story like this places itself snugly with the likes of Shirin & Farhad, Zulekha and her lover, Jahangir and Anarkali.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

A book you will never forget

By C. Lee

The other commenter that said the book is about porn didn't give enough credit to the author. He created magnificent scenes and imagery with his prose. Yes, there was a lot of lovemaking described in detail in it but it was all about the love the two character shared. This book has haunted me since I was an undergrad. Please read it with an open mind.

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