



FLATIRON
BOOKS

Tokyo Ever After Reading Group Guide

Welcome to the Reading Group Guide for *Tokyo Ever After*. Please note: In order to provide reading groups with the most informed and thought-provoking questions possible, it is necessary to reveal important aspects of the plot of this novel—as well as the ending. If you have not finished reading *Tokyo Ever After*, we respectfully suggest that you may want to wait before reviewing this guide.

1. In *Tokyo Ever After*, Izumi goes by several names, including Izumi, Izzy, Zoom Zoom, Princess, and Radish. What do each of these names say about different parts of her identity? About her relationships?
2. When Izumi's mom asks her if she's missing something not having a father, Izumi thinks, "Yes. I miss having a dad. Even more, I miss having a past...I want to understand myself. I want to put my hands in the earth and pull up roots." What does learning about her father really mean for Izumi? What connection is she looking for?
3. "I can't tell [my mom that] when people ask me about my story—who I am, where I come from—I tell it like it's an apology. *No, I don't speak Japanese. No, I've never been to Japan. No, I don't like sushi.* It's always clear in their disappointed gazes. I am not enough." Why is Izumi "not enough"? What does this say about expectations others may put on her, a Japanese American girl? In what ways does Izumi subvert those expectations?
4. When Izumi first confronted her mother about her father, she felt betrayed. How does meeting her father and being swept up in royal life in Japan change the way Izumi understands her mother's decisions?
5. "[Akio and I] were born to play certain roles. Our destinies were predetermined." How do Akio and Izumi each approach the parts they're meant to play? How do their different upbringings affect the way they view these expectations?
6. The media also plays a role in royal life. In what ways do the tabloids reflect and sway public opinion? Are they a necessary evil of living in the spotlight? Why or why not?
7. Izumi asks Noora, "Don't you ever feel like you don't belong anywhere? Like you're two discordant halves living in one body?" Her best friend responds, "We all have to figure out on our own who we are and where we fit in." How, if at all, does Izumi figure it out?
8. What does it mean for Izumi to take control of her narrative in the Japanese press? To win over everyone not by changing who she is but by unequivocally being herself?
9. When Izumi's father comes to California, he says, "You spent weeks in Japan learning where I am from. Now, I will learn where you are from." What does it mean for him to chase Izumi and her mother instead, and in what ways does this role reversal play out?

10. Caught between worlds, Izumi has always wanted to feel like she belongs. What is the significance of her father telling her, “You belong with me”? How does this change our understanding of belonging in the story?
11. At the end of *Tokyo Ever After*, we’re left with questions about Izumi’s future as a princess and with Akio. What do you think happens next? Will you read the sequel?