

# Modern Japanese Stories.pdf/55



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fell into a drunken sleep. This was Kanako's first experience of such behaviour and she felt that in a flash she had been confronted with the true nature of men.

Some time after this incident the young couple moved into a little rented house not far from the parents' home. Wasao, who would normally have objected strongly to the change, was in no position to do so. For on a certain evening while Kanako was pouring saké for him he had made an objectionable suggestion that had utterly infuriated her.

His wife had gone out that evening to the local cinema. She had taken along the youngest daughter, but Yoshiko had stayed behind. The elder girl's mental condition had been growing steadily worse and when the time came for the cherry-blossoms she had lapsed into real lunacy. After the worst period had passed, they found that her nature had completely changed. The girl, who had formerly suffered from manic frenzy, now became extremely subdued. Occasionally she fell into fits of fearful depression, but most of the time she was reasonably calm. The genesis of Yoshiko's disorder appeared to lie in her obsession with her beloved Chōjirō. One night she had jumped out of bed, crying that Chōjirō was passing outside the window, and she had tried to rush into the street. Evidently she had been

aroused by the sound of a group of factory-girls walking by after a visit to the cinema; this had in some way stirred up images of the memorable occasion when she had seized Chōjirō by the hand. Wasao was well aware that his daughter's tendency to madness was shared by his wife, who loved him so frenziedly, and he felt that he was imprisoned by bonds of cause and effect from which he could never escape. He sighed deeply and took another sip of saké. Until that year Wasao had always observed the strictest economy. He never made any objections, however, when his wife used to dress up and go out shopping. She used to get terribly lonely when he left for work and sometimes she could not bear to stay in the house. His wife really adored him. Even



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