



The Typhoon Lover

By Sujata Massey
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Introduction

After a party for her thirtieth birthday, antiques dealer and part-time sleuth Rei Shimura answers a mysterious invitation to a job interview. The task is to search for and authenticate an ancient Middle Eastern pitcher that disappeared from Iraq's national museum. The suspect: Takeo Kayama, a wealthy Japanese collector with whom Rei was once desperately in love. When a typhoon hits Tokyo, Rei finds herself trapped with the object of her investigation, where she discovers that much more than an ancient antiquity is at risk.

Questions for Discussion

1. How would you describe Rei's character? In what ways does the first-person narration in *The Typhoon Lover* affect your feelings about Rei Shimura? Does your opinion of Rei change over the course of the book?
2. Rei and Hugh were supposed to get married; however, we learn that they canceled their wedding and are no longer engaged, though still living together. What are Rei's feelings about Hugh? What are her feelings about marriage? Why do you think they canceled their wedding?
3. Hugh pays for the bulk of his and Rei's expenses. How does Rei feel about this? Rei's new assignment does not pay any money. Why does she accept the job offer in Japan? Why does she ask Hugh not to come with her?
4. Hugh throws a wild party for Rei's 30th birthday. What significant events occur that night, both personally and professionally for Rei?
5. After Rei's party, Angus, Hugh's rock star brother, and his friends get into a street brawl and are arrested. When the charges against them are mysteriously dropped, what does this tell Rei about the assignment she is thinking of accepting? Is she comfortable with this? What other suspicious signs does Rei discover that suggest spying from her potential new employer?
6. Rei is sent to Japan to investigate her old lover, Takeo Kayama, who is suspected of smuggling antiquities. What is Rei's reaction the first time she sees Takeo? How does the news that he is engaged affect her judgment about his guilt? How does Takeo receive Rei?
7. How does the relationship between Rei and Michael, Rei's employer, change over the course of the assignment? Do you think Rei will continue to work for Michael in the future?
8. Rei uses her Aunt Norie to gain access to Takeo. Who else does Rei use in order to get what she needs? Is Rei resourceful or selfish in these acts? Why?
9. Even though she is investigating Takeo's involvement in art smuggling and has a serious boyfriend back home, Rei ends up sleeping with Takeo. Why? What does this act set in motion? How much is Rei responsible for what happens next?
10. How does Rei gain the trust of Sakurai, a Kyushu potter and a Japanese "living treasure?" What information does Rei learn from Sakurai that helps her solve the mystery?
11. Rei takes dangerous chances with her life, including nearly drowning during the typhoon and facing down criminals. She is also impulsive in her personal life. Where is Rei braver—in her professional or personal life?

About the Author

Award-winning writer Sujata Massey is the author of nine novels featuring Rei Shimura. She was a former reporter for the *Baltimore Evening Sun*, and she spent several years living and working in Japan. She lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota.