

# The Briefcase - Hiromi Kawakami

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Tsukiko, thirty-eight, works in an office and lives alone. One night, she happens to meet one of her former high school teachers, Sensei in a local bar. Tsukiko had only ever called him Sensei (Teacher). He is thirty years her senior, retired, and presumably a widower. Their relationship traced by Kawakami's gentle hints at the changing seasons develops from a perfunctory acknowledgment of each other as they eat and drink alone at the bar, to an enjoyable sense of companionship, and finally into a deeply sentimental love affair. As Tsukiko and Sensei grow to know and love one another, times passing comes across through the seasons and the food and beverages they consume together. From warm sake to chilled beer, from the buds on the trees to the blooming of the cherry blossoms, the reader is enveloped by a keen sense of pathos and both characters' keen loneliness. Author: Kawakami, Hiromi Publisher: Counterpoint

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