

SYNOPSIS

Memoirs of A Geisha is about a poor nine-year-old child named Chiyo who came from a poor fishing village, Yoroido. She had a happy life with her father, mother, and Satsu her older sister. Chiyo's mother was very ill and later died of bone cancer. Her father could not cope with the upbringing of the two children on his own. So they were sent away to Mr. Tanaka Ichiro; they both believed that Mr. Tanaka Ichiro would adopt them. In fact, these girls were driven to Kyoto where they were separated and each took a different way. Chiyo was sold to the *Geisha's* house of Gion in Kyoto, and her older sister, Satsu was sold into prostitution.

In the *okiya*, Chiyo had to serve as a maid for some time before becoming a *Geisha*. Meanwhile there was one main *Geisha* in the *okiya*, Hatsumomo, renowned for her beauty in the district of Gion had considered Chiyo, and later, another well-known *Geisha*, Mameha as her rival. In the *okiya*, she faced bad treatments from "Mother," Granny," and Hatsumomo. Hatsumomo treated Chiyo and Pumpkin, another girl who also was trained as a *Geisha* cruelly. Even as a little girl, Chiyo was very beautiful with her natural grey-blue eyes instead of the usual brown. It made Hatsumomo jealous and caused Hatsumomo tricks on Chiyo that brought numerous troubles and cause her a lot of debt in the *okiya*.

Three events in Chiyo's childhood were the most significance. First, when Chiyo and Satsu, her older sister intended to run away from their respective place but Chiyo failed to escape from the *okiya*; while Satsu succeeded escaping away from her place. Unfortunately, Chiyo was prevented from leaving and this caused

her deepen miseries in her situation. Satsu had left her without any hope of ever returning the *okiya*. The second event, the meeting between Chiyo and a man known as “The Chairman” had eventually determine the course of her whole life. Her ensuing attachment to this man affected everything about her life from that point on: her dreams, ambitions, behaviour, thoughts, and everything.

The third that might be the most important event was the decision of the famous Mameha to take Chiyo under her wing and guided in the ways of the *Geisha*. At the time, Chiyo believed this to be part of Mameha’s own plan to annoy and frustrate Hatsumomo who took Pumpkin to be her “younger sister.” But, Mameha was appointed by the Chairman to train her as a *Geisha*. Then, the story followed a large part of Mameha and Chiyo’s endeavours as they tried to establish Chiyo as a successful *Geisha*. Part of the transformation was that Chiyo took a different name, Sayuri.

Sayuri quickly discovered exactly what she wanted and how she believed she could get. Soon Sayuri also met all the right people and came to be one of the most popular *Geishas* in Kyoto – the evidence was shown by the highest price of her *mizuage* or virginity. This was auctioned off to the highest bidder who would paid an expensive sum. Though a *Geisha’s* duty was mainly serving and tantalizing men, love was ridiculed as a waste of time and money.

Sayuri’s interaction with Nobu Toshikazu, Dr. Crab, the General and the Chairman had led her to be a successful *Geisha*. But, Sayuri practically ignored the help and care she received time after time from Nobu Toshikazu. Because her heart and thought were only for the Chairman. When finally Sayuri had resigned

from the fact that Nobu was her destiny and not the Chairman, her fortune took yet another change. But as World War II erupted and the *Geisha* houses were forced to close, Sayuri with a little money and even less food might reinvent herself all over again to find a rare kind of freedom on her own terms.

In the end of the story, after the war had finished, Sayuri returned to her life as a *Geisha* and found her true happiness. The Chairman became her *danna* and they immigrated to New York.