



NEKOMONOGATARI (WHITE): Cat Tale

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After months since her last time turning into Black Hanekawa, Hanekawa finds a new oddity problem in the form of a white tiger that burns down buildings she had slept in the night before. The tiger is an oddity Hanekawa accidentally produced herself after years of domestic abuse that kept her from having her own room.

NEKOMONOGATARI (WHITE): Cat Tale Details

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From Reader Review NEKOMONOGATARI (WHITE): Cat Tale for online ebook

Cuong T. Tran says

What a good story :'(

Brandon says

The "Second Season" of the Monogatari Series begins with a novel told from the perspective of Tsubasa Hanekawa, going far enough even to push Araragi out of the majority of the novel's action, having him, presumably, dealing with the events of the following novel of this series, before jumping back in at the novel's climax.

Similar to the Araragi-perspective novels, this one spends a decent chunk of the overall page count dilly-dallying without quite getting into the actual supernatural goings-on. But where Araragi eats up pages with his banter, Hanekawa treats the book as more of a serious "I novel," as in classic Japanese literature. That is, Hanekawa tells us first-hand just how fucking depressed she is. And, furthermore, in case we couldn't quite read between all the lines, Senjougahara pops up to make it even clearer. Actually, it is somewhat bothersome that Senjougahara has to keep spelling everything out for us in this book, but at least we have the excuse that Hanekawa can't quite see the forest for the trees. The prime example is when Hanekawa tries making a meal for Senjougahara, completely missing the dressing for the salad and any condiments for their eggs, from which Senjougahara concludes Hanekawa is the type of person to "accept" bland food because she simply has nothing "real" to her person, other than to just take everything as it comes, not able to will herself to see bland food as something negative. Or something. I don't quite remember right now.

Oh, so the thing is Hanekawa runs into a big ass tiger on her way to school, and it ends up burning down the house in which she grew up, so she has to live with Senjougahara for a while, learning how a "real" family lives (particularly w/r/t a loving father), then moves to hang with the Araragi sisters (Koyomi is off doing something with Hachikuji and/or Kanbaru), learning an insight into what it means to have siblings (as well as getting some motherly advice from Mrs. Araragi). Oh, also, we learn that Araragi's parents, heretofore unseen in the series, were police officers the whole time. Oh, also also, Araragi was a violent juvenile delinquent in middle school, hence why he's so averse to his sisters' vigilantism. So, anyway, a couple chapters seem to skip when Hanekawa goes to sleep, and we eventually find out these missing chapters cover the actions of "Black Hanekawa," who has come back to the surface of Hanekawa's mind in order to deal with the stress of the tiger aberration. Hanekawa runs into Episode (from Kizumonogatari) again, as well as Izuko Gaen, senpai to Oshino, Kaiki, and Kagenui, and relative to Kanbaru, who clue Hanekawa in on the potential identity of the tiger aberration, whom Gaen claims will be named the "Tyrannical Tiger" by Hanekawa. Cue Hanekawa clamoring to research what the Tyrannical Tiger is, before realizing she's the one to have discovered it, before realizing she's the one to have created it in the first place, just as Black Hanekawa was a new creation informed by the pre-existing Afflicting Cat aberration.

So what we have now is a questionable alteration of the series as a whole. Previously, the featured aberrations seemed to have been based on "real" (that is, pre-existing) yokai and things, until Hanekawa had to go and make a new one up, and now we seem to be completely pulling new aberrations out of our hat. I

don't personally care enough to research whether earlier aberrations were based on real yokai, preferring to at least uphold the illusion of their being real, but if we're just going to explicitly say we're bullshitting, it could get wonky. We'll just have to wait and see.

Hanekawa is a pretty great narrator, a fresh change of pace from Araragi, his banter, and his ramblings (as much as I love everything). It actually seems, with the more "focused" storytelling here, that more stuff happens in this novel than in any previous book (except Kizu-), perhaps taking up more time than the four or so anime episodes would allow. I've not yet seen the Monogatari Series Second Season anime adaptation, but I do know the so-called "First Season" truncates a lot of the banter scenes in favor more reasonable runtimes for episodes (the conversation between Araragi and Tsukihi in Neko [Black] runs for eighty pages in the novel, which, if adapted 100%, would easily take up at least a couple episodes' worth of time). So in this book, we have Hanekawa bounce from location to location, meeting and talking to several of the other girls in the series, and she writes a long-ass letter to her Black self which I can only assume gets heavily edited for the anime version.

On that note, Hanekawa's note is most certainly the high point in this novel, and quite likely the greatest moment in the series as a whole, at least to this point. I mean, it's a light novel, so the actual prose isn't the greatest thing every writ to paper, but the weight of pathos brings great depth to Tsubasa Hanekawa as a character, especially after having been sidelined in her previous focal stories ("Tsubasa Cat" and "Tsubasa Family") by her feline alter-ego, as well as the introduction of her over-the-top-to-the-point-of-seeming-boring backstory, which also gets fleshed out more, earlier in this novel (Hanekawa believes the Tyrannical Tiger burned the house down because of her envy that the mother and father were becoming emotionally close once again, leaving Hanekawa herself out of their burgeoning new family). Araragi has previously shown some weakness, but mostly he just mentions that he's crying or screaming or something, instead of actually describing his heart with any accurate analysis. And Hanekawa really cuts into herself, to show how critical she's become with the advent of the Tiger, and how she wants to get rid of her "monstrous" present self in favor of a more "human" version, ironically absorbing both Black Hanekawa and the Tyrannical Tiger.

As has been the case with other climaxes in the series, Hanekawa can't do shit to the Tyrannical Tiger, and a deus ex machina comes in the form of Araragi, returning from wherever at the last possible moment, showing better mastery of the Kokorowatari katana, and covering up his heroism by saying he arrived as soon as he saw the picture Hanekawa sent of herself wearing Araragi's streetclothes.

Hanekawa's epilogue is not wholly a punchline, as with Araragi's conclusions, but is instead considered a new story for which all previous events have been retroactively classified as "prologue." Unlike, e.g., Senjougahara's "development" in the Nise- volumes, Hanekawa actually feels like she's gained some three-dimensional growth - and of course Nisioisin characterizes this with a change in hairstyle!

Juanjo says

The best one of the series until now. Hanekawa is an amazing character. I'm very satisfied with this one.

Michael says

I feared going in to Nekomonogatari: Cat Tale (White), that it would come off awkward and wouldn't live up to previous novels due to the switch from Araragi's perspective over to Hanekawa's. While the book isn't nearly as comedic, or filled with the banter I love from Nisiosin's books, this one is a much deeper book overall.

After seeing a tiger on the way to school, Hanekawa's house burns down and she has no desire to stay with her parents whom she feels no connection to. She decides to survive on her own, but only lasts a night before Senjogahara takes her in, and eventually Araragi's family. Black Hanekawa (AKA Afflicting Cat) comes out in a much softer demeanor through out the book.

While I knew Hanekawa had more layers as a character than previously let on, I didn't think she could be interesting enough for a whole book. Nisiosin tosses those worries aside pretty quickly. The way he crafts her voice to be the sole focus is superb. Whether it is as her or Black Hanekawa, he knows just how to draw you in and keep you glued to the pages.

This book is all about Hanekawa being forced to look inward at herself in terms of emotions, struggles, and who she wants to be. She spends much of this book in a state of confusion, trying to figure out why she is black out again, what the tiger is as an aberration. As she works this out, we get a look at just how disconnected she has been in her life when dealing with stress, abuse, and other problems.

Nisiosin could have easily stuck to the tried and true of Araragi as the lead in Nekomonogatari: Cat Tale (White), but showed that taking chances can work out brilliantly. Fans of the series should be prepared for a fresh look with the perspective of Hanekawa. I kept reading along furiously with little pause as I became engrossed with her story of awakening to whom she always should have been.

Cover Thoughts: Has VOFAN ever let us down? The cover art of Black Hanekawa and the tiger is beautiful, sexy, and fierce all at once.

Rating: 5 out of 5 Beers

Claudio says

On the 8th book in the series we finally get a story that is told from another perspective instead of that of our traditionally tried and true Koyomi Araragi, bringing along with it a whole new look at characters we'd already grown so familiar with. NisiOisN's greatest triumph here is in making this book's narrator, Tsubasa Hanekawa, sound like a completely separate person while simultaneously displacing her from the pedestal the aforementioned protagonist always puts her on whenever they're in contact or he happens to speak of her. Going forward I know there will be at least a few other books that will follow this trend with different characters and I so greatly look forward to seeing how these perspectives and their perceptions of the cast will change depending on the lens that they are viewed through.

Krishna Avendaño says

Perhaps you are simply too pure — as white as innocence itself. You do not understand your own

heartlessness , nor your cruelty (...) You are simply dim to the darkness. In that case... you are a failure as a living creature. - Senjougahara Hitagi

Written from Hanekawa's point of view, Nekomonogatari (White) takes a more intimate and compelling approach than the previous novels to build what is perhaps one of the best works by Nisio Isin. The Tsubasa Tiger arc tells us the story of a pure woman, a fake, a monster, and her relationship with her abusive family and the people around her.

Leaving behind the action oriented plots, in Nekomonogatari (White) not only Hanekawa but also the people who cross her path undergoes a remarkable evolution from their previous selves. It's not an exaggeration if we affirm that one of the greatest virtues of Nisio as a writer, and most likely the factor that distances him from fellow and generic authors, is his ability to create complex characters. I'm not mistaken when I state that Nekomonogatari (White) is where his prose takes a new level. The once aloof, detached and somewhat tsundere Senjougahara and the pure and unstable Hanekawa, through the brilliant scenes that depict their interactions, are now multilayered characters and reach a new and surprising level of humanity.

If Kizumonogatari is, at the end of the road, a story about how broken people can even in tragedy form bonds, and Nisemonogatari a tale about persons becoming fakes in order to exist, Nekomonogatari, while sticking to the previous premises, is a novel about how our flaws, that part that brings us closer to be failed creatures, allow us to embrace reality and get through our daily life. Being Hanekawa Tsubasa the embodiment of this, we understand that only by experiencing hatred, jealousy, envy, loneliness and getting hold of our flaws can we understand ourselves as human beings. Otherwise, as Hanekawa, we are nothing but monsters. Pure monsters.

PhanDuyThong says

"A model student, a class president among class presidents, kind to all, fair, smart, like some kind of saint-maybe the old me whom Araragi described in such terms was the first aberrations I ever created.

The girl that Araragi called the real deal.

And the girl that Miss Senjougahara called a monster.

That was the very first time I created myself.

...

I would never change, no matter what me I became."

This volume of Monogatari series is the start of the new Second Season. Told through the eyes and thought of a new narrator, Tsubasa Hanekawa, the class presidents among class presidents, the model students, as we got to know how "broken" she is and her journey of "self-discovery".

No doubt that this is my favorite book so far in the series. Even though we don't have a chance to read from the infamous unreliable narrator Araragi, Hanekawa has done a great job keeping my eyes on the page. Full of thoughts and questions about who she is, about how she can change her life somehow, etc.

The twist in the end, but maybe it's not a twist at all, shows us that Nisio really loves using Chekhov's gun with everything he already presented in the book. I love all the chatter and banter, especially with best-girl Senjougahara, the Fire Sisters, and Shinobu and how knowledgeable is the series (the myth of Napoleon's bath, referencing to Doraemon, and Hanekawa's comments on the difference between traditional books and e-books, etc).

After all, this is a fantastic ride for me, as I can empathize with Hanekawa about how the world works and how important it is to feel, despite the bad thoughts we always seem to have. I can't wait for the next Zaregoto books and Kabukimonogatari coming out in the following months.

"I'll off"-Black Hanekawa.

D says

Hanekawa Tsubasa's tale continues in Nekomonogatari (White). This isn't a sequel for Nekomonogatari (Black) though, just another tale that involves Hanekawa and her aberrations. And as NisiOisiN pointed out in the afterword, both books can be read independently of each other.

This is probably the only Monogatari book (well, of the ones officially translated and I've read) that isn't told in Araragi's POV and boy does the novel get an instant extra star just for that alone! Gone are the pages upon pages of panties. Hanekawa tries her best to do the boke/tsukkomi routine with everyone, but alas, that's not really her forte even if her conversations with Senjogahara were a treat to read. Of course, Araragi's still mentioned and very much loved. And I guess from Hanekawa's point of view I can see the appeal--But also it looks like Araragi himself had some things going on when he was in middle school, and I think that's a tale for another novel?

Episode makes a surprising return and reveals he's actually seven years old (for some reason he seems to have lost his sanpaku eyes, but maybe Hanekawa didn't pay as much attention as Araragi?). That was such a bizarre conversation, but we'll see what part he plays later on I guess.

Where (Black) tells us about the events of Golden Week and Black Hanekawa, (White) is about a tiger aberration that appears in town right at the start of the term. Hanekawa is worried about it, but thoughts of aberrations are pushed from her mind when she sees her house burn down from the school window. Her 'parents' rent a hotel room to stay at while their house gets rebuilt, but unable to spend the time with the two adults who don't give two pins about her, Hanekawa decides to rough it out in the cram school. Senjogahara will have none of this and invites Hanekawa to her house, and then later on to Araragi's own home (Araragi is absent for 98% of the novel and Hanekawa sleeps in his room).

While my fave bits are definitely Hanekawa and Senjogahara's interactions, I also loved how this novel gets into Hanekawa's psyche. We get to see why Meme Oshino thinks of her as a monster when we see nothing but a perfect human being from Araragi's POV: there's something scary about how little she cares about herself but at the same time protecting herself through seriously unhealthy coping methods. I've always said that I had to kill parts of myself in order to survive, but what Hanekawa did was throw everything into the side, the feelings that later find release in Black Hanekawa (view spoiler) Perhaps this coping method is not as bad? In the end, Hanekawa might not be the same person as she's been in the previous books, but she's still very much herself.

I think the question of selfhood is very much a theme here. And how to deal with stress and intrusive thoughts.

This is probably one of my faves in this series, along with the Nise ones.
