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Ghost Train

Historical fantasy novel set in 19th century Japan,
scheduled for October release

New York, NY – SelectBooks publishers are very pleased to announce the upcoming publication of *Ghost Train* by Natalie Jacobsen (ISBN: 978-1-59079-564-4). *Ghost Train* is Natalie Jacobsen's debut novel and it marks a new step in SelectBooks' effort to develop its list of titles serving a Young Adult and New Adult readership.

Ghost Train is a folk-horror novel set in 1877 Kyoto during Emperor Meiji's rule which led the way to Japan's Industrial Revolution—also referred to as the Meiji Restoration. Based on true events and folklore, *samurai* daughter Maru Hosokawa spends the summer working in a *geisha* teahouse where she is haunted by: ghosts, plagues, and a mystery surrounding disappearing girls. A *kitsune*, a fox-shaped demon, finds her and claims the faults lie with the emperor, urging her to help before she too falls victim. The teenage girl overcomes her anxiety and finds the strength to confront authority while challenging the rapid transformation and Westernization of her society—her mission is to save her world while simultaneously finding her place in it.

Jacobsen spent years writing *Ghost Train* and collaborating with historians and subject matter experts across Japan and the U.S. for historical accuracy. "It was critical that I not only rely on my personal experience in Japan, but others' perspectives, knowledge, and expertise," she says. For years Jacobsen has had a career in journalism, media, and nonprofit in both Japan and the U.S. Her beats included civil rights, travel, and lifestyle. She is currently a marketing professional for a Federal workplace giving campaign, and volunteers in her spare time.

SelectBooks Publisher, Kenzi Sugihara's long career in book publishing includes his stints as a Vice President and Publisher at both Bantam/Doubleday/Dell and at Random House, ushering in a number of best-selling and critically-acclaimed books. He formed SelectBooks in 2000, noting that the emergence of desktop publishing and digital printing presented new opportunities in the industry. In response to what attracted him to Jacobsen's novel, he stated, "One of the many compelling things that we saw in *Ghost Train* was Natalie's ability to assemble this fascinating tapestry of history, fantasy, and Japanese culture to produce an immersive story. I found it to be simultaneously thrilling and meditative. Also, her deep connection with Japanese culture is unmistakable, and quite profound."

In his endorsement for the book, Jake Adelstein, author of *Tokyo Vice* and *The Last Yakuza*, stated, “With lyrical prose that evokes the mystique of 19th-century Kyoto, this meticulously researched narrative weaves together historical authenticity with the ethereal allure of *yokai* folklore. Prepare to be captivated by a world where every shadow conceals a mystery, every whisper harbors a secret, and every choice echoes in worlds seen and unseen—a mesmerizing journey that will linger in your thoughts long after the final page is turned.”

As a key new release in their developing line of Young Adult publications, SelectBooks hopes that *Ghost Train* will resonate with a younger generation that is now rediscovering the rich fabric of Japanese society through such pop culture idioms as Manga comics, Anime film, and the video game industry.

Ghost Train hits bookshelves everywhere October 15, 2024. A launch party open to the public is set to be held at Solid State Books in Washington, DC and at the National Press Club in Washington, DC in October. She is due to visit a number of bookshops in the Mid-Atlantic and New York regions to speak on Japanese yokai and media, living in Japan, and what we can learn from history’s lessons. “This is my love letter to Japan,” says Jacobsen. “I hope to do right by its history, folklore, and people.”

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