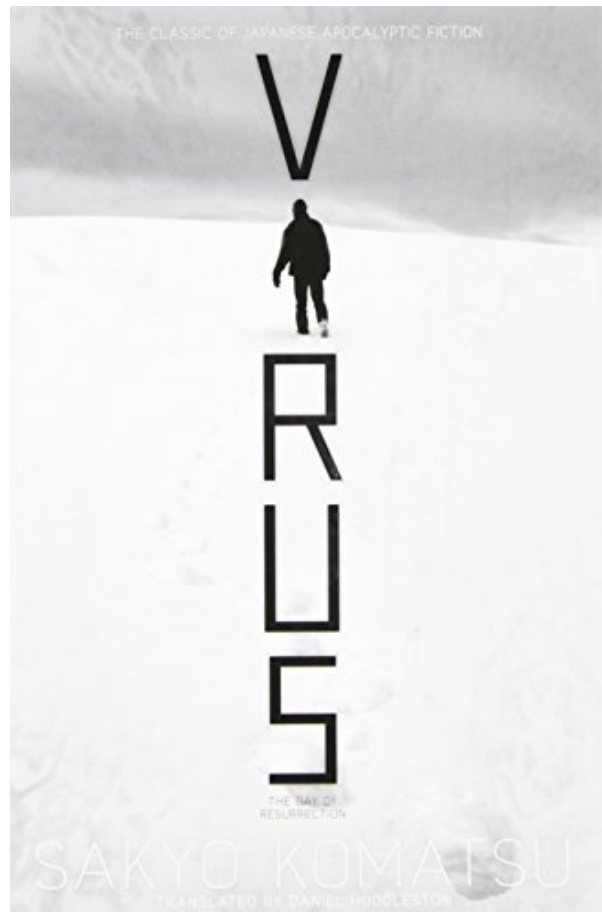
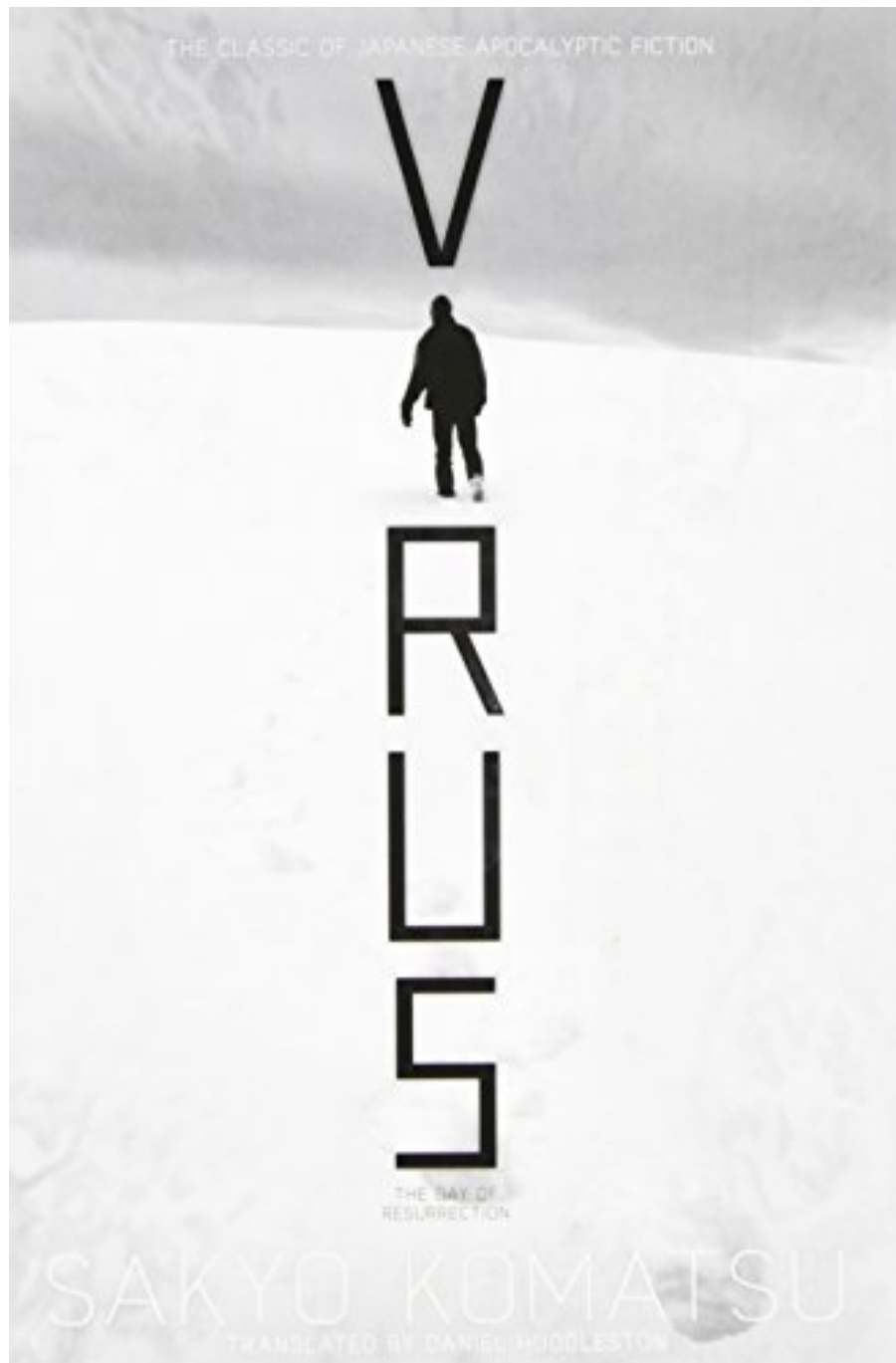


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A mysterious virus wipes out all of humanity, save for researchers in the frigid Antarctic. To save what is left of the world from nuclear destruction, the scientists must find a way to return to America.

Reads L to R (Western Style).

In this classic of Japanese SF from 1964, American astronauts on a space mission discover a strange virus and bring it to Earth, where rogue scientists transform it into a fatal version of the flu. After the virulent virus is released, nearly all human life on Earth is wiped out save for fewer than one thousand men and a handful of women living in research stations in Antarctica. Then one of the researchers realizes that a major earthquake in the now-depopulated United States may lead to nuclear Armageddon...

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- Binding: Hardcover
- 380 pages

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Surprisingly fresh sci-fi from nearly 50 years ago

By Michael G Kurilla

Komatsu's *Virus* while published in 1964 was recently translated into English. In spite of the time span, themes and characters eerily resonate with today. Also surprising is that this story was published several years before the classic *Andromeda Strain* with which it overlaps. The story itself is set in the early 1970's but with an early 60's set of conditions: space exploration was advancing, biological warfare was still being pursued by major nations, and nuclear confrontation between the US and Soviet Union was front and center. In essence, a series of unfortunate steps some by nature and some by man, coalesce to produce a global apocalypse that leaves a tiny contingent of scientists in Antarctica as the sole survivors who must race to prevent their destruction from dead men switches left over from the defunct nuclear powers.

The science is surprisingly relevant even after 50 years. Komatsu weaves a complex web of outer space germs, a fledgling biological manipulation project, a credible influenza pandemic, and a concomitant chicken disease that wipes out vaccine production capability to craft the perfect storm of global annihilation. Societal breakdown and collapse occurs in a realistic, haunting manner. Perhaps the only ding to his prescience might be his optimism that earthquake prediction would have been solved within the decade.

For devourers of the end of the world apocalypse theme this is a definite classic that should not be overlooked.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

The Cold War, Japanese Style

By Amazon Customer

Reading this book in the early stages of the Ebola outbreak may not have been my smartest choice.

\_Virus\_ is grim, bleak, exciting, and even a little over the top campy--not quite in equal measure (it's mostly grim). Instead of a viral outbreak turning most of the world's population into rampaging zombies, an outbreak kills just about everybody. And rather than taking the post-apocalyptic moment as its starting point, Komatsu attends at great length to collapse of human civilization. In grand Cold War fashion, the militaries and governments of the US, Soviet Union, Great Britain, Japan, and others are tripping over themselves and each other (in ways I can't specify without revealing too much). Scientists make a variety of almost-right guesses in their efforts to stop the disease.

My biggest complaint with the book is a handful of long, very pedantic lectures about science, philosophy, history, and politics. As often happens with science fiction, the science both matters and doesn't--if you're a geneticist or microbiologist, I can imagine there are all kinds of problems that most of us wouldn't recognize. But it seems at times as though Komatsu wants to bury any problems with the science (or philosophy or history) in words words words! You can skim those parts and probably won't miss a lot.

That, and 1960s gender politics. Don't be surprised.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Can't stop reading over

By Denis

This is the original novel by Sakyo Komatsu that was adapted into the 1980 movie "Virus" (Fukkatsu no Hi). I was only a child when I watched it and since then my appreciation for any kind of catastrophic movies never lessened, especially those involving viruses and the likes . That is to say, the fascination that movie played on my imagination!

When I found out that finally the original novel had been translated in English, I rushed to get the book as soon as possible.

And the wait was all worth it: the story is enticing from start to end to read and follows step-by-step, deep in details, the plot portrayed in the movie.

There are some minor tweaks in the names, the major one being the disease name, that goes by "Tibetan flu" instead of the more impressive "Italian flu" like it was in the movie but, apart from that, I have no complaints at all.

A masterpiece I highly recommend to every science fiction reader, in particular those with a thing for disasters.

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