



the complete review - fiction

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&
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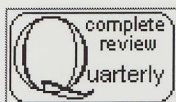
Trying to meet all your
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Ring

by
Suzuki Koji

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Title: *Ring*
 Author: Suzuki Koji
 Genre: Novel
 Written: 1991 (Eng. 2003)
 Length: 286 pages
 Original in: Japanese
 Availability: [Ring - US](#)
 [Ring - UK](#)
 [Ring - Canada](#)
 [Ring - France](#)
 [Ring - Deutschland](#)
 DVD: [The Ring - US](#)
 [The Ring - UK](#)
 [The Ring - Canada](#)
 DVD: [Ringu - US](#)
 [Ringu - UK](#)
 [Ringu - Canada](#)



• Japanese title: *Ringu*



- Translated by Robert B. Rohmer and Glynne Walley
- *Ring* has been filmed twice, as
 - *Ringu* (Japan, 1998), directed by Nakata Hideo
 - *The Ring* (US, 2002), directed by Gore Verbinski, starring Naomi Watts, Brian Cox, and Jane Alexander



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Our Assessment:

B : passable thriller, cleverly resolved

See [our review](#) for fuller assessment.

The *complete review's* Review:

Ring begins with some unusual and inexplicable deaths -- two young people die in separate incidents, for no apparent reason, but practically at the same moment.

Kazuyuki Asakawa, a journalist, happens to be the uncle of Tomoko Oishi, one of the victims. And he happens to hear from a taxi driver about the other victim. The coincidences -- the victims are about the same age, died at almost exactly the same time, and there is no good explanation of what happened to them -- make him curious, and he looks into the matter. A bit of research and he discovers two more victims who died at the same time and in the same manner.

A bit of digging around reveals that the four teens knew each other and spent a few days together at a resort exactly a week before they died. Asakawa follows the trail, and checks into the same Cabin B-4 where the four stayed, thinking he might discover the casue of their deaths here -- maybe a virus or something.

Instead: "Never in his wildest dreams could he imagine what awaited him there." What he eventually finds is deeply disturbing -- a videotape full of unsettling and confusing images. Worse is what comes at the end of the video: a warning that: "those who view these images are fated to die at this exact moment one week from now" unless some instructions are followed carefully. Unfortunately, those instructions have been erased from the tape

The race is on. Asakawa isn't entirely convinced by what he's seen, but it seems almost plausible. He turns to the only person he imagines can help him, an old schoolfriend who finished medical school and also has a

Ph.D. in philosophy, Ryuji Takayama.

Ryuji also watches the tape, and then they try to figure out what's behind it. The story unfolds as a decent little action-mystery, though unfortunately the explanation largely turns out to involve the supernatural (which makes it considerably less compelling than one would have hoped for).

Still, the tension mounts as the clock winds down for Asakawa (and Ryuji, though since he only watched the tape later he has a bit more time). Suzuki chases his characters around Japan, has them dig up some ugly old stories that explain what happened, and even throws in some bad weather for them to contend with. The pressure mounts too because Asakawa's wife and young child have seen the tape, and Asakawa worries that they too might suffer the same terrible fate.

Discovering what's behind the tape isn't sufficient to discover the "charm" that offers release from the death sentence -- or is it? Asakawa and Ryuji can't be sure until the moment, a week after they each first saw the video, when they are meant to die

It's only at the end of the book, when it's finally clear how the death-sentence can be staved off, that Suzuki offers a truly ingenious turn: it's a nice and very satisfying twist.

Ring is a passable thriller: there's tension, excitement, some neat little stories explaining various pieces of the puzzle. Unfortunately, the central conceit -- the videotape-message -- relies on a ridiculous supernatural explanation and can't be taken seriously, which completely undermines the rest of the book. The writing isn't particularly polished, but Suzuki does create some decent characters, and even the exaggerated Ryuji is an entertaining presence.

Overall: an undemanding quick read, with a few decent thrills and chills.

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Links:

Ring:

- [Vertical publicity page](#)
- [ringworld](#) - *Ring* site
- [Ring site](#) (French)

Reviews:

- [ActuSf](#) (French)
- [Inside a Dream](#) (French)

***The Ring* - US film version (2002):**

- [IMDb page](#)
- [The Ring - Official Movie Site](#)

***Ringu* - Japanese film version (1998):**

- [IMDb page](#)

Suzuki Koji:

- [Article in Metropolis](#)

Other books of interest under review:

- See [Index of Far East Asian literature](#) (Chinese, Japanese, Korean) at the *complete review*

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About the Author:

Japanese author Suzuki Koji is apparently an authority on childrearing.

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