

TOKYOPOP
PRESENTS

MANGA

漫画

LL 2005

Dramacon:

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED
ON THE WAY TO THE CON

FIRST KOREA, NOW THE WORLD:

MIN-WOO HYUNG GIVES
US JUSTICE N MERCY

peach-pit:

THE INTERVIEW

THE PRINCESS AI COSPLAY COMPETITION:

PRETTY IN PURPLE

PLUS:

- THE WRATH OF CONS
- MANGA FASHION
DOS AND DON'TS
- PAPIER-MACHE MADNESS
- POSTCARD FROM JAPAN



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TEEN
AGE 13+

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We're BACK! And thank you for coming back, too! I'll keep this brief—we have lots of manga to get to...

A few months back, we opened up a dialogue with you and asked, "Wanna do Takuhai?" Your resounding response? "Yes, I want my manga!"

So we're taking you at your word—literally. From henceforth, your *Takuhai* magazine will be called, quite simply, *Manga*. (If you don't believe us, just look at the front cover!)

Why did we make the change?

Scientifically speaking, it's called the snowball effect. "Takuhai" means home delivery, but after giving away the first issue of our free manga magazine to more than 100,000 fans, everyone wanted a copy. Schools, libraries, foreign dignitaries, my mother...you name it, they wanted it. Everyone was clamoring for the greatest and freest manga magazine on planet Pokopen. (Thanks for all the word of mouth, guys—you're really good!) And since bookstores and newsstands wanted to stock our magazine, we couldn't exactly call it "home delivery" anymore, could we? Hence, *Manga* was born.

Manga is about attitude, it's about lifestyle, and it's bolder and better than before. If you have to ask what *Manga* means (or don't even know how to pronounce it), your finger's just not on the pulse. Come on, we don't have to tell you that manga is really a state of mind.

This issue of *Manga* is full-color throughout, with even more pages than the first issue. We continue to offer a great selection of manga from Japan, including *Beck* and *Kamichama Karin*. We're also showcasing cool series from our American creators and our Korean ones, too. Personally, I'm psyched to read about Min-Woo Hyung's *justice N mercy*. And just when you thought it couldn't get any better, we've serving up some papier-mâché madness. You gotta trust me on this one.

I said I'd keep this brief. (Ouch! Stop kicking me, Li!!) Please visit us when we're in your town, keep on rockin' in the free world, and make sure you tell all your friends about the Manga Revolution.

Viva Manga!

~Marcoting



Letter From the Editor

FREE MANGA ONLINE

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

Our free manga mag also exists online—and the content is totally different! Visit www.TOKYOPOP.com for free to read exclusive manga and other cool schtuff not in this print edition. Below is just a taste of things to come when you log on. Each month we'll feature brand-new manga, in addition to adding more chapters from series that have already made their debut. Check out the following guide to our new series and continuing favorites.

VIEW NOW

BIZENGHAST

In the sleepy, forgotten town of Bizenghast, not every lost soul is a lost cause.

DRAMACON

A funny thing happened on the way to the convention—it was a thing called love.

SOKORA REFUGEES

There's a saying in manga: A little fan service goes a long way. Welcome to *Sokora Refugees*!

I LUV HALLOWEEN

With this twisted whack pack, sometimes it's not always about the candy.

SPOTLIGHT SORCERORS & SECRETARIES

Nicole Hayes sure likes to daydream, especially when she's alone with her notebook. She crafts fantastic stories and lets her imagination go-go-go! If only the guy of her dreams could see what it was she was dreaming about!

PSY-COMM

The next phase of warfare is finally here—War: The Ultimate Reality Show!

VAN VON HUNTER

The classic, epic saga of a hero who's a legend in his own lunchtime.

OFF*BEAT

Trust us: This is not your average boy-meets-boy story.

WAR ON FLESH

In the deep South, an ancient voodoo curse unleashes a hellish plague.

SHUTTERBOX

Like a photograph, love develops in darkness.

MAIL ORDER NINJA

The grand prize winner in TOKYOPOP's fifth *Rising Stars of Manga™* national competition.

NEW SERIES DEBUTING IN OCTOBER

@LARGE

The last battle for the heart and soul of hip-hop begins right here.



SO YOU WANT TO SEE A MANGA STAR?

PRINCESS AI

The adventures of Ai, a princess searching for identity and salvation in this world and beyond.

JUROR 13

After the arrival of a mysterious jury summons, a man's life is thrust into a downward spiral!

A MIDNIGHT OPERA

For centuries, undead creatures have been able to blend into society... until now.

MBQ

A tragic-comic portrait of life in the great big, burger-fed underbelly of the big city.

STEADY BEAT

A young girl discovers love—in a very surprising place!

ARK ANGELS

Magical girls from another world are charged with saving all creatures from extinction.

SPOTLIGHT THE DREAMING

Twin sisters Amber and Jeanie uncover a dark, mysterious secret: Students have been known to walk off into the surrounding bushlands, where they have vanished without a trace. A nightmare from down under is about to begin!

ROADSONG

The ultimate band on the run—filled with cool music and hot girls.

RE:PLAY

Rock 'n' Roll will never die in this story about an everlasting love.

THE ABANDONED

Sometimes growing up can take a lot of heart—and blood and guts!

NEW SERIES DEBUTING IN NOVEMBER

DARK GOODBYE

A regular case turns wickedly bizarre—it's horror-boiled noir at its darkest.

PEACH FUZZ

The epic saga of a ferret who defied her cage.

FOOL'S GOLD

Just when we thought that school was full of jerks, true love can fool us all.

IDIOTZ

When the human race needs saving, we can count on...uhm...Harold Melman.

PRIVATE SCHOOL

An elite military unit goes undercover at a high school that's chock-full of fan service.

SPOTLIGHT MARK OF THE SUCCUBUS

Maeve, a succubus-in-training, is sent to the human world to learn how to hone her skills of seduction. But things get a bit complicated when she sets her sights on Aiden, a smart but unmotivated student at her new high school.

RIDING SHOTGUN

Assassination is a legal industry, and two hit men try to keep their licenses from being revoked.

SPOTLIGHT SEA PRINCESS AZURI

Even underwater, Princess Azuri realizes that going with the flow can lead to a sea of unhappiness. Azuri faces the most difficult decision of her life: Should she save the world or follow her heart?

PANTHEON HIGH

The children of deities from all religions have to go to school *somewhere!*

EARTHLIGHT

A coming-of-age teen drama set on a lunar colony.



WWW.TOKYOPOP.COM



YONEN BUZZ

Four aspiring musicians stand at the threshold of their rock 'n' roll dreams.

DOGBY WALKS ALONE

Deceit...mischief...murder—Happyplace Theme Park has really gone to the dogs!

NEW SERIES DEBUTING IN DECEMBER

DYSTOPIA

These unforgettable stories revolve around a group of people struggling to find their place in the world.

KAT & MOUSE

Two cool—very cool—high school girls solve crimes using math and science.

STAY TUNED FOR MORE MANGA!



Anyone know what day it is today?

We greatly appreciate the contributions of the following humans:

Tim Beedle
Bryce P. Coleman
Hope Donovan
Carol Fox
Elizabeth Hurchalla
Troy Lewter
Paul Morrissey
Luis Reyes
Aaron Suhr
Rob Tokar
Rob Valois



Arbor Day?

THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN:

We also greatly appreciate the contributions of the following humans, who couldn't fit under the heading

"These Go-to Eleven":

Peter Ahlstrom
Charles Babb
Spencer Boyle
Susan Hale
Mutsumi Miyazaki
Matt Nixon
Candice Uyloan



Bastille Day?



Noo...It's another day in which to excell!

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TOKYOPOP Inc.

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COMMENTS? LETTERS? SUGGESTIONS? STORIES?

Here's some info you should know about sending us your stuff:

All submissions of letters and art must be made via regular mail to:

TOKYOPOP attn: Manga Magazine
5900 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 2000
Los Angeles, CA 90036

Please print your name, your age, and your address clearly on your letter, art, story, etc.

No submissions will be returned to you. Anything you send to us becomes the property of TOKYOPOP Inc. We will have the right to print, reproduce, distribute, or modify the artwork for use in any of our products, royalty-free. We will have the right to print your name, city, and state if we include your work in any of our products.

If you are under 18, here's what needs to happen:
On the back of each piece of artwork or each page of a letter submitted,
your parent or guardian must give his or her permission.

You acknowledge that all material you send to us is your original creation and does not violate the rights of others. (In other words, it's OK to send us art based on CLAMP's manga, but only if YOU are the artist and NOT if you ripped it off from your little sister or former best friend.)

On the Covers

Front: Sandra from *Dramacon*
Back: Koyuki from *Beck*

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WHERE TO BUY manga

We love manga, we love our fans, and we especially love our retailers—and here are a few retailers who love manga as much as we do! We encourage you to buy TOKYOPOP goodies from your favorite bookstore and comic shop—look for manga in the graphic novel or manga section.

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<< ¡Ai-carumba! Carly B. is princess for a day. See page 40.



12-year-old Nancy Li from Philly woos us with her depiction of *Sakura Taisen*. For more fan art, see page 90. >>

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SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES

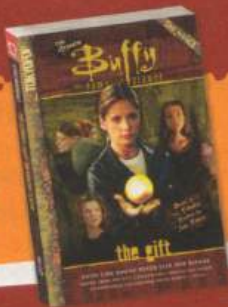
(IN THE FORM OF MANGA, CINE-MANGA, AND NOVELS!)

Heard enough of that shojo beat? Not too wild about Harry? Need something to read that's less normal...and more para-normal? Well, now that Fall is upon us, let's kick sand on our summer reading lists. We have a few deliciously fiendish choices to get you through Halloween (and the rest of the holidays this year).



Dead End by Shohei Manabe
If David Lynch, Clive Barker and David Cronenberg had a love child who was forced to create a manga in the bowels of a torture chamber, then *Dead End* would be the fruit of its labor. The unpredictable story follows a grungy young man as he pieces together shattered fragments of his past. Think you know where it's going? Well, think again!

The Ultimate Buffy the Vampire Slayer Cine-Manga
For all Buffy fans, living and undead, TOKYOPOP presents "The Gift"—Buffy's 100th episode—as you've never seen it before. It's totally filled with behind-the-scenes photos, director and actor commentary, excerpts from the uncut script, and intricately designed stunts.



Samurai Champloo by manglobe & Masaru Gotsubo
Yep, the manga based on the hot anime is finally here! And there's a reason that *Anime Insider* called it "the spiritual sequel to *Cowboy Bebop*." In the manga series, ancient Japan is about to get a lethal dose of street justice—*Champloo* style!

CLAMP School Paranormal Investigators Novel by CLAMP and Matsumoto Tomiyuki
When killer ice cream, soul-capturing machines, and vampires abound, who you gonna call? The CLAMP School Paranormal Investigators! In this CLAMP novel series, there's no telling what will happen to the fab five. But you know they'll be mighty fashionable!



Priest by Min-Woo Hyung
Priest is just one of the scores of innovative and eye-shattering graphic novels to arrive from Korea. One look at this popular horror-western series and you can see why Japan is scooping up Korean artists. A second look and you just might scream at the dark, bloodcurdling tale of revenge. For more on Min-Woo's art, see the next page!

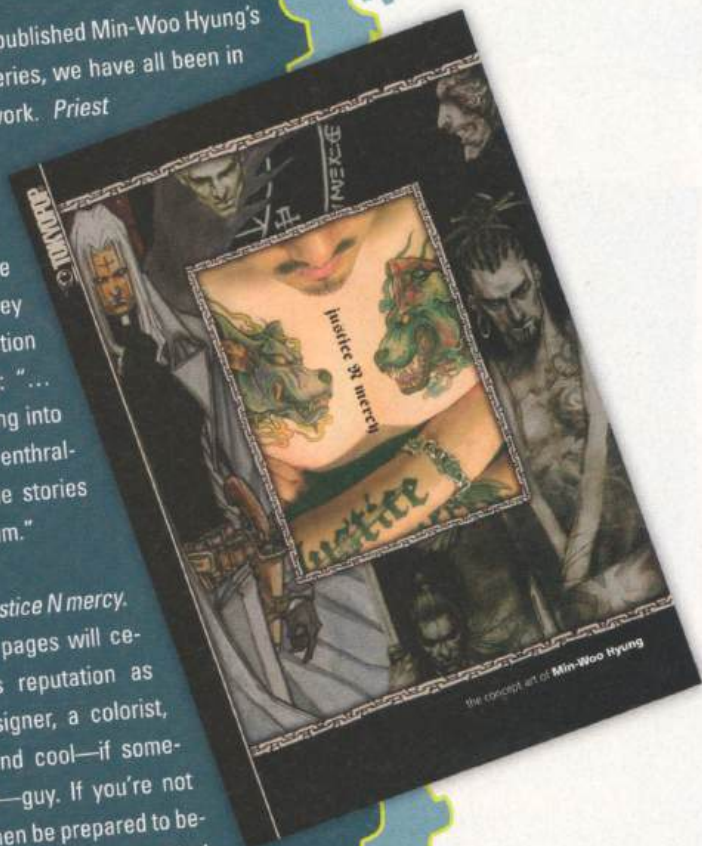
MERCY, MERCY ME

IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS PRIEST...

Ever since TOKYOPOP published Min-Woo Hyung's *Priest* graphic novel series, we have all been in awe of Min-Woo's work. *Priest* is a dark, rich story that has completely blown away countless fans all over the world. As Mike Carrey said in his introduction to *Priest* Volume 6: "... it's currently evolving into one of the most enthrallingly unpredictable stories in the entire medium."

And now comes *justice N mercy*. The art in these pages will cement Min-Woo's reputation as a character designer, a colorist, and an all-around cool—if somewhat deranged—guy. If you're not already a fan, then be prepared to become one once you behold Min-Woo's amazing work. As you look at his art, you might want to be careful that your face doesn't melt.

TOKYOPOP was fortunate enough to spend some time in Seoul hanging out with Min-Woo, his family and friends. We had the pleasure of sitting down and chatting with him about what he loves best—making manga. And we can attest from firsthand experience that what he says in his interview is true: most of his friends are simply crazy...and we hope to qualify as one of them.



So without further ado, we bring you an interview with Min-Woo.
Just make sure you count your blessings...



Q: What kind of book is *justice N mercy*?

A: It contains illustrations of various characters that I came up with while preparing for the new serial, as well as pieces that I have special attachment to among the ones I've done over the years. It also contains several covers I've done for fantasy books in Korea. I agreed to do this book because I wanted to present these various pieces in some kind of systematic order. I feel a bit embarrassed about it, though. It's like I'm being exposed half dressed, since these are works in progress. I'm curious how it will all turn out.

Q: What does "justice N mercy" mean?

A: You mean beyond the literal meaning? It doesn't have some deep meaning. It's just what I have tattooed on my arms. I guess it's a kind of self-expression.

Q: What do you focus on most in your work?

A: The basic theme that runs through my work is masculinity, power, and strength.

Q: Where do you get the inspiration for your work?

A: Mostly from movies, comics,

novels and art books, but there are a hundred other images as well that suddenly come upon me during the course of the day, giving me ideas about different characters. They're too many to mention.

Q: I heard that you're preparing a series for the American market. What kind of series is it going to be?

A: The central character is a warrior who's been cursed to wear the face of a beast. I don't know how suited it will be to American tastes, but I'll follow the style that suits me best and leave the rest to fate. If it flops...well, blame those



who should have known better for not stopping me.

Q: Can you explain the process for getting the series published in the U.S.?

A: It's the same as in Korea, mostly. You come up with the content, then prepare sketches... One difference is that in Korea, you do a hundred percent of the ink sketches by hand, but in the States, you often use a computer. (Even when you use a computer, the main goal is to make the drawings have a hand-crafted feel.)

Q: What are some of your favorite American comics?

A: I like Ashley Wood's *Hellspawn* and many others. I tend to be an omnivore where comics are concerned.

Q: And your favorite artists?

A: Ashley Wood, Simon Bisley, Kent Williams, and John Van Fleet.

Q: I heard you went to the August 2003 Toy Con in Hong Kong. What was the reason for the trip?

A: I'm extremely interested in dolls and action figures that depict Hong Kong's street culture. I'm making some of my own action figures, too. I just wanted to know what was new in the field.


Q: What kind of figures do you like?

A: My taste changes every day...but one thing that's been consistent is that I like a kind of belligerent look in my action figures. I also like Michael Lau's Urban Vinyl street culture-style works.

Q: What kinds of music and films do you like?

A: It's all about style for me as far as films are concerned. I don't care about the content. As for music, I like anything that has a groovy beat. (Sometimes I enjoy listening to film soundtracks as well.)

Want to see more from Min-Woo? Pick up a copy of *justice N mercy* wherever books are sold!




Dear Manga 101,
What is the correct term for "animation" in Japanese? When I tried to ask for directions to a comic store in Japan, the store employees gave me a confused look. I tried anime, animation, comic, then finally manga. :(Did I say it in the wrong tone?
~RasperiHevn, Age 24, California

Dear RH,
Well, it could have been that the employees were intimidated by a gaijin suddenly asking them questions. Sometimes Japanese people are shy and assume that a foreigner can't speak Japanese, so they block everything out and try to escape. Also, we Americans assume that everyone in Japan knows everything about anime and manga. This isn't true at all—most Japanese people are as clueless as normal Americans on the subject.

Dear Manga 101,
I was wondering two things.
1. Why does the Sgt. (from *Sgt. Frog*) love Gundams so much?
2. Will we see more Gundam-making in the *Sgt. Frog* series?
~MCM IV, Age 19, Cedar Rapids IA

Does someone
need a reason
to love Gundam?!

Dear MCM IV,
Does someone need a reason to love Gundam?! They're big, bad robots beating each other up! Plus all those points of articulation! Besides, they give Sgt. Keroro something to do while he suffers from a chronic case of IPD (Invasion Procrastination Disorder). Oh, and he also uses the Gundam models as a foil for avoiding his longstanding issues with his father. (This ties in with the IPD—it's technically an anxiety disorder, frequently manifested in the hoarding of small objects that mimic battle scenarios, justifying the avoidance of real life ones.)



Dear Manga 101,
Will TOKYOPOP be publishing manga from American artists only through the Rising Stars contest? Or will there be ways to hand things in other than through the competition? In other words, will TOKYOPOP eventually start series of its own or will you just continue licensing from Japan and Korea?
~K.L.S., Age 11, Edmonton, Alberta

Dear K.L.S.,
TOKYOPOP is working hard to create more and more original manga. Check out the previews in this issue and on www.TOKYOPOP.com. Manga such as *Bizenghast*, *Mark of the Succubus*, *A Midnight Opera*, and *Dramacon* are just a few of the many series that TOKYOPOP has conceived with home-grown talent. TOKYOPOP is

Oh, if only there
were more *Cyborg*
009 fans like you!

also trying to create
more series like
Princess Ai and
Warcraft, which are drawn

by established Japanese and Korean
artists. If you are unable to enter the Rising

Stars contests, you can always make
a submission. Check www.TOKYOPOP.com/aboutus/submissions for more
details! And we always have editors at
the conventions to review portfolios of
aspiring manga-ka.

Dear Manga 101,
Why is TOKYOPOP only publishing
Cyborg 009 until vol. 10 as opposed to
continuing it after the Black
Ghost plotline?

~Rafael, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands

CYBORG009

Dear Rafael,
This is a good question for which you might see a
more satisfying answer if there were more *Cyborg*
009 fans like you! Book 10 was the original ending of
the series, so we felt it was a good place to stop for
now. Back in Japan, the series was so popular that
Ishinomori-sensei was asked to continue the series
and did so. But he unfortunately passed away before
he could give the series the proper conclusion it
deserved, so that was another factor in our decision
to stop at volume 10. But tell your friends about
this groundbreaking series—maybe a student of
Ishinomori-sensei will be
inspired to pick up the
Cyborg ball!



manga 101

HEY, MANGA DAWGS! Thanks for the deluge of letters and emails with your questions
about all that is manga. In this issue I'll try my best to answer your questions about how
manga is made, what's the story with the original double-zero hero and just what exactly
IPD is. Oh, and to those dudes who were expecting to see Lil, sorry about that. Hopefully I
can be your straight guy for the shonen ai.

~Alexis Kirsch

YOU GO, SHOJO!

HEY, LADIES! If you love manga like we love manga, then you know that many of the themes we read about can apply to our day-to-day lives. Yes, we're talking about boys and relationships and boys and...well, you get the idea. The following is a list of storylines and character traits that we've come across in our manga travels—each is taken from current TOKYOPOP titles. We will admit that not every example is exactly relevant to the world in which we all live, but that's where the fun begins. How does your life compare to manga? Well, you're gonna have to read each question and see which answers apply to you and your life, and score yourself accordingly. **Good Luck!**



1. Which of the following statements are true when sizing up a potential boyfriend:

- ☐ It is important that we are able to wear the same dresses (5 pts)
- ☐ It is important that we are able to share jewelry (2 pts)
- ☐ It is important that he lets me communicate with lost souls (2pts)
- ☐ It is important that he is actually male (5 pts)

2. The guy you are involved with just got a haircut. This is important because:

- ☐ Short hair makes him cute (2 pts)
- ☐ His hairstyle will tell you whether or not he steals (2 pts)
- ☐ You might break up with him if he stops using mousse (2 pts)
- ☐ Your entire perception of him changes according to the length of his bangs (2 pts)

3. Which of the following describes the person you would be most like likely to marry:

- ☐ The guy your father has vowed to kill because he's in a rival mafia gang (2 pts)
- ☐ The guy your parents promised you to...way back when you were three (4 pts)
- ☐ The guy who cross-dresses to look like the country's top female pop singer (4 pts)
- ☐ The guy who is undead (2 pts)
- ☐ The guy who is stalking you (5 pts)
- ☐ The guy who promises to do his best (10 pts)



4. When leaving the house in a hurry, what are you most likely to forget:

- ☐ To put on underwear (2 pts)
- ☐ Your AK-47 (2 pts)
- ☐ That you're married (4 pts)
- ☐ That you had a child (4 pts)

5. Check any of the following that have happened to you:

- ☐ You were placed under a zombie curse (2 pts)
- ☐ The devil tried to text message you on your cell phone (2 pts)
- ☐ You slipped through a portal in the girls' locker room shower (2 pts)
- ☐ Your memory has been wiped out, and strange figures are after you (2 pts)

7. You are stranded on a desert island. What is the first thing you do:

- ☐ Find suitable water/food rations (2 pts)
- ☐ Devise a way to signal for help (2 pts)
- ☐ Locate appropriate shelter (2 pts)
- ☐ Make a thong bikini out of palm leaves (10 pts)

Bonus Question—Extra Credit!

Give yourself 1 point each if you have:

- ☐ A talking cat
- ☐ A talking bird
- ☐ A talking hamster

Super-Deluxe Extra

Credit Question—

Give yourself 5 points if:

- ☐ All your pets talk



answer key

Okay, now you're done—total up your score and look to the right. And don't worry, no matter what your score is, there's definitely enough manga in you to go around!

10-15 POINTS

You might need some time on your own before you commit to anyone; however, your life might be grounded in more reality than manga can handle!

15-20 POINTS

You're checking out your relationship options and keeping your eyes open for love. Also, you should investigate whether or not you have a long-lost twin.

21-25 POINTS

Your life's manga melo-drama levels are heading up the charts. And you're probably talking to your pet a little too much!

26 OR MORE POINTS

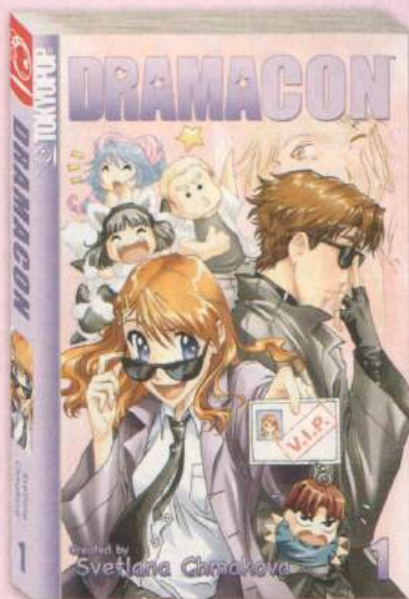
Your life is an open book... an open manga book, that is!



Dramaicon

DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR FIRST TIME...AT AN ANIME CONVENTION?

Svetlana Chmakova was born and raised in Russia and moved to Canada at the tender age of 16. She claims to have slept through Sheridan College, but she must have managed to study enough on a subconscious level to receive a Classical Animation diploma. Svetlana is currently a freelance artist working on stuff that mostly has nothing to do with animation—she suspects it has something to do with the fact that comics now own her soul.



One of the really awesome things about being an anime and manga fan is that sense of community that comes along with it. Anime clubs, online fan communities and conventions all help to create a network. Anime conventions are pretty amazing experiences, and in *Dramaicon*, Svetlana has done a brilliant job of making that experience come alive for the reader. However, the action takes a backseat to the relationships and the romance that our heroine, Christie, an aspiring comic book writer, runs into at her first-ever fan con. Svet captures all the confusion and heartache of first (and then second) love, and the struggle of trying to grow up as an artist and as a person, by setting her story in a chaotic, sometimes hostile, but always fascinating environment.

~Lillian Diaz-Przybyl





**Mysterious Guy
+ Sunglasses =
Deep Dark
Secret?**

17

Svet's works include
two manga-style online
comics: "Chasing
Rainbows" on
www.girlamatic.com
and "Night Silver" at
www.wirepop.com.
See our little Q & A for
more info about these
comics.

>> Each chapter opener in *Dramaicon* features a different character from the manga series. Why did the manga-ka design the book this way? She wanted to show pretty pictures!

In designing her characters, Svetlana goes for realism over idealism. She prefers to create characters who may be a little overweight, not so skin-and-bones. Here here, Svet!

Right off the bat, here's a taste of Svet's witty writing style (and sight gags...sorry, Mr. Raccoon).



The first twenty or so pages of the book are very dense and fast-paced, which reflects the feel and verve of a real convention. >>



"Yatta" is a general exclamation in Japanese, as in "I did it!" or "Yeah!"



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www.TOKYOPOP.com

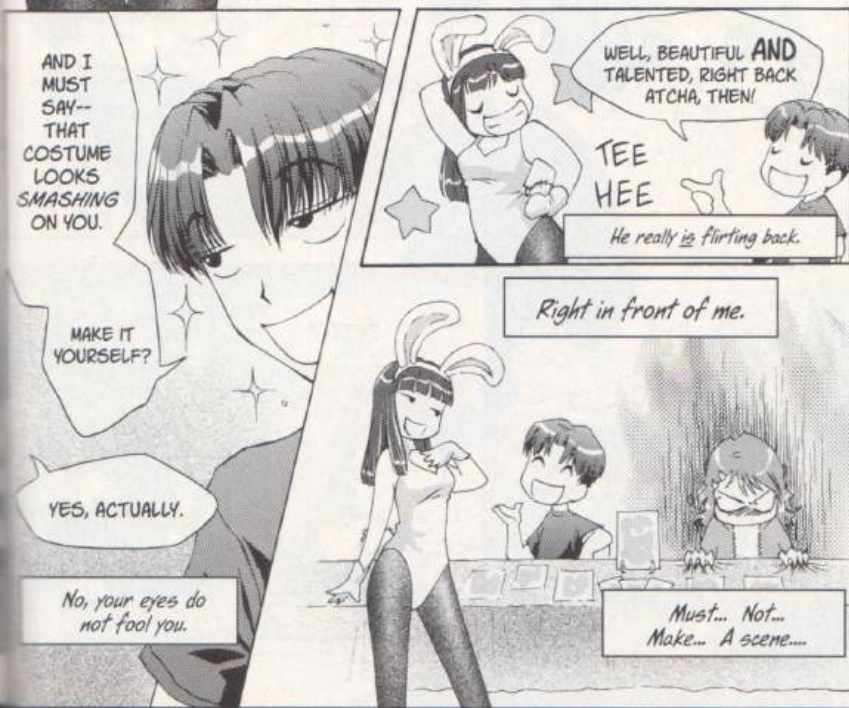
>> This convention was not based on any that Svetlana has attended. She wanted to call this "Yume Con," until she discovered that there actually was a Yume Con!

SIGN UP FOR FREE MANGA AT
www.TOKYOPOP.com

Girls with
animal ears are
a prominent
feature of
this manga.



As we sat down with Svetlana to do the editorial commentary for this page, she suddenly began screaming! Svet noticed that she missed the highlights in the hair in panel two. Oh, the things that we miss! >>



In creating the Wary City logo and packaging (top panel), Svetlana had to tone down her art style so that it looked like the characters—and not Svet—designed it.

>> The comic *Wary City*, which features a fair amount of blood, is right up Derek's ally. Also in keeping with his modus operandi, he knows that the way to a cosplayer's heart is to flatter her!

Hmmm...

Why does Derek go to conventions? Is it for the opportunity to score with the ladies?



Note the daggers and flames in the last panel...ouch!

The progression showing Christie's growing anger in the top three panels is one of the editor's favorite moments in the chapter. Svetlana effectively creates an emotional roller coaster within Christie. >>



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WWW.TOKYOPOP.COM

>> Svetlana confesses that she likes drawing kimonos. However, she does not own a kimono, but desperately wants one. Perhaps that's why she likes drawing this cool garment!

Worst excuse ever: "We were just rehearsing a scene."



The pushing and shoving in the bottom panel shows the busy, chaotic environment of the convention. This constant feeling of suffocation comes from Svet's personal experience. >>



Clothes make the man?

Svetlana based Matt's

outfit on what she thought

was cool.

**I wonder why
he wears
sunglasses
inside?**

>> Christie is seventeen and having a rather rough time at her first convention. She's also a very open character who doesn't try to hide her feelings or hold anything back. She just wants everyone to get along.

**Matt's a
sucker for a
crying girl.**

The attention to detail—see the cosplayers hanging out on the floor—throughout the manga adds to the authentic portrayal of a con. (Hey, sometimes we just need to sit down!)



The cosplay characters shown throughout the manga are from the deep, creative recesses of Svetlana's mind. They are not representations of real characters—Svetlana was concerned about a lawsuit. (Thanks, Svet!) >>



>> Christie is choosing her words very carefully here. (Hey, give her a break—crying really dehydrates you!) And the backhanded compliment—"No offense, but..."—can't help with what she's just experienced!

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WWW.TOKYOPOP.COM



The comic montage at the top is somewhat representative of Svetlana's experience at her first con, which wasn't too successful (but very memorable)! She had no idea what to expect. You've come a long way, Svet! >>



...so Christie takes the advice to heart and writes it down!

Again, Matt is the voice of reason. Sometimes the obvious answer to a problem is right in front of you!

>> Christie's obviously torn: She could tell Derek to stop being such a jerk...but then she's worried that he'd dump her. And we all know nothing's worse than being dumped! (Or is it?)

SIGN UP FOR FREE MANGA AT
www.TOKYOPOP.com

As Tina Turner
says, "What's
love go to
do with it?"



Can you believe Christie wants to work it out?! There's something to be said about not giving up. And don't you love the full spectrum of emotions displayed here? >>



Okay, Derek in a bikini: Terrifying!



Now Christie is wondering why he's wearing sunglasses. The body language and expressions speak volumes.

>> When it's all said and done, Derek isn't really that bad a guy. Under different circumstances, perhaps they'd be good friends. Perhaps we'll see this later in the manga...

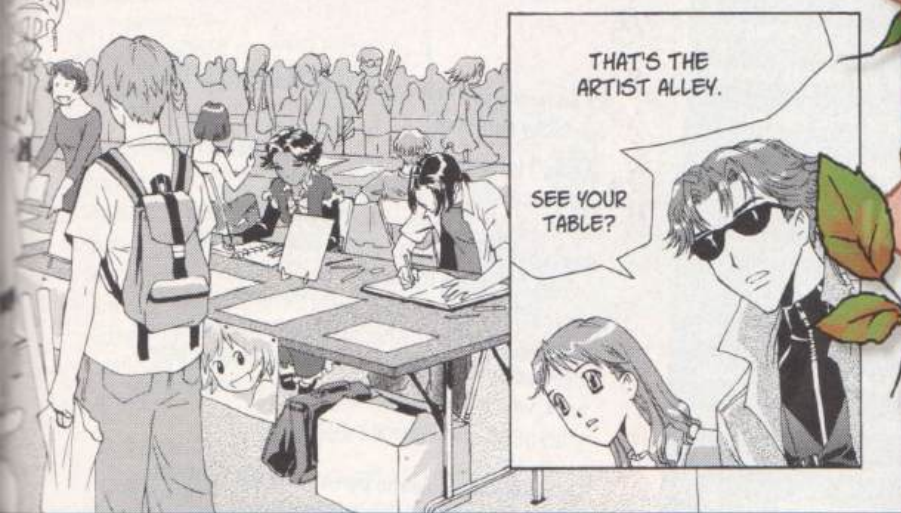
Come on, folks. Make sure
you grab a map before
entering the convention.

Planning...
planning...
planning!



Forward-thinking? Matt is holding Christie's hand now!

Svetlana confesses that she really likes Christie's little sweater, which is inspired by Svet's own wardrobe. And maybe we'll see Christie get a makeover in volume 2—Svet admits that Christie's hair is very hard to draw! >>



>> Svetlana labored over the crowd scenes here and throughout her manga. She didn't want the background to look rushed or thrown together, but the crowd scene is never-ending, just how she wanted to portray it.



OH, THE DRAMA CON! WHAT'S NEXT?

BEFORE WE CONTINUE, I HAVE TO ADMIT SOMETHING:

I'd receive the final pages for a given chapter, and just flipping through them, even without the text dropped into the balloons, would be enough to make me laugh out loud or blush right along with poor, flustered Christie. Love it!

But getting back to the manga series, you should know that things will just keep getting hotter for Christie from here on out. She's got a boyfriend, but suddenly she's not sure if he's really the one for her, and the events of the con keep throwing her in Matt's path. Matt's somewhat of a mystery, too. He's always got those wacky sunglasses on, and he can't seem to decide if he wants to be nice to Christie or just be a sarcastic jerk. Throw in an encounter with Lida Zeff, manga-ka extraordinaire, and Christie's facing one surprise after another.

creator interview SVETLANA CHMAKOVA

SVETLANA HAS ADMITTED THAT HER FAVORITE HOBBIES are sleeping, reading more comics than is healthy for her wallet, and fighting with the family cat over chair territory. We certainly do not condone violence on any level, but sleeping and reading? Music to our ears! She sounds as well-rounded and adjusted as any of us, doncha think? But what makes her tick? We decided to sit down with this Bolsheviken, who showed us she can have her cake *and* eat it, too.

Q: So how'd you end up working with TOKYOPOP, you lucky dog, you?!

SVET: I forwarded all my spam to my contact editor until he cried uncle and gave me a job. :D ...Well, okay, not really. It was actually a very gradual process—I initially got noticed because of my online comics ("Chasing Rainbows" on www.girlamatic.com and "Night Silver" on www.wirepop.com). After that initial interest, I followed up with a proper portfolio of more polished work, which really tipped the scales and made TOKYOPOP start waving a contract at me.

Q: What's your favorite part of your job? Writing cool stories? Drawing beautiful things? Hordes of adoring fans throwing themselves at your feet?

SVET: From that list—writing cool stories and drawing beautiful things. :D I am actually pretty shy with people (though apparently I hide it well), so hordes of fans would probably scare me into therapy or something. *laughs*

Q: What was the biggest change and the biggest challenge in going from publishing online (i.e. "those punks on the intarweb") to working for a more established publisher (i.e. "the pros")?

svet: Hey, whaddaya mean, "intarweb punks"? I resemble that remark! :3 I love the internet and will always keep making comics for the web, even while I am in print. Long live cyberspace! So, the biggest change: detail quality. There is a lot more you can get away with online than in professional print. What looks pretty dashing on the screen may look like bad on paper—sloppy inking, rushed toning. It all becomes very obvious.

Q: What's the hardest part of what you do? What makes you want to put a foot through your computer monitor?

svet: Make that a hammer! I like my feet and will never use them to break monitors, as they are my backup plan for when my hands start hurting from too much drawing. (I'm sure this sentence explains a lot about some of the art in my book, heh heh heh.) What makes me want to put a hammer through my monitor? Pesky editors with silly questions like "Where is the chapter, Svet? Did you know that your deadline was LAST MONTH?" Seriously, though, the hardest part is the creative process—fleshing out the vague ideas floating around in my head to be something tangible, like an actual scene with dialogue, a script, a penciled page. Ideas are aplenty. It's crafting them into something complete and worth someone's time that is the real challenge.

Q: Where do you get all your ideas?

svet: I drink a lot of sugar with very strong tea. :D Other than that, no specific place. Some story ideas come from dreams; some just suddenly form in my head, inspired by life, people, movies, books, daydreams. I daydream a lot. The idea for *Dramacon* evolved from a repeated sighting of a cool-looking cosplayer at one of the cons I frequent. I was too shy to even ask his name, so I wrote a story instead. *laughs*



Q: If you could meet one famous person, living or dead, who would it be? How about a famous manga-ka? Whose brains would you like to pick about their creative muses?

svet: I am not sure if it is she is famous or not, but I really would have liked to meet Edna St. Vincent Millay*, who was an American poet. She just sounds so cool! I could see us having tea on a quiet veranda or in a garden talking about life. Manga-ka—I have a lot of favorites, but my biggest is Rumiko Takahashi, whose work was possibly the strongest influence on my early manga-style comics. Along with (don't kill me) *Sailor Moon*.

*[Pulitzer Prize-winning American poet, 1892-1950...trust us, she's pretty famous!]

Q: Do you ever dream that you are other people? Your editor occasionally dreams that she is Luke Skywalker, you know.

svet: Almost never! Which is strange because I have "waking dreams" or "false memories" in real time, where I am experiencing something through another person's eyes. I have cinematic dreams, though. It's awesome! :D

Q: What's the two-second route to instant happiness in Svetlana-land?

svet: Instant happiness is a myth. Now, 5-second happiness, on the other hand, is easily achieved with words like "paycheck," which often translates into "more comics and books for my overburdened shelves" and "CAKE CAKE CAKE." You know,

humble little pleasures like that. Also, sleep. In very large doses. :D

Q: Did you know that Russian is, like, the sexiest language in the world?

svet: No. No, I did not. Uh, should I be scared? *considers getting a bodyguard*

Q: When's *Dramacon* volume 2 coming out? ;~)

svet: Uhm... Uhm... Hey, look, it's CLAMP! *escapes through the window while everyone's distracted* Heh heh, I am so clever...

—Lillian Diaz-Przybyl

the WRATH OF CONS

Reports from:
Tim Beedle
Hope Donovan
Matt Nixon

FROM THE EAST COAST...WEST COAST...AND
(almost) every convention in between

So how did you spend your summer vacation? If you're like us, then we know one thing: Summertime means convention time. We met thousands of you all around the country, but if you missed out, here's little recap about how we decked the convention halls with boughs of manga-ka!



Sgt. Frog gets his groove on at the TOKYOPOP booth.

anime Boston 2005, Boston, Ma

Anime Boston 2005 was a whirlwind of romping, glomping cosplayers frolicking alongside exhibitors plying their wares and displaying their latest must-have items. Booth after booth was crammed with hard-to-find manga, anime, and related merchandise. But this convention really belonged to the otaku, who showed a level of commitment and passion that was truly awesome.

At the TOKYOPOP panels, creators M. Alice Legrow (*Bizenghast*), Justin Boring (*War on Flesh*) and Svetlana Chmakova (*Dramacon*) joined editor Lillian Diaz-Przybyl in a spirited presentation on making manga. Fans and aspiring creators were given an inside look into the process that leads to becoming a manga-ka. For more on these creators, visit the online edition of our mag: www.TOKYOPOP.com.

And, of course, it wouldn't be a TOKYOPOP panel without a disco-dancing frog, fun games and cool prizes. (And whoever took my Bishonen Explosion T-shirt...I'd like it back, please!)





As lucky fans munched on burgers during the MBQ promotion...



...Felipe Smith gets his double-double on...



...and another fan proudly displays a Peach-Pit autograph.

anime expo, anaheim, ca

Burgers! Peaches! Debuts of new manga artists! And a whole lotta free manga magazines! It's difficult to condense the July 4th weekend into a few paragraphs, but here goes.

TOKYOPOP unveiled a few manga creators from the next generation of manga-ka: Hans Steinbach (*A Midnight Opera*), Felipe Smith (*MBQ*), Rivkah (*Steady Beat*) and Irene Flores and Ashly Raiti (*Mark of the Succubus*).

While watching in-booth presentations of their work followed by talks and signings, we have to admit we were a bit nervous that these first-timers might be intimidated by the demands of the day. But something cool began to happen almost instantly, as a large turnout lingered around our booth: People connected with the artists in a very immediate and intimate way. Fans took interest in these manga creators regardless of their country of origin; instead, they saw the artists as people, like themselves who happen to tell stories for a living.

But it wasn't just the newbies on display. TOKYOPOP brought over the dynamic duo Peach-Pit, creators of *DearS* and *Rozen Maiden*. Not only was it cool hanging out with gals, but we also couldn't have asked for a better panel—the combination of sophisticated questions and fan excitement was more than we could have anticipated. Then again, we do have the coolest fans on the planet. For more from the Pitters (as a core group of fans referred to them), see the interview on page 42.





Who was princess for a day? See pages 40–41!

COMIC-CON, SAN DIEGO, CA

Comic-Con San Diego was HUGE, with more than 100,000 attendees! Not to toot our own horn, but TOKYOPOP's deft publishing moves and creative deals had the floor buzzing. Two of the big draws this year were international creators Masami Tsuda (*Kare Kano*) and So-Young Lee (*Model, Arcana*). Fans attended their panel discussions with eager ears and rapt attention. When the ladies stopped by the booth for signings, it was astounding to see that the queues wrapped around the entire TOKYOPOP booth!

Elsewhere on the floor, TOKYOPOP's talented stable of American creators presented their work during several in-booth presentations. Felipe Smith, M. Alice LeGrow, and Hans Steinbach were just a few of the talented individuals who pressed the flesh at TOKYOPOP's (and their own) behest.

And lastly, the Ais have it—again! If you missed Comic-Con 2005, then you missed the Princess Ai cosplay, which proved to be event of the summer. See pages 40 and 41 for a royal recap.

The spectrum of emotions was definitely on display...



...as everyone was gearing up to do Takuha!



WIZARD CHICAGO

In comparison to San Diego Comic-Con, Wizard World had fewer panels and workshops. The costumed attendees didn't turn out in droves, even if there was a decent Batman and a giant-size Pikachu hanging out at the Nintendo booth. Still, with some big name celebs like Kevin Smith, Alex Ross and Frank Miller, we wondered—would there be room in the Windy City for TOKYOPOP to spread the word about manga? Of course!

With an intern army spreading the word about our manga mag, and in-booth features highlighting creators Felipe Smith (*MBQ*) and Rivkah (*Steady Beat*), Middle America will never be the same! We also brought special guests from *Rising Stars of Manga 5*: winners Joshua Elder, Erich Owen and George Alexopoulos, who talked through the finer points of his semi-autobiographical story "Can I Sit Here?" These are members of the next generation of manga-ka, and we couldn't have been more pleased with how they were received. The momentum from the summer cons definitely continued in the Second City!

Present Arms: Felipe Smith (right) was everywhere this summer!

ANIZONA, PHOENIX, AZ

2005 marked the first year for AniZona, but judging from the response it received, we don't think it will be the last—everyone in attendance seemed to have a ball. We saw a Sephiroth dancing to "I'm Walking on Sunshine." Strange, yes. But not so weird when you realize that Yoshitaka Amano was the guest of honor.

Amano-san is known for his concept designs for the *Final Fantasy* video games as well as his work on *Gatchaman* and *Vampire Hunter D*. The panels focused primarily on his video game work, which *Final Fantasy* fans loved. And there were plenty of them to go around, particularly among the convention's cosplayers. In fact, there were times when the convention floor looked less like a con and more like some sort of Ivalice/Midgar border crossing.

Fan art star Kristen Bibby stopped by the Comic-Con booth to show off her work from the first issue of *Takuhi*. (below)



Cosplayers were in Hevn at AniZona.



OTAKON, BALTIMORE, MD

TOKYOPOP's first visit to Otakon proved to be an unforgettable experience. Once again, we unveiled more future manga stars—fans lined up to see old convention pals Felipe Smith (*MBQ*) and Marty LeGrow (*Bizenghast*), along with some new friends: Svetlana Chmakova (*Dramacon*), Jen Lee Quick (*Off*Beat*), Christy Lijewski (*RE:Play*), Becky Cloonan (*East Coast Rising*), Pop Mhan (*Blank*) and Ashly Raiti and Irene Flores (*Mark of the Succubus*).

But that's not all. Straight from Japan, making her Otakon debut, was the Gothic Lolita queen herself: Mitsukazu Mihara! TOKYOPOP had the pleasure and privilege of hosting this manga goddess, creator of *Doll*, *Haunted House*, *Happy Family*, and many more sophisticated and haunting manga series. The feeling was unanimous: Mihara-sensei (left) is a doll!

WELL, DEAR FRIENDS, TIME FLIES WHEN YOU'RE HAVING FUN. THAT—GASP!—IS OUR CONVENTION ROUNDUP. UNTIL NEXT YEAR—OR SOONER!

THE PRINCESS AI COSPLAY EVENT AT
COMIC-CON INTERNATIONAL

PRINCESS FOR A DAY



Carly B—from Carly-fornia—took home the grand prize!



The five finalists vogue for the crowd...



...and for Gene Simmons!

Take twenty beautiful ladies who make men weak in the knees; add four judges who give Simon Cowell a run for his euros; throw in hundreds of dollars in fab prizes; mix in cool struts down the catwalk, and, of course, a wardrobe malfunction; have it all witnessed by hundreds of fans and press; and you've got the *Princess Ai* cosplay contest.

With a grand prize package worth nearly \$500 in prizes—comprising the entire line of *Princess Ai* dolls from Bleeding Edge, a cell phone installed with *Princess Ai* wallpaper and exclusive downloads, and the entire set of *Princess Ai* merchandise—the tension was palpable at the TOKYOPOP

booth, as the lights, cameras, and buzzing crowd crescendoed to a cacaphony.

In the end, it all came down to attitude. Grand Prize Winner Carly B not only wore platforms that were out of this world—literally—but she held true to the number one rule of cosplaying: Stay in character, no matter how badly you fall! The first runner-up, Stephanie Mecum, oozed cool—and much more—in her winged outfit, complete with a guitar that moments earlier was strummed upon by rock legend Gene Simmons of KISS. Third prize winner Sarah Edge was a vision in purple.

It was a memorable time for everyone—until next year!



The judges confer...



...as the contestants wait anxiously.



COSPLAYING COSMETICS:

THE DOS AND NEVER-EVER DOS OF COSPLAYING

TOKYOPOP's Princess Ai cosplay contest brought to light a few of the classics dos—and do nots—of cosplaying. For you fans who may have missed the summer extravaganza, here's a handy cheat sheet to make sure you have a fulfilled—and fully clothed—experience.

Rule #1: DO NOT wear stiletto heels. Absolutely under no circumstance should you wear shoes that are taller than you are. As some of the more gravity-challenged Princess Ai cosplayers realized, it is very hard to strut yourself up stairs when your legs are longer than the yellow brick road.

Rule #2: DO remember cosplaying is a family oriented event. Which means you should follow the 1/3 rule...okay, I'll be realistic—the 1/4 rule. At least 1/4 of your body should be covered by clothes at any given time.

Rule #3: DO practice your cosplay. The art of the celebration takes mere minutes to practice, but if left unperfected, can spell certain doom for a scantily clad cosplayer. Costume malfunctions in the pectoral region can be embarrassing and hindering to your overall performance. You know how to get to Carnegie Hall? Practice...practice...practice.

Rule #4: DO NOT forget to have fun. Even if you end up breaking all other aforementioned rules, passing rule #4 will mean success. As all fellow cosplayers know, having fun includes getting free stuff, looking hot, getting that cute boy's number, and making new friends.

~Spencer Boyle



THE HOST SPEAKS: EMCEE SQUARED

Two hours before show time a panicked thought pierced my consciousness—I have nothing cute to wear as host of TOKYOPOP'S first Princess Ai cosplay contest! With the *Mission Impossible* theme in mind, I power-walked to the nearest mall and raided everything that was pink, black and cute. The fashion gods smiled upon me that day and I was out the door with a new outfit in less than 20 minutes. Back at the TOKYOPOP booth, the lights, cameras, and crowd were waiting. This was it! Armed with my microphone, I was feeling sassy and ready to host this thing.

The 200-strong audience was rapt, our judges were in good humor, and the contestants looked incredible. If you couldn't tell that I was having any fun at all, then you need some glasses, my friend, because I was having a blast. :)

~Candice Uyloan



Strike a pose!



Microphone check-one-two, one-two!

a couple of dears: an interview with peach-pit

at this summer's anime-expo in anaheim, california, TOKYOPOP had the pleasure of hosting manga creators Banri Sendou and Shibuko Ebara, the dynamic duo behind Peach-Pit. From their experience on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and witnessing curious canines to getting a hint of the behind-the-scenes in their studio, this dynamic duo was a sweet treat for all manga fans.



TOKYOPOP: So we heard you visited Disneyland—what did you think?

PEACH-PIT: We had a great time at Disneyland! But we also went to the [Grauman's] Chinese Theater in Hollywood, where we saw the handprints in the Walk of Fame. It was different than we expected. L.A. is so pretty and filled with cool people. The city looks very sophisticated.

TOKYOPOP: Did you see any movie stars while you were there?

PEACH-PIT: No (sighs), but we saw a Johnny Depp look-alike.

TOKYOPOP: Ha ha! Which movie stars did you want to see?

PEACH-PIT: Christian Slater or Johnny Depp—the real one, that is!

TOKYOPOP: Did you have any odd experiences during your travels in L.A.?

PEACH-PIT: Everyone we've met seemed very cheerful and friendly. One thing we saw that was pretty funny was when we were driving. We kept seeing dogs that were really hyper and running around. One was obsessed with a tennis ball, jumping

around while the ball was in its mouth; another pulled its owner all over the place, especially when they were crossing the street. (Ebara-sensei imitates a dog pulling its owner.) This can be dangerous in Los Angeles traffic!

TOKYOPOP: Glad you survived! So what's Anime Expo been like for you?

PEACH-PIT: Well, the booth next to TOKYOPOP's was loud at one point, drumming and throwing out gifts, which startled us. We've never been to events where we interact directly with the fans, so it's a bit new. We really wish we could speak English because the language barrier can be difficult to tell our fans how much we appreciate them. Fortunately we have good translators.

TOKYOPOP: If the crowds are any indication, they loved you. Did you meet any of our American creators? What do you think of their manga? (We show Peach-Pit art from a few series, including *Dramacon*, *Sokora Refugees* and *Steady Beat*.)

PEACH-PIT: Wow, we didn't realize that some of them were American artists. We can't tell the difference between your American artists and Japanese artists. It's all very pretty.

TOKYOPOP: Thanks for the compliment. So, not to fish for even more compliments, but can you tell us what it is like to work with a U.S. publisher?

PEACH-PIT: The obvious difference is the language. In Japan, we can talk directly with the publisher, but here there are layers that communication needs to go through. But we're always very interested in how things are translated when it's something unique to Japanese culture. In the Japanese edition of *DearS*, the teacher is an English teacher, but for the U.S. edition, we were interested to see she was now a Spanish teacher. We also wonder how specific phrases and expressions could be translated and still be funny. We met the editor, Luis, and he's very passionate about getting across the message in the manga.



TOKYOPOP: Speaking of *DearS*, how did you come up with the idea for the manga? (Sendou-sensei and Ebara-sensei laugh.)

PEACH-PIT: We sat down and wondered what it would be like for an outer space species living in a human environment. We wanted to throw characters together

from different worlds and look at how they would interact with each other. This lends itself to a lot of comedic episodes and situations.

TOKYOPOP: How do you work together?

PEACH-PIT: It depends on the title. We divide the art and writing, depending on the series.

TOKYOPOP: But what about *DearS*?

PEACH-PIT: Sendou does the original story concept and rough draft. Ebara does the panel layout and Sendou does the final art. For *Rozen Maiden*, Sendou did the layout and Ebara did the art.

TOKYOPOP: What is the future of Peach-Pit?

PEACH-PIT: We are working on the three manga series that are keeping us very busy. *DearS* and *Rozen Maiden*, which TOKYOPOP is publishing in America, and *Zombie Loan*. We want to create these stories so that they will continue to be popular here and in Japan. Other than creating those manga, we have no immediate plans for the future. (sighs)

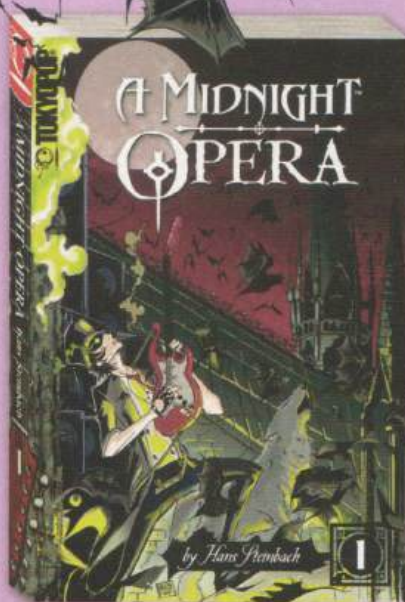
TOKYOPOP: Thanks for your time. Looks like you have a big line of fans waiting for you!



a MIDNIGHT OPERA

IMMORTALITY, REDEMPTION AND BITTERSWEET LOVE...

I have always been a fan of the Goth aesthetic, and not just black lipstick and fishnets (though that stuff does help), but the richly emotional, dark-themed, highly Romantic transcendence of mind and mortal flesh that makes up the tapestry of Gothic fiction. And finally here, teamed up with artist Hans "Hanzo" Steinbach, I get to work on something drenched in such an aesthetic.



For nearly a millennium, undead creatures have blended into a Europe steeped in religious dogma and intolerance. These beasts of the night allied themselves with factions of mortal men aimed at shaking the foundations of the Catholic Church and freeing society from its strangling grip. But always were their true natures hidden, often even from each other, and the world was unable and unwilling to accept the existence of extra-mortal beings. *A Midnight Opera* is the story of two undead brothers, Ein and Leroux DeLaLune, divided in this epic struggle, who are forced to reconcile their differences in the modern day to stop an open assault on mankind by the dissatisfied elements among the rest of the undead.

~Luis Reyes



Although the scene you are about to read takes place in 1609, much of the action in the manga takes place in the modern day.

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>> Hanzo plays with normal conventions of horror films, such as the creaking of a door to reveal a monster. However it is not the main character scared of the beast, but the beast scared of the main character.

**The dichotomy
of the two
brothers is
revealed.**

Surprisingly enough, Hanzo doesn't have any formal art training. His sensibilities have been informed by his worldly travel and subsequent understanding of many different cultures.



The peaceful Ein appeals to his far more impulsive brother Leroux to restrain himself. Notice the cloudy mist emanating from Leroux's left eye. In the world Hanzo has created, the mark of the undead is that eerily smoking eye. >>



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The wild beast
 from the previous
 page begins
 to show his
 human agony.

>> It is the duality of the human and the beast in one body that lies at the core of the manga story. (Well, pretty much any story about werewolves and vampires, but especially at the core of *this* story about werewolves and vampires.)



Leroux's comment in the second panel illustrates his firm religious convictions.



Ein shares his brother's religious convictions to a certain extent, but the political and social ramifications of their involvement in the Huguenot church are far more important to him. And over the centuries, Ein drifts further and further from the kind of doctrine his brother holds so dear. >>

WHAT'S NEXT FOR A MIDNIGHT OPERA

THE SCENE YOU JUST READ TOOK PLACE IN 1609, AS THE FUTURE rock star Ein DeLaLune is hunted by the society of the undead, the Order of the Catholic Church and his very own brother. Everyone wants Ein for his incredible ability to straddle the divide between man and monster. All Ein wants is for that identity to fade into the backdrop of his life forever. And all we want you to do is to check out www.TOKYOPOP.com for more darkly addictive chapters of *A Midnight Opera*.

Volume one of the series focuses on Ein, who fled his brethren in the early 19th century only to surface early in the 21st century as an underground Goth metal sensation. But with his newfound fame comes the exposure that brings all the demons from his past. And the Ein who wanted simply to pursue a life of music and love will find that he may have no other choice but to forsake both and assume the weight of all salvation on his shoulders.

Read the entire
first chapter at
www.TOKYOPOP.com



I LUV HALLOWEEN PAPIER-MÂCHÉ MADNESS

1 Newspapers, beach ball, white glue, paint, brushes, pink tissue paper, cardboard, petroleum jelly—under \$15 at your 99 cents store.



SO WHO DOESN'T LOVE HALLOWEEN?

In honor of TOKYOPOP's release of *I Luv Halloween*, editor Rob Valois grabbed a few of his closest friends around the office to make the ultimate in headgear—*I Luv Halloween*-style! Rob pays homage to Pig Pig, the character from *I Luv Halloween* who is a bit slovenly and gross, and perhaps even borderline feral. Think there's more to this character than ham, bacon or pork chops? Think again! Let's follow Rob as he transforms into the ultimate magical animal.



Check out Pig Pig and read
I Luv Halloween for FREE:
www.TOKYOPOP.com



One of the best things about being an editor at TOKYOPOP? You can make the junior editors do all the work.



2 We used manila folders to make the snout and hat.



3 Make sure you covered the beach ball with the petroleum jelly! Dip strips of newspaper into your hot-water-&-glue mixture, then wrap away.





All those years of paint-by-numbers finally pay off!



4 While the head is still wet, wrap the strips of pink tissue paper.

5 Apply eyes, ears, nose, hat. Then paint away!



6 Place pig head on an unsuspecting sucker... uhm, I mean, intern.





When do you
take the beach
ball out?

7 To be... or not to
be Pig Pig. (What is
Ham-let really about?)



8 Now you're ready to
create much mischief
and mayhem!

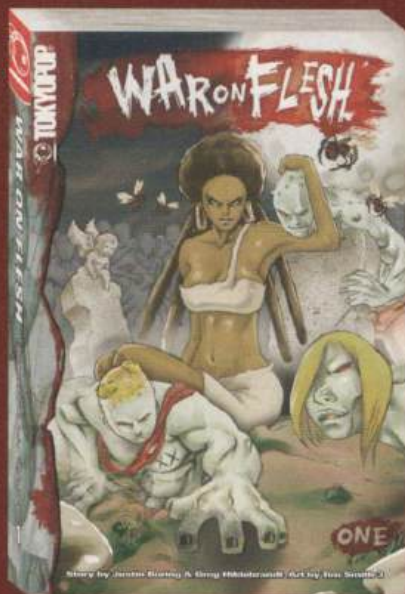


Wait—how can you see if there
are no eyes cut out?

WAR ON FLESH

A DECLARATION OF WAR ON THE LIVING, A WAR ON ALL SOULS, AND A WAR ON FLESH!

Fans probably know Justin Boring's work—he was an apprentice with Backwood Films—the talent responsible for such films as *The Boneyard*. Boring's co-writer, Greg Hildebrandt, has worked in all aspects of television and film production, and he has penned several novels, screenplays, and comics. The artist Tim Smith 3 grew up in Cleveland and has done work for Marvel, DC, Archie, and Devil's Due. Recently, Smith went back to Ohio, but his city was gone.



War on Flesh is not your typical zombie thriller. It's a tale of ancient evil and Voodoo magic, where undead minions are animated to serve their master and bring him ultimate power! Beginning in Haiti hundreds of years ago, a maniacal witch doctor turns his tribesmen into the walking dead in a quest to gain the favor of the gods of darkness.

Though he is personally denied, the promise of power lies in his bloodline—guaranteeing that his descendant will reign supreme!

A word of caution to the youngsters out there: Children shouldn't play with dead things. *War on Flesh* is an OT-rated chiller thriller.

~Aaron Suhr

THE JUNGLES OF BUTAM
SATA, HAITI...HUNDREDS
OF YEARS AGO...

JUST AS THE
POWER OF
VOODOO CAN
TAKE LIFE...

Voodoo is a religion
derived from African
polytheism and
ancestor worship,
and it is practiced
chiefly in Haiti.

...IT CAN
ALSO GIVE
LIFE....

>> The editor confesses: Every time I see this page, I think that the spear from panel 2 is some sort of headdress for the guy in panel 3. ^ _ ^



Dr. Ew Chott Channy is the human factor necessary in breaching the boundary between the world of the living and the world of the dead. He was groomed for this purpose from the day he was born, chosen by the Dark Forces to carry out their evil needs.

Etymology of Voodoo: Louisiana Creole voodoo, probably from Ewe vódu tutelary deity, demon.



One of my favorite things about this book is Dr. Ew Chott Channy and his stylish dreads! Coolest hair ever?! >>



Or, Voodoo may be a corruption of the word *vodun*, which means god or spirit in the West African Fon language.

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>> In preparation for his dark ritual, one can guess the sort of violence the good doctor is about to inflict here...

CHECK OUT MORE OF THE MANGA:
WWW.TOKYOPOP.COM



In West Africa,
 where Vodoun
 originated, there
 is not to be found
 anything resembling
 a "Voodoo doll."



Little does Sergot know, the infant who his children find on the edge of the village is none other than his sworn enemy's only child. In taking in this orphan, he is setting in motion the very series of events that his men died to prevent... >>

WHAT'S NEXT FOR WAR ON FLESH

AS THE WAR ON FLESH CONTINUES, DR. EW CHOTT CHANNY'S LEGACY begins to reveal itself, with the birth of Jean Tois De Contier, the key to unlocking the Voodoo curse and unleashing an army of the undead. In the poverty-stricken village of Dunjavi, Jamaica, his father, Vecture, is corrupted and driven mad by the Dark Forces—who want Jean Tois to carry out their own evil designs...



Tim Smith 3 gives props to editor Aaron Suhr!

The Voodoo dolls

so recognizable to

Westerners were most

likely incorporated into

American culture from

European folk magic.



EVOLUTION

OF a manga: PSY-COMM

HELLO AND WELCOME TO THE "EVOLUTION OF A MANGA"! I'M HERE to take you through the various production stages of a TOKYOPOP manga. Using two pages from *Psy-Comm*, you'll see the whole process; from script, to pencils, to inks, tones and the final lettering. So come along, I'll introduce you to the crew.



PAGE 45

Panel 1.

INT. BOARDROOM
 We're watching a screen—the same stuff we saw earlier, Mark pointing back at the field, only with some TV-style pixilation.

DIRECTOR 1 (O.S.)
 Are we going to talk about Mark Leit?

Panel 2.

Now we see a DIRECTOR— a faceless statue sitting behind a boardroom table.

CAPTION

Board of Directors Meeting,
 Electromedia Corp.



Panel 3.

Now we see a row of them. Another faceless statue speaks. These shots are meant to convey a weird paranoia, lots of low angles of the Directors, going back into the distance, as if there were many more than the ten or so that there are at the table.

DIRECTOR 2:
 Let us discuss the parade.



Panel 4.

On his face, a smeared reflection of the parade swans—other directors in the background.

DIRECTOR 2:

Yes. The citizens dispersed with few injuries, but a heightened stress level. Rentals of romance, pornography and comedy rose 3% in the following twelve hours as the populace soothed its nerves.

I think it was an ingenious move on the part of the writers, Jason Henderson and Tony Salvaggio, to have the members of the board not appear in person, but rather to be represented by faceless, identical mannequin-like avatars.

>>

STAGE 1

SCRIPT

<< This is the boardroom scene from *Psy-Comm*, where Electromedia Corp's Board of Directors contemplate the future of our hero, Mark Leit. It's a very creepy scene, illustrating the Orwellian nature of this future, corporate-controlled society.

PAGE 46

Panel 1.

A mannequin director raises a frozen, plaster hand. Its face was formed a smeared smiley.

DIRECTOR 2

Terrorists should attack more often. They make such great news.

Panel 2.

All of the director masks form smiley faces.

DIRECTORS

Ha ha.

Ha ha.

Ha ha.

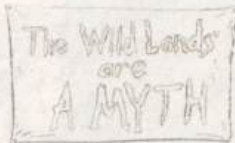


Panel 3.

The screen circles over to Suki Blair, reporting.

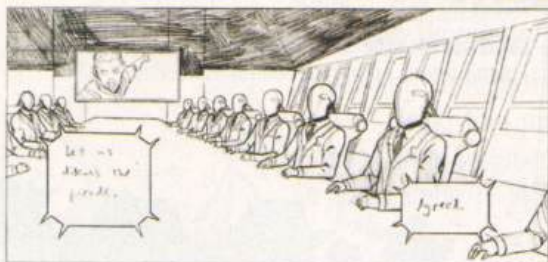
DIRECTOR 2

Suki Blair has been reporting for three nights in a row that the attack on the parade AND the sabotage of the statues was the work of Wild Land Revolutionaries.



Panel 4.

On the screen, a sign on a wall says:
 SIGN
 The Wild Lands are a Myth!



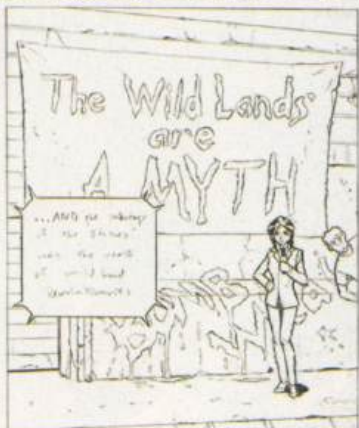
STAGE 2

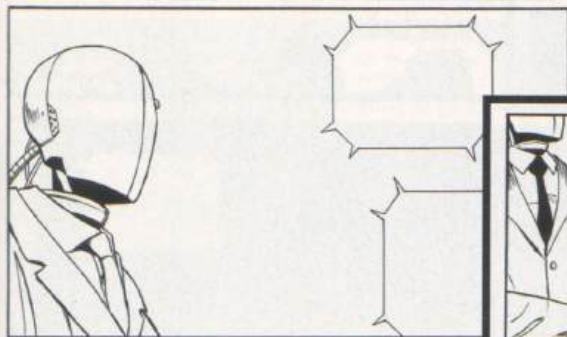
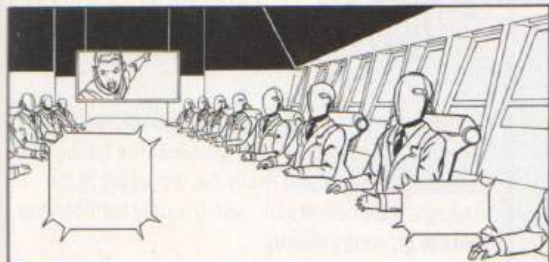
PENCILS

◀◀ These were challenging pages to translate visually (dummies in suits!), but artist Shane Granger pulled it off admirably. His use of perspective and the minimalist design of the mannequins strike the ominous, sterile tone of the scene perfectly.

At the bottom of the page we see reporter Suki Blair, all grown up and still covering Mark's exploits. Shane did a great job of maturing her—earlier in the manga we flash back six years—without making her look like a completely different character.

>>





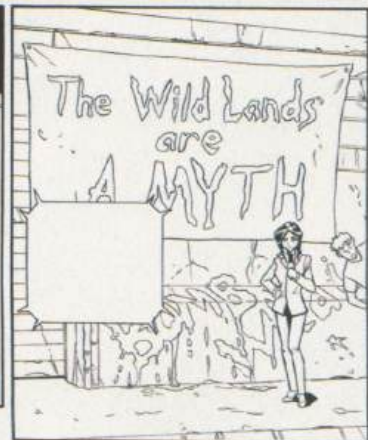
Another thing that the inker can do is help direct the reader's eye to a desired location on the page. Notice how Jeremy's heavier inks on Suki in the last panel really make her the focus of that image.

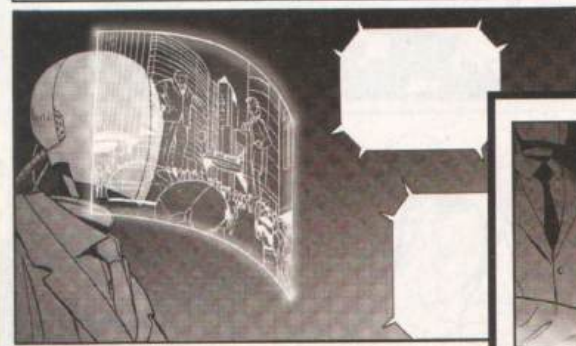
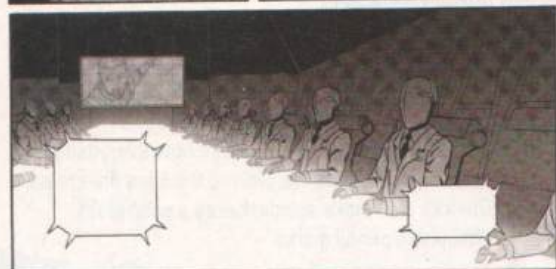
>>

STAGE 3

INKS

<< Next we see inker Jeremy Freeman's contribution to the pages. Notice how everything suddenly has added weight and the lines are crisper. The inks also make any dark area a solid black, eliminating pencil marks.





Check out the special effects that both Shane and Chi put together. For the holographic image and the smiley faces, Shane first drew the line art, then Chi converted it to a glowing negative image and layered it onto the page. Cool, huh?

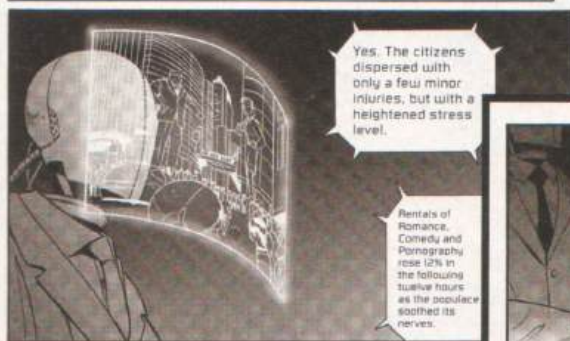
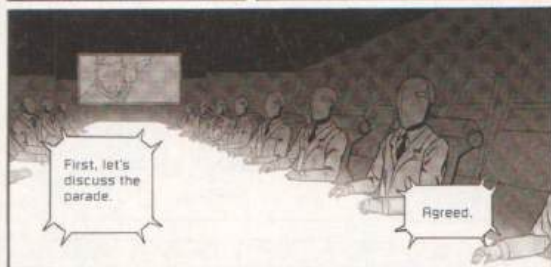
>>

STAGE 4

TONES

<< Now we come to tones, compliments of Chia-Chi Wang. One of the coolest things about the toning of these pages is how you really get the effect of the shadowy, dark boardroom, with the only light coming from the glowing tabletop.





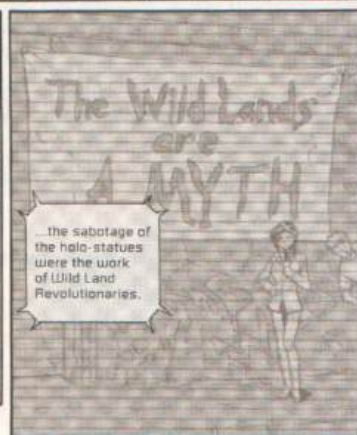
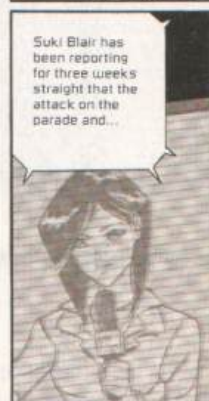
Another aspect of lettering is trying to choose a font that will best convey the personality (or in this case, lack thereof) of the characters speaking. For these pages I've chosen a sterile, electronic font for the voices of the board members.

>>

STAGE 5

FINISHED,
LETTERED PAGES

<< Finally, with the lettered pages you may notice a few differences from the original script. Some changes come about as the artist interprets the script, while others are a result of editing after viewing the text and art together.



We hope you've enjoyed this tour through the evolution of *Psy-Comm*. Now turn the page for a manga preview! And remember, you can also go to www.TOKYOPOP.com for more FREE manga.

Part of the
inspiration for *Psy-
Comm*? Blue Oyster
Cult's "Veteran of
the Psychic Wars."

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THAT'S RIGHT,
LADIES AND
GENTLEMEN OF
ELECTROMEDIA CORP!
THE SIRENS DON'T LIE!
THE **PSY-COMMS** HAVE
ARRIVED AT THE SCENE
AND—WAIT A SECOND!
IT APPEARS THAT SOME
OF OUR TROOPS HAVE
COMMANDEERED A
GENCOP
JUNEBUG!



After narrowly escaping an ambush, Mark Leit and his comrades, David and Raven, commandeer a vehicle. >>



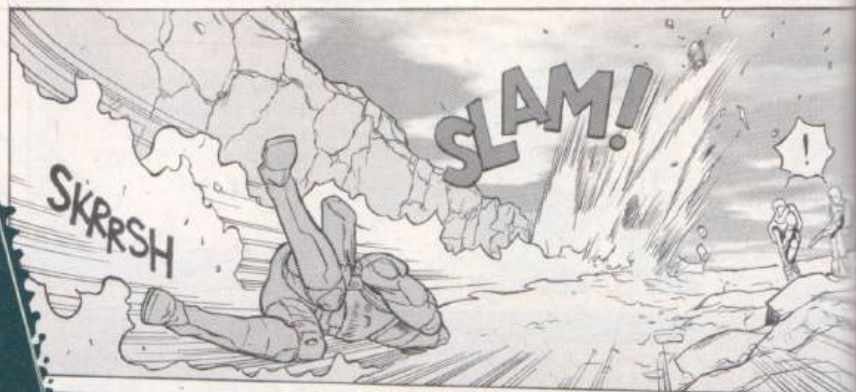
The vehicle Raven just crashed is called a Junebug. It's a single-passenger aerial assault vehicle capable of vertical takeoffs and landings.

Mark fights for Electromedia, one of the world's most powerful corp-states.

>> Raven is finding out the hard way that flying a Junebug for real is a lot harder than it is in simulation.

Mark possesses
the ability of
"capillarity."

In *Psy-Comm*, capillarity
is the ability to see
several possible future
outcomes. This will
become crucial to the
success of Mark's plight.



Rookie journalist Suki Blair is imbedded with the Electromedia Corp troops on the battlefield. Due to her coworker's mishap, Suki's about to be promoted to the senior reporter in the field. >>



David Jerold's
Psy-Comm
power—telekinesis.

>> Now we get a sample of David Jerold's psychic abilities. He can control objects, especially metal-based ones, even forming them into weapons. Notice how easily he disarms the opposing Mars/Samson soldiers.

One of artist Shane Granger's inspirations is the classic anime *Akira*.

Who are the Psy-Comm creators:

Jason Henderson is currently the writer on the commandos-versus-vampires comic *Sword of Dracula*.

Tony Salvaggio is a computer animator, writer, musician, and a videogame, anime and manga junkie.

Shane Granger was runner-up in TOKYOPOP's *Rising Stars of Manga* competition with his entry "Possessions."



Shane has done an excellent job on this page. The beats are perfect—David pauses to look back, has a second to see all heck breaking loose, the close-up of the enemy and...BAM! Each panel is packed with kinetic energy. >>

and now, a word or two from our cowriter

We sat down with *Psy-Comm* co-writer Jason Henderson and asked him for his thoughts on being part of the book's creative team. Here's what he had to say.

T: Tony mentioned that part of the inspiration for *Psy-Comm* came from the B.O.C. song, "Veteran of the Psychic Wars." Can you expand on that a little and tell us what some of your and Tony's other influences were?

A: Tony and I have been working together for years, and one thing we have in common is being inspired by various media—movies, music, favorite songs, etc. Tony loved "Veteran of the Psychic Wars" because it seems to tell of a whole other world, this soldier who uses armor and the powers of his mind, who's on his last legs. That reminded us both of anime like *Grey: Digital Target* and Tony's favorite, *Locke the Superman*, which is about a wandering, unhappy super-psychic. My own influences tended to be anime like *Grey* and certain pop ideas like *Logan's Run*. We want to show people the idea of our main characters being very good at what they do *before* they run.

Q: Shane's art is fantastic. As a creative partner, what would you say he brings to the project?

A: Shane is very much a creative partner on the project—he doesn't just draw, but comes back and asks us for clarifications, makes suggestions, etc. I'm glad for that, because I think of comics as being very collaborative; the script is just a beginning, and as long as the chapter goes where it's

supposed to go in terms of story, I think you can have healthy debate and exploration of the details.

Q: *Psy-Comm* is one of our few original titles that has a writing team. Briefly, how would you describe the writing process between you and Tony?

A: It's great to write with a professional who's also a friend. We're very supportive and gracious and honest—we can divide up work, or work on the same computer, hammering out ideas and watching anime with another eye at the same time.

Q: In your opinion, what makes *Psy-Comm* a must read?

A: *Psy-Comm* is a very exciting mix of romance and action. These are kids trained to fight with their psychic powers. So you have telekinetics, fire-users, gravity-users, all these different powers, and they go into battles that look like the grunt battles in *Starship*



Troopers. Personally, *Psy-Comm* is one of the most exciting projects I've worked on—it's very fast-paced and yet almost real-time as you follow these young people who exist to fight and die, to get ahead and get more stuff, more reputation and more blood. The whole book really drives toward two people's forbidden love and forbidden escape. Beyond that, the action is just plain cool.

~Bryce P. Coleman

WHAT'S NEXT FOR PSY-COMM?

Years later, Mark's popularity reaches epic heights, but the rewards of celebrity aren't enough to make him forget the tragic events of that first battle. Now, as Mark struggles with doubts about his future and memories of the past, the Electromedia Corp Board of Directors are formulating big plans for their premier *Psy-Comm*. It is a mission that will take Mark and David behind enemy lines and into a confrontation that will alter their lives...and the lives of everyone involved, forever!

Clothes make the manga

the season's most outrageous outfits

Ever notice how some manga characters seem to dress like it's Halloween all year 'round?! Here are some series featuring our favorite and most outrageous outfits. After reading this, please don't give us the shirt off your back.

— Alexis Kirsch



Dragon Voice

When a series showcases a hot boy band, you know there's going to be crazy outfits. But when the boys get drafted into doing a Power Rangers-type show, these guys bring in da funk. Just don't hate them because they can afford Versace and you can't.

Initial D

This is the series that turns my everyday wardrobe into a cosplay extravaganza... The characters all wear T-shirts and jeans, and they're not even sponsored by the Gap. Hey, what's wrong with relaxing at home in my boring clothes?

Dears

What would an alien slave girl wear? As long as it's tight and too small, who cares! This series features wacky lingerie that a teacher wears for her impressionable students. Talk about being hot for teacher!





VAN VON HUNTER

Flaming princes, ominous cloaks, plaid loincloths and a main character who wears a heavy jacket with no undershirt! And it only gets better—volume 2 is rumored to contain the world's most stunningly inefficiently designed armor!



PSYCHIC ACADEMY

Characters' clothes may be trapped in the '80s—or somewhere much, much darker—but what saves their fashion sense is that the female characters spend a lot of the time outside of their clothes. And isn't this series supposed to take place in the future? Is that what we'll be wearing in a few years?



TOKYO BABYLON

Polka dot pajamas—really, what else is there to say? Subaru (right) is always wearing the most bizarre combinations of hats and jackets. And his sister Hokuto is a walking costume party. How can I join this family?



OFF*BEAT

NOT YOUR AVERAGE BOY-MEETS-BOY STORY.

QUICK FACTS ABOUT
JEN LEE QUICK**LIKES:** Movies, animation, comics, videogames, cooking, sleeping**DISLIKES:** Television, legal/political stuff, phone calls, noise pollution**WORK:** Freelanced for White Wolf Publishing, Central Park Media, Othervision, Broken Lizard Films, and Plympton Studios**PUBLISHED STUFF:** Her previously published comic work includes "Soul Union," published in I.C. Entertainment's anthology*Amerimanga*, and Oni Press's graphic novel, *Once in a Blue Moon*. And, of course, *off*beat* out now from TOKYOPOP!

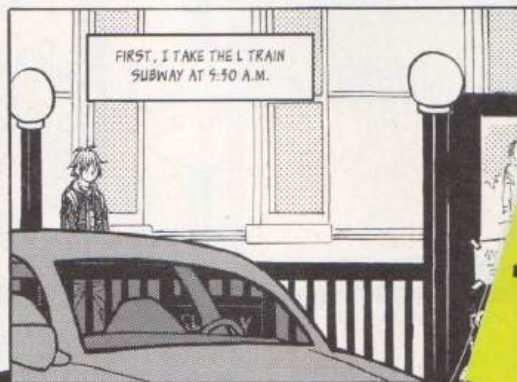
Jen attended The School of Visual Arts where she earned her BFA in traditional animation.



Okay, so raise your hand if you loved *Fake*. Did the depiction of the private lives of New York City police detectives made you laugh out loud? Repeatedly?

Well, then you're like me. So needless to say, I was really psyched to get to work on *off*beat*, where the New York locations help to create a fantastic setting for a smart and very sweet story. Tory's got an overactive imagination, as we see in this segment, but when it comes to Colin, his across-the-street neighbor, his imaginings may not actually be that far off. From transferring schools, taking detailed notes in a journal and raiding the guidance office, Tory is determined to find out who—or what—his curious (and curiously attractive) neighbor really is!

~Lillian Diaz-Przybyl



Check out Jen Lee
Quick online:
www.estrigious.com/jen

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>> No letters from the 11360 please—*off*beat* takes place in Woodbridge, Queens, a fictional neighborhood in the New York City borough. (Jen Quick can take artistic license—she went to school in NYC!)

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WWW.TOKYOPOP.COM



Cut to:
 Tory's
 daydream...

Masks like the one Colin has show up in a lot of different manga and are inspired by traditional Japanese dance and theater. >>



Striped kimonos are cool, especially when the sleeves are so long that they cover your hands.



When the editor saw this sequence, she literally gasped out loud because it was so beautiful and different.

>> Tory is doing his Onmyoji impression, just like Subaru in *Tokyo Babylon*. Onmyoji are Japanese wizards who use the principles of yin and yang.

Tory has a mirror around his neck, which is present in a lot of Japanese myth and magic. Mirrors are objects of power.

One of the three sacred imperial treasures of Japan is the mirror that is enshrined at Ise.



Colin's mask is a fox mask, and foxes are legendary in Japan. They're tricky and are known for their shape-shifting ability. >>



Paul acts as Tory's conscience—he's a balancing force in his life.



>> At this point in the manga, we've seen Colin from a distance, but Tory has yet to talk to him...until now. (Although even now, Colin doesn't answer back!)

Watch out, kids—
it's never a good
idea to fall asleep
on public
transportation.

NEXT STOP, FINAL
DESTINATION,
ROOSEVELT PARK!

OH, CRAP!

MADE IT...

WHEW

One of the many impressive things about Tory is his sense of time—he has an uncanny ability to keep track of time, up to the exact second. Comes in handy when you're intentionally trying to run into someone. >>



81

The old
"accidentally" bump
into someone trick...
that's one way to
get someone's
attention!

WHAT'S NEXT FOR OFF*BEAT?

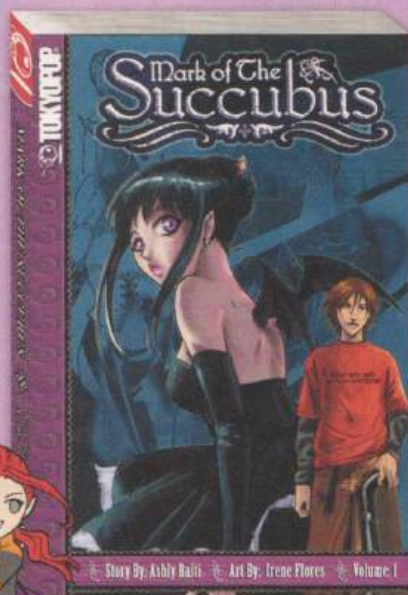
Things are starting to get interesting for Tory, and his relationship with Colin develops slowly, but surely. Their friendship deepens as Tory learns more about Colin's past...and the mysterious Gaia Project!



>> One of the interesting things about *off*beat* is its pacing. We're halfway through chapter one and the characters have barely met. Tory won't talk to Colin until much later in the manga.

MARK OF THE SUCCUBUS

FOR A DEMON, FALLING IN LOVE CAN BE A REAL NIGHTMARE.



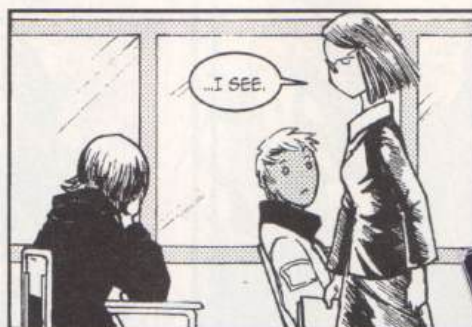
The process of creating manga can be amazing. Sometimes artists and writers come to us with an idea that everyone loves; other times, the timing just isn't right. Ashly and Irene contributed a prize-winning entry to *Rising Stars of Manga* volume 3, and we were all really excited to get them a contract. However, they first gave us a fairly heavily fantasy-influenced story, and at that point, we had quite a few similar works lined up, so we asked them for more of a high school romance, with

some supernatural elements thrown in. They came back with *Mark of the Succubus*, and blew us all away. Irene's unique, incredibly stylish art (so perfect for this story!) was the perfect compliment to Ashly's great sense of storytelling and dialogue. This story of a reluctant succubus-in-training, who makes the mistake of her life when she falls for her first intended victim, has humor, drama, romance and a hell of a lot of style!

—Lillian Diaz-Przybyl

Irene Flores and Ashly Raiti met each other while attending Cabrillo High School. Although, the story goes, Ash didn't talk to Irene until senior year because Ash claimed Irene was "scary." After founding a web comic and entering the *Rising Stars of Manga* competition, they met with TOKYOPOP editors in 2004. The rest, as they say, is history... or their story!

AND
UNLESS MR. LANDIS
IS SLEEPING IN MY
CLASS AGAIN, HE'LL
KINDLY READ IT.



Aiden doesn't
know it yet, but
he really wants
to be a musician.

MR. LANDIS!



SIGN UP FOR FREE MANGA AT
WWW.TOKYOPOP.COM

>> Here we're introduced to the main character, Aiden Landis. Despite the academic challenges he faces at school, Aiden spends a lot of time spacing out.

**I think
we've all had
moments like
this in class!**



84

HEY, AIDEN!
WAIT UP!

**In spite of
being a slacker,
Aiden spends a
lot of time in
the library.**

SHE'S GONNA
KILL ME, DEV.

I BET SHE
ALREADY KNOWS
WHERE SHE'LL HIDE
THE BODY.

YOU KIDDING?
MS. MURPHY?
SHE'S GOTTA
BE USED TO IT
BY NOW.

ER...
THANKS.

LOOK,
I GOTTA RUN.
I'VE GOT BOOKS
OVERDUE.

AIDEN!

THERE
YOU ARE.

Devin is Aiden's best friend and a conspiracy-theory geek. For instance, later in the manga, he comes up with a long list of theories about where the new girl in class comes from (hint: she ain't from New Jersey) and why she's being followed by the mysterious guy in black.

>> ...only to be caught on the next page by his "controlling" girlfriend Sandra.

Sandra may be awfully pretty, but she's not the nicest person in the world. She seems to want to date Aiden because he's pretty, too.



The artist uses an impressive combination of crosshatching and tones.

Aiden also spends a lot of time trying to avoid Sandra, despite the fact that they are dating. He's very laid back, and she's a social climber, which doesn't make for a good match all the time. >>



**Of course,
Devin isn't
helping matters!**

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>> The confrontation between Aiden and Sandra is one of the editor's favorite scenes in the book. The dialogue is fun and snappy, and gives a sense of both characters—how petty Sandra is and how snide Devin can be.

Erebas, the demon world.

**Welcome
to the
Demon World...**

I'M TELLING YOU, YOU
DON'T NEED TO LEARN ALL
THE RULES.

THERE'RE A BILLION.
YOU KNOW THE
BASICS--ALL YOU
REALLY HAVE TO
REMEMBER ARE THE
THREE.

THERE'LL BE PLENTY
OF TIME TO STUDY
UP ON THE FINE
POINTS LATER.

Hours after the sun has risen in mortal
lands, here it is still night.

In Erebas, it is always night.

Minor plot point: All
demons have extremely
bad fashion sense.
When Veril comes to the
human world, he has a
fondness for animal
prints and chaps.

Here we first meet Maeve, our demon protagonist. She is studying for her license to kill. Her mentor, Veril, looks on—he's an older-brother figure to her and keeps an eye on her during her time in the human world. >>

mark of the succubus

THERE'S SOMETHING MALEVOLENT AFOOT IN EREBUS, THE DEMON world, and Maeve is unwittingly right at the center of it. Her mentor, Veril, is on board to help take care of things, but when he's up against the head succubus of the realm, there may be only so much he can do (in spite of his kickin' leopard-print fashion accessories). Maeve's increasingly close bond with Aiden may only make matters worse, as they both get in way over their heads!



IN THE BEGINNING

ASH AND IRENE FIRST CROSSED PATHS WITH TOKYOPOP IN THE THIRD *Rising Stars of Manga™* competition. Their emotionally charged story of survival in a post-apocalyptic world touched many editors, and the themes explored in their short piece are expanded upon in a different way in their manga *Mark of the Succubus*.



Here are two pages from "Life Remains," in which two strangers come together in an attempt to find hope in a hopeless situation.

Fantastic!

art from our creative fans

As much as TOKYOPOP loves you—our fans—we love you even more when you submit fan art! We get an inside look into your passionate love of manga. It inspires us to keep delivering the best manga on Pokopen. So, keep the submissions coming!



SGT FROG
© Heidi Black 2005



HEYA MASHIMASAN!
MAH NAME'S BRANDON NALL!
I'M A 13 YEAR OLD MANGA-MANIAC
OBSESSED WITH NINJAS AND THE
SORT! I JUST FINISHED RAVE II AND
REALISED I FINALLY HAD TIME TO
SEND IN SOME DRAWINGS! THEY'RE
PRETTY AWESOME IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF!
I'M HOPING TO WRITE A MANGA SOMEDAY...
I TRY HARD NOT TO COPY YOUR IDEAS,
IT'S HARDER THAN YOU THINK!
BYE FOR NOW!



Rave Master by Brandon Nall.

You go, Brandon—your letter is milk-out-the-nose funny! Alas, we can't promise that Mashima-sensei will see this.

← **Sgt. Frog by Jia Feong.** Jia, we loved all your pieces, but the envelope is so cute. Way to work those colored pencils, too!

← **Samurai Deeper Kyo by Heidi Black.** Kyo has never looked better, and this picture is excellent. Warning: Stay away from sword-wielding samurai.



Fruits Basket by Christa Cronk. Who said cats and boars couldn't love each other? Keep drawing those pictures, Christa!



Rivkah speaks: "I need my art like I need my coffee: first thing in the morning and several cups to last me through the day."

You know how love can turn up in places when you least expect it? Well that's what Leah, the main character of *Steady Beat*, experiences when she reads a mysterious love letter to her sister from an even more mysterious girl named Jessica. Who is Jessica, she wonders, and what is she doing showering Leah's sister with letters, flowers, and other gifts? So what's a girl to do but go undercover to investigate her sister's secret? But, of course, what she doesn't expect is to find a love of her very own—and in a very surprising place!

~Rob Valois



Rivkah is a proud native of Austin, TX. She loves politics, religion and debate. Someday she plans to take over the world, but that one will just have to wait until she finishes *Steady Beat*. Rivkah won first runner-up in the international Create Your Own Manga Contest, sponsored by Digital Manga Inc. and published in Japan. Oh, and the only other thing that interests her more than her art is the temptation of an open road, wind in her hair, and all of her troubles packed away in a two-day suitcase.

WHAT WE TALK ABOUT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT LOVE...

STEADY BEAT

LEAH
WINTERS
SCORES!!!

#13

EAST-LAKE
TAKES THE
LEAD!

The sidebar info—
Leah's 411—is one of
the creator's favorite
features of manga.

Leah Winters:
Age: 16
Birthday: November 1st
Sign: Scorpio
Eye Color: Hazel
Height: 5'7"

Likes: Chinese Food,
TexMex, and Chocolate.
The colors green
and yellow. Math &
Science classes.
Reading textbooks
"for fun." Beating
up boys.

Dislikes: Country
music. Japanese food
(not enough spice!).
English class. The color
pink. Politics. Religion.

LEAH!

OVER
HERE!

JUNE,

I DIDN'T
THINK YOU
WERE GOING
TO BE ABLE
TO MAKE IT.

I TOLD
MOM I WAS
HEADED TO
THE LIBRARY
TO WORK ON
OUR ENGLISH
REPORT...

...SHE
ACTUALLY
BELIEVED
ME THIS
TIME.

Here we meet Leah for the very first time. Look at the dynamic between her and her sister. Leah has just scored a goal, but when her sis arrives... >>



We first met Rivkah at

Anime Expo in 2004. She

met a few TOKYOPOP

editors during a portfolio

review and showed a mini

sampler of *Steady Beat*.

We thought her work

was pretty solid, and

the rest, as they say, is

history...or herstory.

Fans may be familiar with *Steady Beat*—Rivkah serialized the manga on Wirepop.

>> The book begins with Leah as a star, but once she gets knocked down—literally—we see she is really in the shadow of her older sister.



HI, SARAI...

...I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE COACHING TODAY.

SHE WASN'T SUPPOSED TO... BUT COACH IS OUT SICK.

In a few pages, Leah has gone from a strong, confident winner to a small, insecure child.



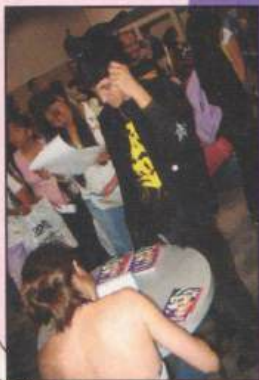
Now we have a sense of what is to come in the manga: Leah will learn that her perfect sister might not be so perfect after all...or at least not the stereotypical ideal of perfection. >>

WHAT'S NEXT FOR STEADY BEAT

EVERYTHING HAPPENS NEXT! AND THE REAL BACKBONE in *Steady Beat* lies in Leah's relationship with her family. Her father is a recluse and keeps to himself—except for one vital incident in the story in which he stands up for Leah's mother, who might be the source behind the sister's problems. The drama and romance heats up, and the mystery behind the secret love letters grows...

Check out
Rivkah's website:
www.rivkah.com

Rivkah drew quite the crowd at Anime Expo 2005 in Anaheim, CA. Fans hung out at the TOKYOPOP booth for more than an hour as she talked about her manga and signed posters and cards for everyone. Here are a few shots of her in action.



WE INTERRUPT THE MANGA TO BRING YOU THIS VERY IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT:

pause

read left-to-right

If you've just soaked up the hottest manga from Japan, you need to turn to the front of our manga mag for some of TOKYOPOP's originally created manga and other cool articles.

read right-to-left

If you've been enjoying the unforgettable left-to-right reading experience, we invite you to jump to the back of our manga mag for more cutting-edge manga...this time from Japan!

Of course, if you're blown away by what you've been reading, then e-mail your friends, call your loved ones, and write the president—tell them all about the Manga Revolution!

And make sure you log on to
www.TOKYOPOP.com
for more manga!

games WITHOUT FRONTIERS: manga INSPIRED BY games

games aren't ALWAYS meant to be PLAYED—NOW YOU CAN READ THEM, TOO!

Think of manga, anime and games as three corners of the triangle of pop culture. Sorta like the Pythagorean theorem: $\text{manga}^2 \times \text{anime}^2 = \dots$ well, maybe not. But the three corners feed a similar fanbase, with characters and stories that cross-over to all media.

Sometimes games beget manga spin-offs, and sometimes manga is the impetus for a game. Whatever the case may be, reading the manga extends the pleasure of the game. Plus there's no danger of getting carpal tunnel or having electric currents shock you through your gaming system. See, manga is all about healthy living. Anyway, we don't want to play games with you—we just want to take you on a quick tour of manga inspired by games.



Kingdom Hearts—Classic Disney characters meet classic *Final Fantasy* characters. The manga version features the same gorgeous art and a streamlined narrative that readers will recognize from the game. And you get to see Donald and Goofy make an amazing transition to black-and-white traditional manga.



Warcraft—The dragon hunt is on! This, of course, is the manga based on the worldwide online gaming phenomenon—Blizzard's online role-playing game *World of Warcraft*. *Warcraft: The Sunwell Trilogy* chronicles the adventures of Kalec, a blue dragon who has taken human form to escape deadly forces, and Anveena, a beautiful young maiden with an enchanting secret.



Suikoden III—The Suikoden universe spans four games currently released in the U.S. *Suikoden III* is currently the only one with a manga adaptation, and it features the adventures of grasslands warrior Hugo, Zexen Knight Chris and the mercenary Geddoe as their world is torn apart by a war for the True Runes. While reading, be sure to ogle the fantastic costume designs of *Suikoden*'s richly developed world.

Culdcept—Number one reason to read *Culdcept*: There's a talking staff. Better yet, Goligan is from a race of talking, goofy-looking old man staffs. Reason number two: Najaran. The heroine of this series is predictably kind-hearted and strong, but also unpredictably violent when something comes between her and her food. The manga differs from the game in that the game is a truly unique CG mix of *Magic: The Gathering* and *Monopoly*, whereas the manga is an adventure story.



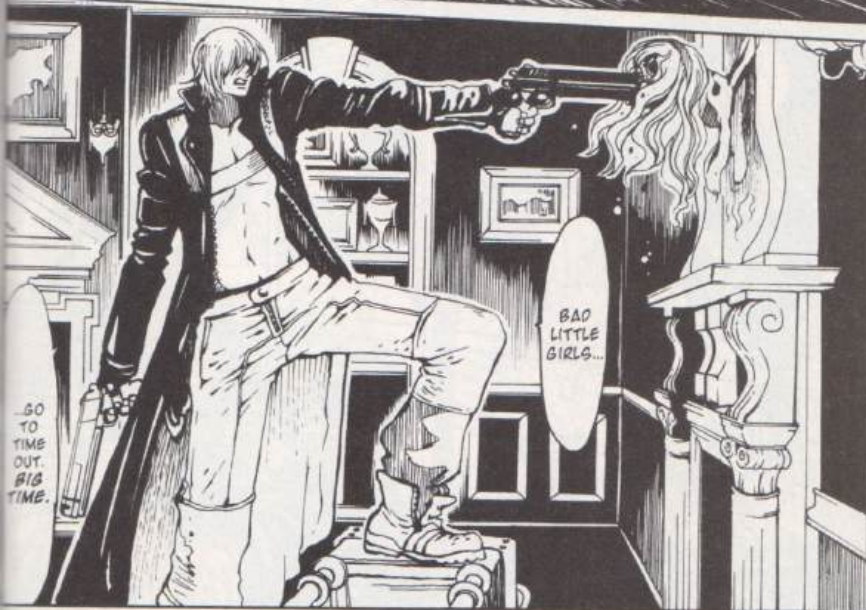
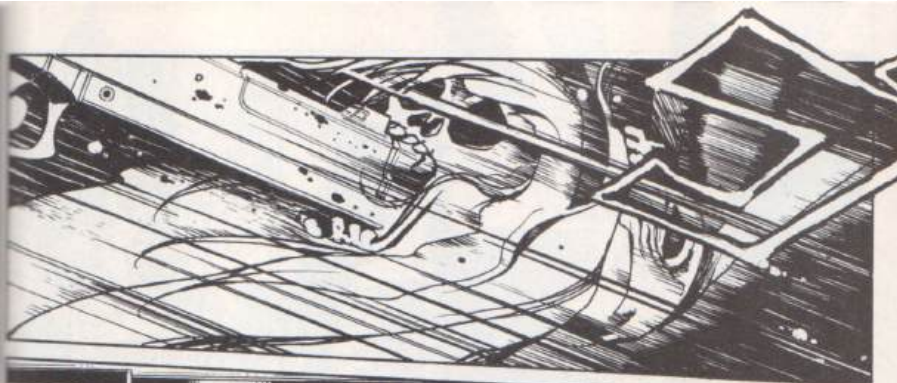
Devil May Cry 3—Well, you just previewed this series, which is both horror-action and family drama. Hey, that can happen when your father is the most influential demon ever to exist (and you're half demon). Keeping with the style of the game, the manga is richly dark and mesmerizing, with badass action and twisted characters.

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57

And even later in *Devil May Cry 3*, we'll also meet Dante's brother, Vergil, who's definitely the bad seed of the family. <<



56

<< After Alice, Dante will come face to face with a Mad Hatter and a White Rabbit, characters far from anything Lewis Carroll ever dreamed up.

Now we see yet another literary influence within the creepy world of *Devil May Cry 3*. The girl is named Alice—as in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*—but she ain't at no tea party, that's for sure!

READ RIGHT-TO-LEFT



...Dante remains cool, and nothing seems to phase him, especially when his guns are blazing the whole time. <<



54

<< This spread shows another amazing action sequence and character transformation from Suguro-san...

Up to this point, you may have noticed that not only has Dante let off an insane amount of rounds within the blink of an eye, but his trusty hand-cannons, Ebony & Ivory, never seemed to need to be reloaded. Cool, huh?

READ RIGHT-TO-LEFT

Suguro-sensei does an amazing job of conveying motion, speed and energy. You can almost feel the debris hitting your face, can't you?



53

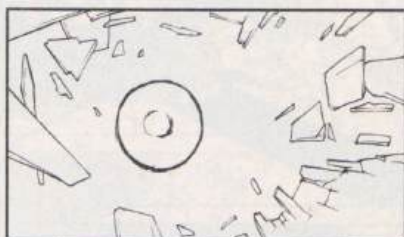
"Alice" is about to undergo quite the transformation before Dante's very eyes... <<



52

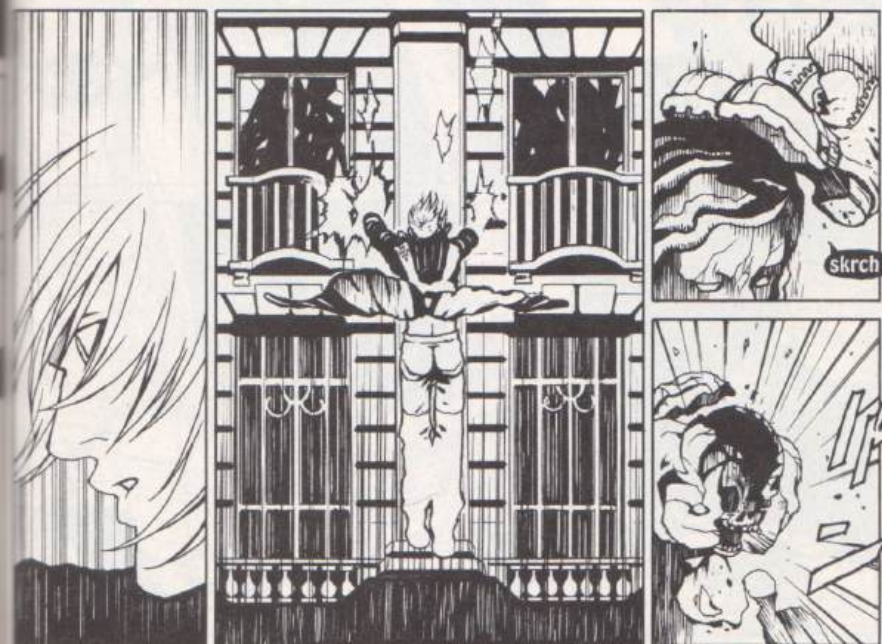
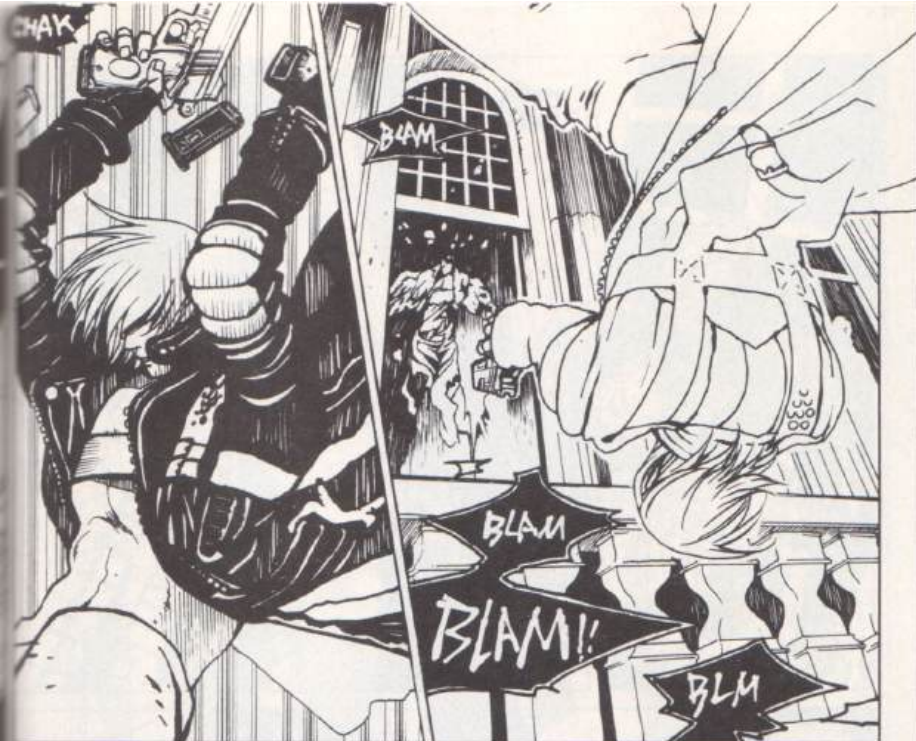
<< Finally, Dante utters a word. But has he really found what he's been looking for?

The artist, Chayamachi Suguro, has effectively set the mood for the world in which Dante exists. It's dystopian in the extreme—dark and inhospitable, an environment where only the strong can survive.



51

Dante spots his target—he's here to rescue Alice, a girl who Dante has been hired to locate and retrieve. <<



50

<< This scene employs the quick pacing of *Devil May Cry 3*'s video game origins.

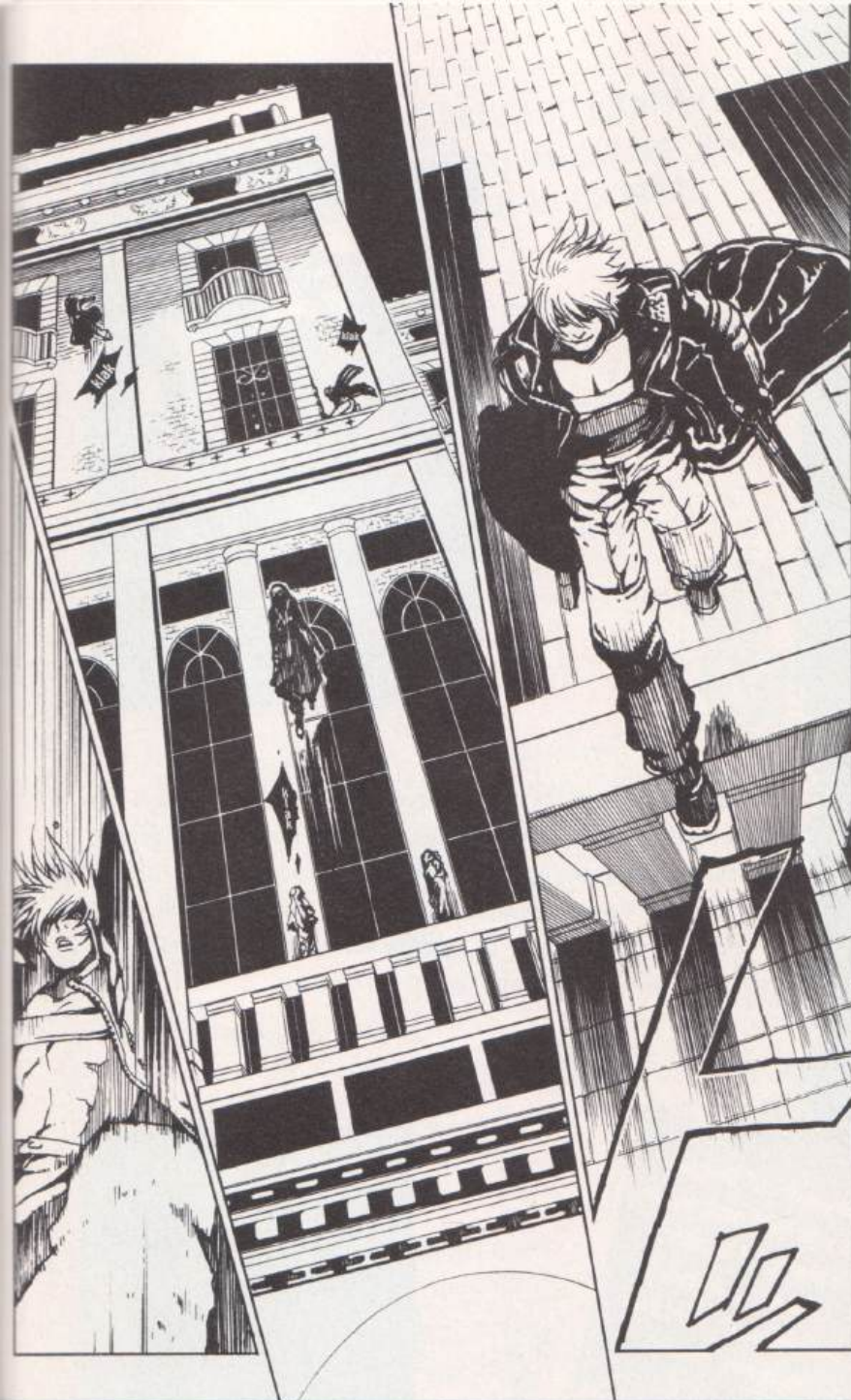
READ RIGHT-TO-LEFT

The name "Dante" is a reference to Dante Alighieri, who wrote the classic *The Divine Comedy*. Literary references are sprinkled throughout the manga.



49

Dante's guns—semiautomatic weapons—were handmade and are capable of a nearly unbelievable rate of fire. When an enemy is in his way, it's time to lock 'n' load. <<



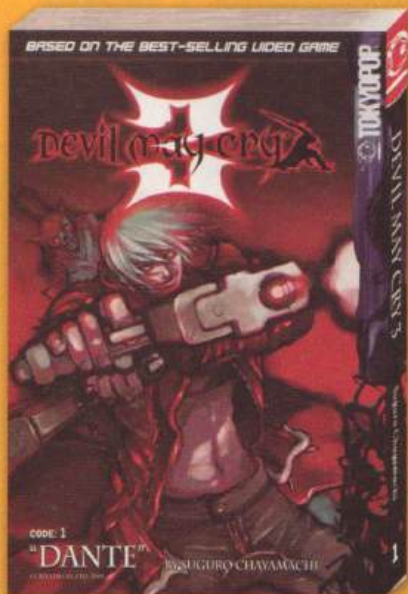
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<< Enter Dante, our hero and son of an all-powerful demon father and human mother. He's about to storm a mansion with his legendary handguns.

DEVIL MAY CRY 3

IT'S GOOD AGAINST EVIL...AND BROTHER AGAINST BROTHER!

Chayamachi Suguro
has worked on a wide
variety of books,
including period
pieces with samurai
and evil Nazis!



And as any fan of the hugely successful video game knows, it is a dark and dangerous world, indeed. Where else could a half-demon, morally ambiguous bounty hunter named Dante be the hero? In a city where demon slaying is a full-time gig, that's where. So come along as we follow Dante on his latest mission. But watch your back; there's no telling what's hiding in those shadows...

~Bryce P. Coleman



MUSIC, MONSTERS AND MURAKAMI

EXACTLY WHAT DO GRAVITATION AND KANPAI! HAVE IN COMMON?!

WHAT DO *GRAVITATION* AND *KANPAI!* HAVE IN COMMON?
THEY'RE BOTH BY MAKI MURAKAMI, THE MANGA GENIUS!
BUT THERE'S MORE...SO MUCH MORE.



Goopy Eyes

Murakami's trademark feature—the omelete-shaped eyes. What do they mean? Something like, “I love you—don’t kill me”? “Let me suck your blood, please?” Perhaps we’ll never know.



The Ponytail

K's ponytail may serve to keep his luscious locks out of the barrel of his semiautomatic, but Nao's only keeps junior monster guardian Shintarou drooling at the back of her neck.



Unrequited Love

Oh, the pain! Shintaro has a pretty rough time convincing Nao to be his food...er...wife. She's more than a bit cold—she's brutally chilling, much like a certain blond-haired writer.



School Uniforms

Did Shuichi borrow his uniform from Taino Municipal Middle School? No doubt Nao'd never lend something that touched her body to a loser like Shuichi!



Wacky Humor

Maki Murakami goes all out whenever she can—playing up the absurdity in a situation by drawing on the oddity of the characters. It can lead to some seriously funny moments.



And that's not all, folks. An early version of *Kanpai!* appears in volume four of *Gravitation*. Also, the original title of *Kanpai!* is *Kimi no Unaji ni Kanpai!*, meaning “Cheers to the Nape of Your Neck!” “A Toast to the Nape of Your Neck” is the title that appears in the manga short in *Gravitation*. We could go on, but we've run out of paper!

~Hope Donovan

WHAT'S NEXT FOR KANPAI!!?

Shintaro's got a secret!
 And it's not just that he
 carries around a two-by-
 four to lay the smack down
 on unsuspecting villains.
 Everyone keeps blocking
 Shintaro's view of Nao's
 nape, and he's just not going
 to stand for it! But when an
 intense game of rock-paper-
 scissors goes horribly awry,
 a dark truth is revealed...
 along with some
 fangs, perhaps?



The guard is almost as surprised to hear a talking rabbit as the readers are...especially a talking rabbit with such an attitude! <<



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<< What's a monster hunter hunter to do? Shintaro has been falsely accused of being the Full Moon Serial Killer.

READ RIGHT TO LEFT

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We just have to admit: The rabbit is totally cute! Check out the next page—since when do rabbits purr, though? <<



Ponta calls Shintaro young master—he has a very specific way of addressing him: “botchan,” which is an abbreviated version of “obou-sama.”

<< A Japanese jail looks like an unpleasant experience, especially if you’ve left your rabbit behind.



In spite of Nao's reaction to Shintaro, she really does care about her friends a lot.

You may wonder why Akiko is fainting. We do, too, but in the long run, it's a Murakami story, and not everything has to make complete sense. <<

DO MOST
SERIAL
KILLERS
CARRY
CUTE LITTLE
ANIMALS
IN THEIR
BAGS?



BUT,
COME
ON,
LOOK...



THROW
IT OUT!
IT'S
TAINTED!!



'CUZ HE LEFT
IT IN THE
CLASSROOM
IN HIS
HURRY TO
ESCAPE...

WHY
ARE YOU
CARRYING
HIS BAG?!



AND LOOK!
HE'S A
NERVOUS
WRECK!



HE LOOKS
LIKE HE'S
HUNGRY...



25

<< Introducing Ponta, the adorable black rabbit. He can talk, of course, and knows even more about Shintaro's true identity...even more than Shintaro himself!

HAVING A PRINCIPAL SUSPECT FOR THE FULL MOON SERIAL KILLER FOUND THIS FAST IS A GREAT ACHIEVEMENT!

NO MA'AM, IT WAS OUR PLEASURE.

THAT'S HARGH, NAO...

FEEL FREE TO AMPUTATE HIS LIMBS TO GET A CONFESSION OUT OF HIM, OKAY?

WHAT EVER!

AND THE CRYSTAL IS TELLING ME TO WARN YOU "PRIDE COMES BEFORE A FALL..."

ELECTRO-MAGNETIC WAVES FROM SATURN ARE BEING TRANSMITTED TO MY HEAD... THEY'RE SAYING, "THE REAL CRIMINAL IS ANOTHER"...

WELL, DOESN'T HE DESERVE IT?! THANKS TO MY PUNCH, THE SAFETY OF THE CITY IS ASSURED!

THAT'S TRUE, BUT...

The manga features the world's ugliest policeman and a crazy psychic who happens to be Nao's friend. The psychic receives messages from the spheres. <<

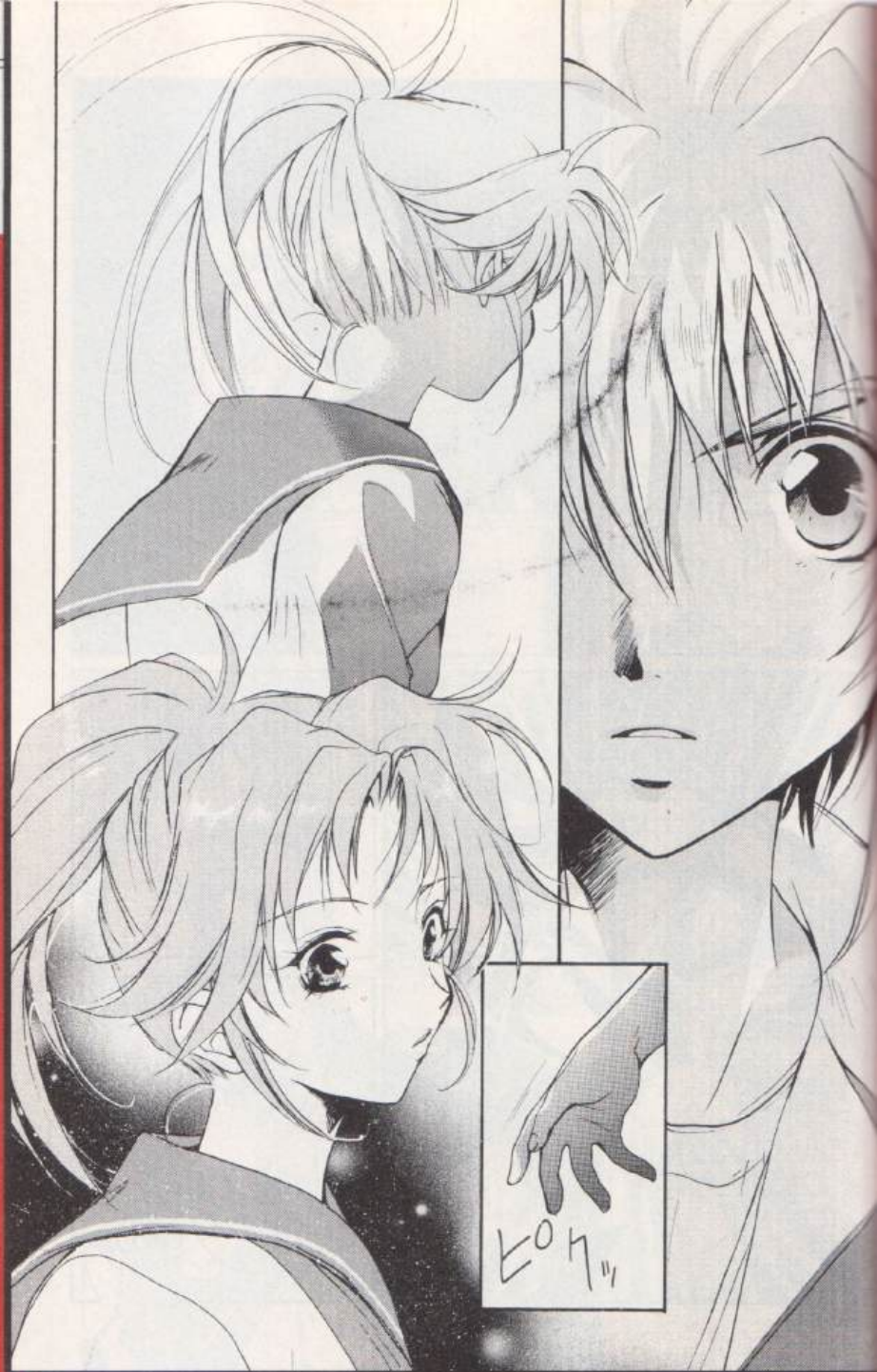


So where did the knife come from? The teacher was using it to stab one of the students earlier in the story. Talk about the school of hard knocks! It's just one of Murakami's odd bits of humor.

<< For all of Nao's narcissism, she doesn't take well to being hit on by the new guy in class. Be warned: she hits back!

READ RIGHT-TO-LEFT

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Here we see Shintaro getting his first glimpse of the lovely Nao's neck. His had twitches in response to seeing it. The inset panel says, "piku," the sound effect for "twitch." (I'm surprised he hasn't started drooling, but more on that later.) <<

READ RIGHT-TO-LEFT



Maki Murakami
is the author of
TOKYOPOP's hit
series *Gravitation*.
Yes, 'that'
Gravitation!

CHEERS—TO THE NAPE OF YOUR NECK!

KANPAI!!

Ponta-kuuuuun! Okay, so here we've got a series featuring a middle school monster-hunter-hunter (he runs around protecting the local supernatural fauna from the exorcists who seek to exterminate them), the girl whose neck he's developed an unnatural attraction to, a werewolf in the body of a guy who looks remarkably like a blond Hiroshi (see *Gravitation*) and has a tendency to jump out of school windows after stray baseballs, and the world's coolest talking rabbit. I want a Ponta of my very own!

~Lillian Diaz-Przybyl

Suffice it to say, Murakami-sensei has put together all the ingredients of a zany, action-packed comedy, and managed to cook up something even more.



IN the name of manga!

KAMICHAMA IS A BIG WORD FOR SUCH A LITTLE GIRL! Kamichama translates roughly from the Japanese to "little goddess"—the "kami" being the divine part and "chama" being a cute honorific for a little person. But dear little Karin is far from the only image of a deity in manga mythology. Here are a few manga that feature some divine intervention:



Saiyuki—The androgynous deity is a rehash of a real Buddhist deity—Guan Yin, or Kannon, the Goddess of Mercy. Although the Indian version is male, as Buddhism developed, he became she. Minekura's version is a little of both. Kind of like Saiyuki's heroes, huh?



.hack—The goddess Aura brings Shugo, the main character, back from the dead with a kiss—and also bestows upon him a magic bracelet. The World will never be the same!



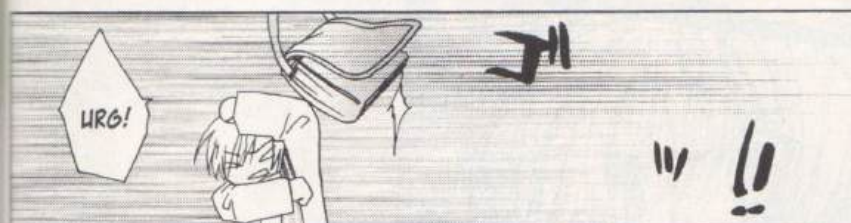
Arm of Kannon—The Arm of Kannon itself is posited as being a god and life force—albeit a rather creepy one. A word of caution: This is a Mature series with a capital M, and will make the hairs on the back of your neck stand on edge.



Demon Ororon—Chiaki is the daughter of a mortal woman and the archangel Michael. She falls in love with Ororon, a devil with a bounty on his head. As Chiaki's latent angel powers erupt, God's messenger starts to stalk her. And you thought your love life was complicated!



Magic Knight Rayearth II—**NOTE: SPOILER ALERT... SPOILER ALERT!** Leave it to CLAMP to make a cuddly critter the Creator. In the final volume of *Magic Knight Rayearth*, Mokona reveals himself to be the creator of the Universe and also the one with the power to appoint a new Pillar of Cephiro.



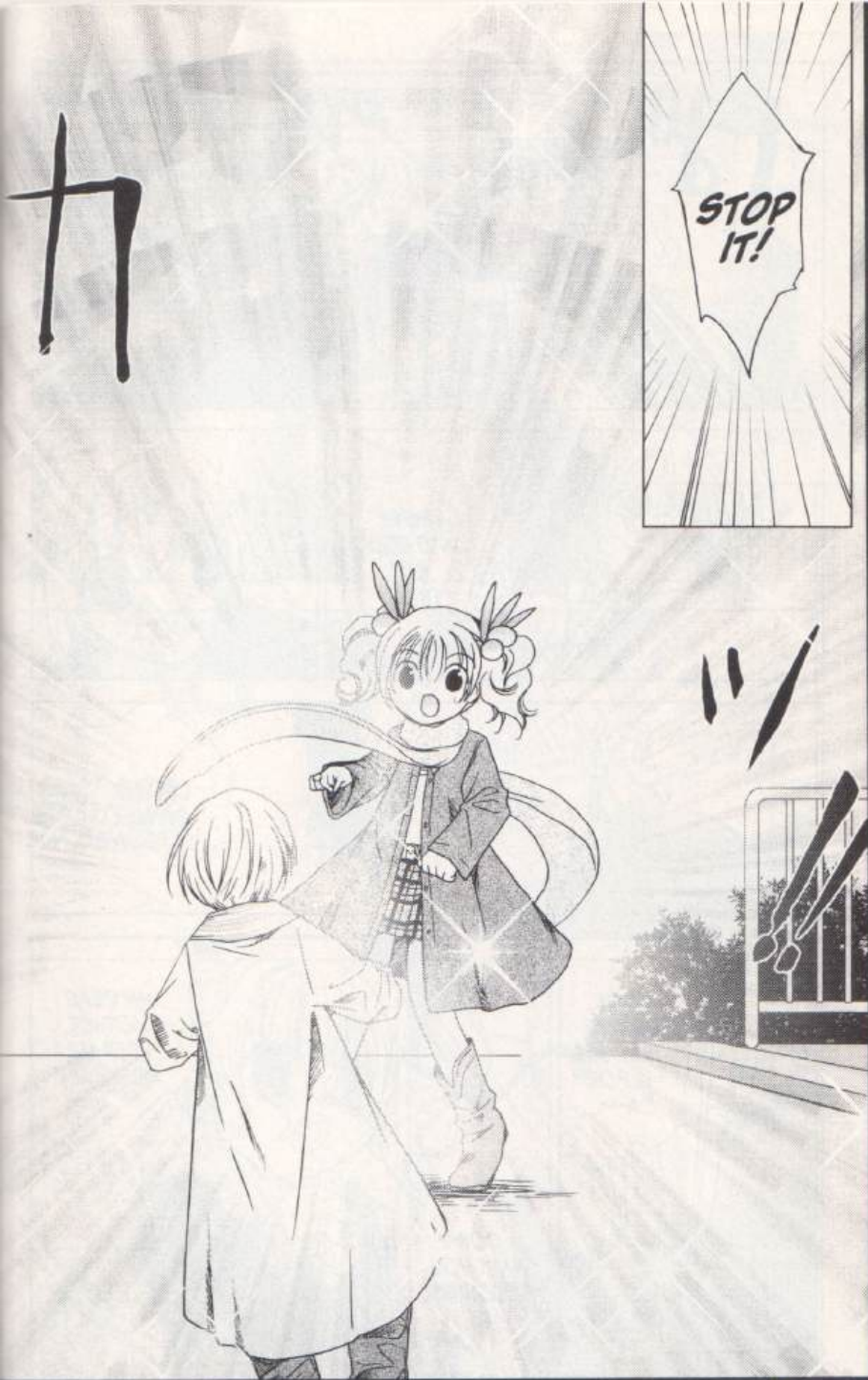
<< Messed what up?! What does Kazune know? Can you believe this is the end of the preview?! You'll just have to read what happens when you buy the manga!

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READ RIGHT TO LEFT



...everyone can now sense that life just isn't going to be the same! <<



Many consider

Kamichama Karin to be

a parody of the magical

girl formula, made

famous by manga such as

Cardcaptor Sakura and

Sailor Moon.

<< And now Karin's goddess transformation has begun...

READ RIGHT-TO-LEFT



The action lines on this page add to the anticipation of what is to come. Imagine how static this page would feel without the lines...

Kasune seems to have an inordinate interest in the rock, too. <<



<< The rock on that ring looks like a jawbreaker, don't you think?

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READ RIGHT TO LEFT

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Karin—the adorable airhead who waxes philosophical. <<



Koge-Donbo's mascot

characters from *DiGi*

Charat are what first

launched her into manga

superstardom!



<< His hair really does look like a toupée, doesn't it?!

READ RIGHT-TO-LEFT

Many manga-ka fill the sidebar with commentary, but for Koge-Donbo, a chibi doodle is sufficient!



Kazune's hair sometimes appears to be "floating," so many have asked if it's actually a toupee.



Manga often include columns like the one on the left, which is left over from ads and such that appeared in the original magazine release. <<



<< Let us explain! When Kazune met Karin earlier in this volume, he was heinously rude to her about her dearly departed cat.

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READ RIGHT-TO-LEFT



"Kamichama" isn't a real Japanese word—it's a sort of mishmash between "little," "cute" and "god."



Earlier in the manga, Kazune royally pissed off Karin, but now, it looks like he doesn't recognize her. Don't worry, he will. <<



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<< Note the cute hair accessories. Himeka's got little circles that float mysteriously above her ear! No wonder Karin wants to be her friend!

KAMICHAMA KARIN

THE GODDESS MAKES THE GRADE!



Poor Karin! She's an average girl...at best. She's totally not good at sports and gets really bad grades. On top of all that, her parents are dead and her beloved cat Shi-chan just died, too. She is absolutely miserable...but everything is about to change. Little does Karin know that her mother's ring has the power to make her a goddess! Of course, you fans know Koge-Donbo, the creator of *Pita-Ten* and the popular mascot series *Di Gi Charat*.

Koge-Donbo also designed the characters for *Tiny Snow Fairy Sugar*.



KICK OUT THE JAMS!

THE CONTRIBUTING EDITORS AT TOKYOPOP like to think they're into cool music. But was that the case from the beginning? We asked, "What was your very first rock 'n' roll concert?" And they answered. Good music? Avoided the question? Or bathetic bath water? You decide.

**JULIE TAYLOR**

1983. Corey Hart opened for Rick Springfield. My twelve-year-old hormones were in overload!

**LILLIAN DIAZ-PRZYBYL**

I was stuck on Ace of Base.

**PAUL MORRISSEY**

1984 Wisconsin State Fair. Bryan Adams. Left early and rode the Tilt-A-Whirl.

**AARON SUH**

Fourth grade. Played trombone in the school band.

**BRYCE P. COLEMAN**

Van Halen's "Fair Warning" tour, 1981. Crushed against the stage.

**ROB TOKAR**

Pat Benatar. She treated me right. This past July (over 20 years later), she did the same.

**CAROL FOX**

It was Nirvana. We got beer thrown on us.

**TIM BEEDLE**

Tim wants you to know: Similar sounding last name aside, he is NOT the fifth Beatle.

**LUIS REYES**

My first was Peter, Paul and Mary when I was 7. They're old.

**MARCO PAVIA**

The Ramones, 1981. Johnny Ramone tossed me a guitar pick.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR BECK?

Ryusuke's so cool and edgy, and Koyuki is in awe of him, both as a person and as a musician. He's responsible for Koyuki's newfound interest in good music. Soon, Koyuki becomes a budding guitar player. And guess what? The kid's got some talent!

Koyuki might be so inspired that he'll pick up a guitar and actually learn to play. Or maybe he just wants to impress Izumi. But can someone who once liked Chiemi Kuniyoshi actually be a serious musician?



**HIS BAND HAS
TO BE GOOD!**

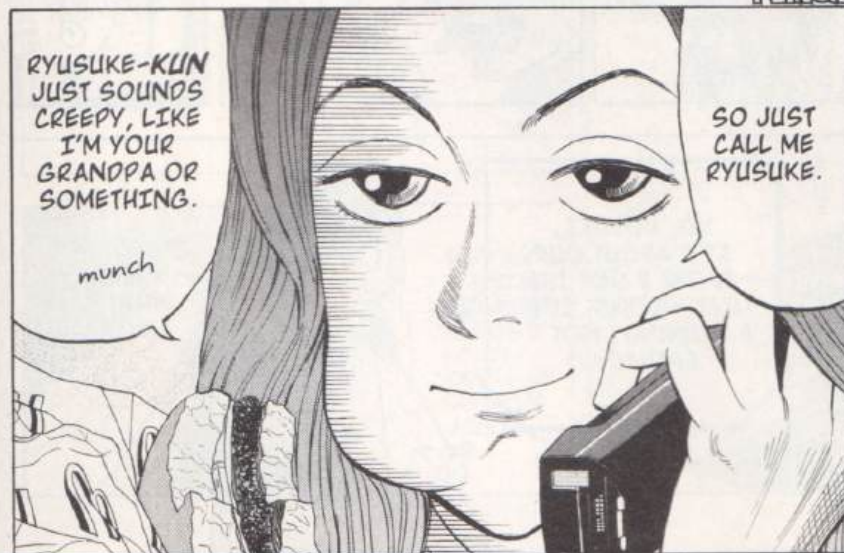
115



I have a feeling that seeing Ryusuke's band is going to throw a big switch in Koyuki's head. Yup, it's gonna be a life-altering experience. <<



FUNCH



<< Whew! Looks like these two are gonna be friends. Thank goodness! Whether he realizes it or not, Ryusuke needs to put Koyuki on the right musical path.

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READ RIGHT-TO-LEFT

Note: We do not support
or condone the editorial
comments and opinions
expressed in the manga.

(But, come on—

Celine Dion?!)



This kid is doomed! No cool, self-respecting chick will
wanna go near him! Please, Ryusuke-kun, you're our
only hope—turn this kid on to some real music! <<



YEAH, LISTENING TO
CHIEMI KUNIYOSHI
IS JUST WHAT I NEED
TO PICK ME BACK UP
WHEN I'M DOWN.



WHY AM
I STILL
LISTENING
TO THIS?!
GOTTA
CHANGE MY
TASTE IN
MUSIC.



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<< There might be hope for you yet, Koyuki! There's a whole world of killer sounds out there. Time to treat your ears!

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Keep listening, Koyuki. Before you know it, you're gonna know Western rock music inside and out! <<

HOW
EMBARASSED



Namie Amuro is an actual Japanese pop star, who is arguably the queen of '90s J-Pop. Amuro, unlike Kuniyoshi, actually has some talent.

<< Koyuki is starting to realize that his horrible taste in music might cost him Izumi's affections!

READ RIGHT-TO-LEFT

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The Drug Cowboys? Hmmm...that must be a clever nod to The Cowboy Junkies, a band whose twangy sound was wrapped around singer Margo Timmins' haunting vocals. <<



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Oh, and before you go out looking for the entire The Dying Breed CD collection, I should tell you that they're a fictional band. They only exist in the world of *Beck*.

<< As far as this humble editor knows, *Happy Sangokushi* isn't a real manga series—however, it certainly does exist in the world of *Beck*. And Christie Sakuishi? I guess that's Harold Sakuishi's fictional female alter ego!

peek

peek

peek

By the way, Free is also an awesome band, responsible for the rock anthem "All Right Now."

Free featured guitar genius Paul Kossoff, who tragically died at the age of 25.



Read right-to-left

Poor Koyuki. He's completely musically challenged—unlike Ryusuke, who's got a pretty good stack of CDs. Can you imagine going through life having never listened to Jimi Hendrix? <<



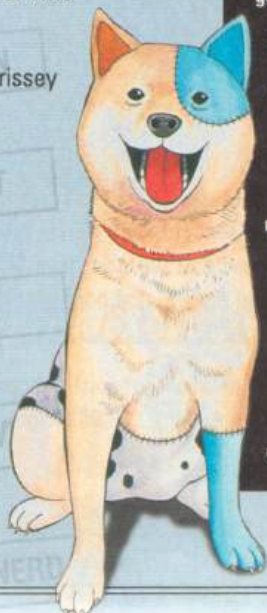
*Beck is a very
funny, very
heartfelt series
that knows
a lot about
rock 'n' roll!*

FOR THOSE ABOUT TO ROCK...

BECK

Remember when you were into some really bad music? Hey, you just didn't know any better. Well, then someone—your older sibling, a cool cousin—turned you on to the good stuff: The Beatles, Dylan, The Clash, Nirvana... That's what *Beck* captures—the moment in life when music makes you see the world differently, makes you grow up...and makes you want to rock out and join a band. It hilariously captures that awkward moment in adolescence when discovering great music helps you discover who you are.

~Paul Morrissey



So, just who is Beck? The alternative rock god? No. The British blues-influenced guitar legend? No. One of the most famous classical music composers of all time? No. (Uhm, that's Bach, silly.) Beck is a dog. But this series is about music. The story centers around Yukio, an average 14-year-old boy nicknamed "Koyuki." His life has been pretty boring... But everything changes when he meets rocker Ryusuke and his funky dog named Beck!

letter from Japan

SUPER LICENSING GIPL Kiyomi Fukuyama reminisces about the early days of TOKYOPOP, when manga was something that people thought was a fruit.

Hello everyone from a blazing hot Tokyo! I am in fact one of the very first employees in TOKYOPOP's Tokyo office. It has been nine years since the company began in Japan, and it seems like yesterday we were wondering just what on earth we were going to publish. In those days, we scrambled to sign up and publish manga series; now the whole industry is completely different. When I come to visit the U.S., I can't believe how much manga has grown. During my first visits to the States years ago, I'd go to specialty stores to find manga. Now all the big bookstores in cities and malls across America have huge manga sections. Times have indeed changed—it makes me shiver and thrilled just thinking about it! :)

I'll never forget the hard work and uncertainty we faced in the days when our company just got started—from basically nothing. We would sit around talking about trying new, adventurous ideas, such as bringing manga to the U.S. and the rest of the world. There were many obstacles to overcome. We had a cramped office in a small Japanese home. We'd work all night on a series such as *Sailor Moon*. For late-night breaks, we took naps on this old futon we kept hidden in the closet.

But many of us at TOKYOPOP were persistent enough to face all those hurdles. Why? It was because we were really enjoying what we were doing, and our love for manga kept us full of hope.



So thanks to all of you who are reading this. You became enthusiastic manga readers and can relate to our deep passion for spreading manga in the U.S. and beyond. (Did you know that we also have TOKYOPOP offices in Germany and the UK, and hopefully in more countries in the near future?)

Thank you for your support! I hope your life will be delightful by reading TOKYOPOP books.

~Kiyomi Fukuyama

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MANGA 漫画

FREE TAKUHA! FALL 2005

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BECK:
OF MANGA AND
MOSH PITS

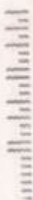
**DEVIL
MAY CRY 3:**
THESE BROTHERS
GOT SOUL

**KAMICHAMA
KARIN:**
THE GODDESS
MAKES THE GRADE

Kanpai!
ONE WACKY
NECK ROMANCER

PLUS:
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THAT ARE HIPPER THAN
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