



After Hours, Vol. 1

Yuhta Nishio

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There's always something going on at night. Sooner or later, you'll find your scene.

Emi Ashiana is 24, unemployed, and not really sure what she wants do with her life. When a friend invites her to a dance club, Emi doesn't expect much. But what she finds will change her world!

The club is hopping and Emi isn't...so she ends up hiding in a corner after her friend ditches her to flirt with a guy! Emi figures the night is a bust, but then someone amazing comes to her rescue. Kei is a DJ, and her effortless self-confidence captivates Emi. Is this just a wonderful night out or the start of the rest of her life?

After Hours, Vol. 1 Details

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Author : Yuhta Nishio

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From Reader Review After Hours, Vol. 1 for online ebook

Matisse says

What a charming little story!

Twentysomethings in manga are usually what a teenager **thinks** a twentysomething is. Such characters still have their parents as a huge influence in their lives, they never go to work, they date around without introspection or consequence, there's NO angst over trying to make it on your own for the first time, there are no responsibilities, and I can go on.

'After Hours', while still teen-friendly, is more rooted in reality. Eri's reactions to her first time clubbing, hooking up with someone new, worrying about her direction, are all true-to-life. She mentions breaking a lease on an apartment, and she has a previous career that didn't pan out. I feel like, while we wouldn't cross paths, I could know and get along with this person.

We don't get a lot of backstory in this first volume--it just starts, and we gleam details here and there--but this is to its credit as well. When you meet someone as a teenager, you ask about where they go to school, what they do for extracurriculars, if they play an instrument...when you meet someone in your twenties, you're first gauging to see if you get along. Eri and Kei are just getting to know each other. It's natural, and comes across like we're there with the characters, learning about everyone a little at a time.

I took a risk on this one. It paid off! =)

Aaron says

"Such delicate features. . ."

Emi's sexuality may or may not be as obviously fluid as her blush would indicate, but one thing is for sure: the jobless twentysomething is most definitely attracted to the confidence, conviction, and dubious generosity of her part-time lover, Kei.

Why? Because it is not enough to rumble through Help Wanted ads, hoping against hope something *sticks* this time. It's not enough to stretch the rental lease just one more month, vainly hoping nobody notices. It's not enough to bumble through shady night clubs, desiring a brand of physical intimacy or emotional comfort that doesn't really exist.

Emi Asahina needs someone (or something) to bolt her to the floor. Quickly. Desperately. Because if that special someone doesn't come along anytime soon, then chances are good she'll drift away, and it'll be far, far too late for her to do anything about it.

AFTER HOURS is a manga of simple truths: diagnosing the peril of new-adult relations and where it crisscrosses social stigma and flagging societal expectations. For the unmoored young female, **AFTER HOURS** is a story of searching. For all others, the manga risks slipping into the territory of a cute frolic, and nothing more.

Emi and Kei's relationship is both real and not. When the two connect at a dance club one autumn evening, it's not immediately clear they're destined for romance: Emi is having trouble meshing with her peers at the

club ("I just can't get into it."); Kei, with a fresh undercut and an adorable if devilish smirk, refuses to judge, but also refuses to give up ("Don't worry, I won't abandon you. I promise.").

An odd-couple humor comprises the bulk of **AFTER HOURS** and its general rhythm. Kei is an interior designer who moonlights as a DJ. As such, she's playfully aggressive, inconsolably flighty, and never passes up an opportunity to poke fun at her new friend (or simply grab her breasts). Emi is jobless, nerdy, and more than a little needy. She's six years younger than Kei, and as such, hungers for validation in all of her social engagements. Lost, Emi's expectations are muted.

AFTER HOURS is commendably even-handed. The romance is gentle, notably consensual, and relies more on the feathery anxieties of its characters than on the narrative's own impulse to see two young women occupy the same futon. From this, the book develops Emi and Kei's relationship as a kind of pulse -- occasionally strong, occasionally subtle -- actively intertwining the comical (Kei is frustratingly blasé about purchasing a new laptop), with the curious (learning the ins and outs of the local night life), with the serious (Emi has yet to fully bury her previous relationship), with the understated (both women make regular, measured comments about beauty, aging, camaraderie).

Nishio's strength clearly rests in pulling together engaging character expressions and complimentary dialogue. Bug eyes, scrunched faces, caustic open-ended smiles. Sarcasm, bad puns, and cute stutterings. The eyes of female characters, for example, possess dotted lower eyelashes, lending women with a harder edge (e.g., Kei) with a touch of feminine mischief (Kei: "You're a bad man who made her pound a shot of Jäger."). The background art is sparse, and more than a few of the manga's gags are kitschy, but overall, **AFTER HOURS** is a simply drawn, simply told comic book.

Arielle says

Let me set the scene. I sit a nice hot bath that smells, like cinnamon and nutmeg and I pull out what I'm told by my roommate is an amazing manga. I read and read and suddenly it's over.

After hours is a manga about two girls, honest to god adults who meet in a club and come together in a beautiful relationship. I appreciate how adult the getting together is. I've read a Yuri series before and it's long and drawn out will they won't they. in After hours, you barely get to know the characters before they are sleeping together, and there's something so honest about that. The characters are sweet and I feel like I can relate to each of them at different times. I appreciate how Kei has no shame and how Emi is just so starry eyed about everything Kei does.

Do I think this is a perfect book? No, not really. I feel like there were some pacing issues. The middle flew so fast I couldn't keep up and I'm still not entirely sure what happened. But the art is fantastic, if a little silly at times, and the story is pretty good. I'll be curious to read the next volume, but I'm certainly not at the edge of my seat waiting for it.

I think, of the Yuri mangas I have read, this is the best. I relate to the characters and I want to know more about them, even better I enjoy their interactions. I feel like more could have been explained, and the pacing could have been adjusted, but overall it was a worthwhile read. Even now, I'm considering rereading it.

Fiona M says

Cute but nothing mind blowing to be honest. Style of the manga was a little darker and busier than I like but it was still an interesting start to the series. Don't know if I will be picking up the next volume

Heather says

From this manga's description, I wasn't even sure this book was yuri. I took a gamble in buying it, and I was glad to find the yuri in between the pages isn't as subtle as the plot summary on the cover.

This manga is unique in many ways. More than 75% of the yuri titles I own were published by Seven Seas, but this one is by Viz Media. I love that yuri is becoming more accessible and being licensed by more than just one publisher. The author/artist (mangaka) is a man. The characters in the manga aren't teens, but adults in their mid-twenties and early thirties, dealing with adult issues and not high school drama.

What I loved most about the manga was how the relationship between two women was written so naturally. They start out like many movie couples, hooking up after meeting in a club. The main character is portrayed as bisexual, as she just broke up with a boyfriend but is now interested in a woman. There's none of that "but we're both girls!" trope and the words "gay" or "lesbian" aren't even used.

What I wasn't crazy about was a lot of the rest of the book. I'm invested in the focal relationship so I want to see where the story goes, but there is a LOT of technical how-to about the art of DJing that I just didn't find interesting, and a lot of side characters are thrown at you at once. It didn't kill my interest but the manga started strong for me and then dwindled as it went on.

James DeSantis says

Like the characters, but the plot is lacking big time. This is basically two women falling in love. It's actually really cute when it starts and I like they deal with it in a mature way. Then we get the plot, their goals in life, and honestly it's boring. Do you know what a VJ is? No? That's okay. It's very boring. Basically that's our heroes dream is to become a VJ which is like a DJ but with videos and ugh...boring.

Overall, I enjoy the characters but not the plot. A 2.5.

Natalie says

EEK! This was such a cute yuri manga about 24-year-old Emi and 30-year-old Kei who have a meet cute moment at a club and spend a night together leading into them consistently enjoying more and more of the others' company.

Emi and Kei are quite different from each other but work so well together. Emi is unsure of herself, a bit bashful, and quite expressionate in the best way. Kei on the other hand is full of confidence, sassy, and very dedicated to DJ-ing - which is super cool. I love the pair and am excited to see how the story plays out for them both.

With only 3 volumes in this series I cannot wait to pick up the next two and have these in my collection because this first volume was so enjoyable!

Keana Labra-Asunción says

Volume 1 of After Hours by Yuhta Nishio is about twenty-four year old unemployed Emi Ashiana. She is without purpose and is unsure of what she wants for the future.

We are not introduced to much about Emi as the manga begins; we see her immersed in a club, the story beginning in media res. She is left to her own devices until she meets Kei, a confident DJ, who saves her from the advances of a drunk man. The exchange between Kei and Emi may be interpreted as corny or disingenuous; Emi confesses that she does not find joy in loud, crowded environments while Kei immediately states lines of whimsy and nostalgia, a romanticized whiff straight from a Hollywood script.

The two return to Kei's room and after having a few drinks and playful banter, they engage in intimate relations. Nishio addresses the quickness of the relationship by way of Emi's doubts, but the interactions between the two remain earnest and pure. There's no pornographic display of their affection even in panels where the two are without clothing.

The two peruse Kei's vinyl collection, and Kei volunteers Emi to VJ as she DJs to help out at a friend's show. VJing is described as compiling a video that matches the music in real time, which is then projected onto the screen while the music is playing. Pad, Kei's friend who enlisted their help, encourages Emi to feel the music intently to pick up on what Kei is playing. The two play in sync to Justice vs. Simians "We are your Friends" and Emi finds herself enjoying the job.

It's revealed that Pad no longer has a hernia, but thankfully, unlike other series, this little white lie does not drive a rift into Emi and Kei's relationship. The rest of the Kei's friends are introduced and the night ends with it becoming day. Kei and Emi separate from the rest of the group, and they hold hands in the cab ride home, Emi hoping to share the view and Kei's company again.

A glimpse into Kei's past and her background with DJing is explained. Turntable basics and the functions of a turntable are briefly discussed as well. But, most importantly, it is revealed that Emi has a boyfriend with whom she has yet to break up. Emi is interrupted before she is able to inform Kei of her situation, and the chapter transitions in a clunky manner to the exclamation of a new DJ gig, to which Emi asks if she may VJ again.

The volume ends jovially, with the reader rejoicing at Emi's slowly building confidence and Kei's ever smooth, perfect responses, but the exposé of Emi's boyfriend leaves me wondering. If Emi can be indifferent and blasé to Kei's previous white lie, why even present this as an issue? Will it be in Kei's character (as it's presented to the readers now) to be jealous?

Overall, the art is cute and the character's expressions are hilarious. Also, the sexual aspect of Kei and Emi's relationship is handled respectfully and tastefully. However, Emi and Kei could be further fleshed out as characters with more direct intentions, and the conflict Nishio is laying out for the two can be more detailed as well.

I'm looking forward to reading more of the story, and I hope my concerns are addressed and resolved in the next volume!

Jhosy says

THIS MANGA WAS INCREDIBLE! Finally a licensed lesbian manga in English that is about two adult women!

Emi is around 24 years old and went to a club to meet a friend, but she ends up being abandoned by this friend who finds a boy to flirt. Alone, a man tries to flirt with her then Kei appears and "saves" her.

Kei is 30 years old, is a Dj and dresses wonderfully well (seriously, I'm in love with her style). They talk at the nightclub and decide to stay at Kei's house. There the two end up having a night stand. The most interesting is that unlike other mangas where at this point one of the girls would be freaking out and disappearing in the morning or discovering herself lesbian, Emi takes it all normally. She wakes up, remembers what happened, and gets a bit shy (super cute), but doesn't regret or question her sexuality, which makes me think she may have already known about her own sexuality before. Anyway, the two continue the day normally, but in friendly terms. Neither cold nor loving (romantically speaking).

When the two meet again is with a friendly mood (As if they were meeting as friends before starting something more serious). Emi ends up being influenced by Kei to VJing in an event that Kei will work and she ends up meeting her friends.

At the end of the chapter Emi thinks that she needs to settle things right with Kei and a tense atmosphere is in the air, later we discover that Emi has a boyfriend whom she probably betrayed with Kei. Emi explains to her friend that she broke up with him, but in the conversation it turns out that even after finishing it, Emi still lives with him. I believe the drama might happen when Kei finds out, because Emi hasn't been able to find the courage to tell her yet.

In short, the story is very good. Funny, with a more mature mood than what is usually found in yuri manga and with a pinch of cuteness.

I believe this is the first time I read a Yuri-licensed manga in English in which one of the characters is a bisexual woman and an adult.

Oh yeah, it's interesting to also focus on the age gap between the characters, because once Emi discovers the age difference and comments on it, Kei throughout the manga begins to drop jokes about her "old age" and the difference of age between them, this is fun and cute.

I can't wait to read all the adventures that Kei and Emi will experience in Volume 2, as well as the growing relationship between these characters.

A total of 5 stars, but if I could I would give it 10.

PS: The music referenced in the manga is wonderful! Kei really has good taste.

Jaylee says

Unlike the rest of the yuri I've read recently, After Hours is not about high school students. It's such a refreshing change to read about adult women (in this case, one is in her twenties, the other her thirties). A lot of common manga tropes are left out of this story – shame about sex, excessive bashfulness, internalized homophobia ("but we're both girls!!"). There's not even any fan service, and the kissing is vocally consented to.

While the two characters have a sexual relationship, the story focuses on everything else going on in their lives. Emi just got out of college but has no idea what she's doing in life or what she wants. Kei is finding a way to pursue her passions as hard as she can, and inviting Emi to join in.

The art is cinematic and the story is well-done, with funny moments and characters you can get behind. This is a unique addition to the current yuri offerings in English, and it deserves a lot more attention than I've seen it given.

Content warning: Depictions of alcohol and drunkenness in club scenes, as well as a friendship that could be

read as emotionally abusive.

Rebecca says

I had no idea going into this that it was a yuri series (or at least had a yuri relationship in it), but that ended up being one of the highlights - not strictly because it has a lesbian couple at its center, but rather because their relationship starts with a one-night stand, and that's something we don't see much of in yuri manga. It grounds the series in a more realistic world, and with Emi's initial reaction to being overwhelmed by a noisy club and her unfocused post-college life, this feels like a much more adult series than we've seen in the genre.

EDIT: Same impression reading it the second time.

Alexis Sara says

This book starts really strong and really feels like a breath of fresh air from so many yuri mangas I have read. It's central characters aren't in high school, they hook up in the first chapter, it's very strongly given to you. However, it then starts to drag as it goes on losing focus as it wants to create drama that doesn't feel needed and has perhaps too many ideas for what could be a much more tightly focused narrative. Still I really enjoyed it overall so I am looking forward to volume 2 and hoping that won't let me down.

Mike says

A breath of fresh air in a lot of ways. Different, and quite good.

4.5 rounded up.

Review: <https://derailmentsofthought.com/2018...>

Laura says

Super cute wlw story. If you want sweet adult-oriented romance, this is it. Looking forward to the next volume!

Laura D says

An edgy, more realistic yuri manga with older protagonists. First volume had enough that I want to continue reading to find out more.
