



Sweet Blue Flowers, Vol. 1

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Akira Okudaira is starting high school and is ready for exciting new experiences. And on the first day of school, she runs into her best friend from kindergarten at the train station! Now Akira and Fumi have the chance to rekindle their friendship, but life has gotten a lot more complicated since they were kids...

Fumi is glad Akira is back in her life. Even in kindergarten, Akira knew how to stand up for herself, and she was always willing to stand up for Fumi too. But Fumi's first love recently got married, and Fumi is grappling with a broken heart *and* the fact that her sweetheart was another woman... Can Akira's open heart help dispel the gloom Fumi has been caught up in?

Sweet Blue Flowers, Vol. 1 Details

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Author : Takako Shimura

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From Reader Review Sweet Blue Flowers, Vol. 1 for online ebook

Sans says

Sweet, slow, and a little childish. Very much a shoujo manga with a yuri twist.

Bryan says

Extremely adorable coming of age story. I really enjoyed that the romantic aspect of the story focused on the developing of a crush and the dating. My favorite part of this book though is the friendship between the two main characters. I wasn't expecting that because when I initially bought this I thought the romance was going to be with them. So, I love cute romances and good friendships and this book delivered both of those. Will definitely be acquiring the other volumes!

taz says

It's a really sweet story! Takako Shimura writes (and illustrates!) LGBT+ fiction without the fetishization and concept of "sinfulness" that permeates the *yaoi* and *yuri* genres. The main characters are kids, and they act as kids would. They're unsure of themselves and have a hard time managing their emotions. Plus, the art style is really nice!

Denise says

It took me about a third of the book and reading two reviews to get the characters straight. There are differences in the way they're drawn and it's enough to confuse me. Was I this confused when I started reading comics in the 90s and everyone really did look the same?

Anyway. This is a slow story and sweeter than I expected. Akira and Fumi where friends as children and they meet up again after Fumi's family moves back to town. As children, Akira helped out the quiet Fumi and they pick up where they left off. They go to different schools and make new friends but all of them get together to work on a drama festival. There's relationship drama all over. Fumi is still hurting from a relationship ending and angsts over not only that but of her feelings for girls. I wasn't loving the book until she comes out to Akira. Tears.

The relationships are pretty amazing. The girls get along, want to spend time with and help each other, and don't purposely hurt each other. Even with the dating drama. There are no evil characters (well, a secondary character is a little bitchy but it's with her sister and their other sisters call her on it). That was a little weird. And lovely.

Amber says

Oh heck, I don't know what's come over me, but I'm reading manga all over again. (And to be fair, they're all

so very short and easy to binge on)

Sweet Blue Flowers I immediately jumped on, because, hello YURI!! (Alright more shoujo-ai, but we'll get to that). Back in my day, those stories were so far and few in-between, but it seems like more f/f stories are coming out more. Or maybe I'm just optimistic? Still, the stories revolve around high school, and I'm starting to feel too old to treat into those stories.

This manga is a whole lot of drama that may only feel unique because of the f/f storylines. So complicated, you might need to draw a map on who likes who to follow the story. I think there's also a bit of cleverness hiding in it, because these stories revolve around the concept of first loves, going so far as to center a *Wuthering Heights* play. So maybe this is just a story that's going to take a while to come together.

There's some frustration on how none of the kisses are depicted, merely implied, when every m/m story involves gratuitous fan service. Except one scene with Yumi and her first love (also heavily implied), there's very little fan service. Okay, Yasuko's existence might be fan service enough, but ya'll get the point.

There's actually very little art depicted in this story with entire pages of empty backgrounds and simplified faces, so maybe the lack of kiss drawings are lack of talent, laziness, or a tight schedule. So who knows. Yasuko might be dreamy, and there's nothing anatomically wrong with the art, but it's so... boring visually.

Finally, the most interesting part of the entire story was only mentioned once throughout the series, so I hope it does get revisited: Yumi's first relationship. That story could go in so many directions, but it was only mentioned a few times.

So all in all, not the best I've ever read/seen, but we get the f/f content we can. So.

Shawna (BacchusVines) says

Yuri manga! WxW!

This was so cute!! I love Akira so much!! And Fumi is more like me than any of the other characters. And I love how open Sugimoto's family was to her dating. I expect nothing less from the author of *The Wandering Son*! c:

Online Eccentric Librarian says

More reviews (and no fluff) on the blog <http://surrealtalvi.wordpress.com/>

Sweet Blue Flowers is a gentle slice of life following two main characters: Fumi (shy, emotional) and Akira (outgoing, kind). The girls were friends in kindergarten, separated for 12 years, and have had the opportunity to meet again thanks to the families being in the same town again. Both attend girls schools in Kamakura and both are about to embark on the twisted path of teen love - both requited and unrequited.

Fumi is very emotional, cries often, and unsure of herself. She is coming off the heartbreak of her former girlfriend leaving her to get married - and she feels that she was toyed with by that person. When a fellow student at her new school asks her on a date, she is happy to find herself in a relationship again. But does her new girlfriend Sugimoto still hold a candle for someone else?

Akira is brash and outgoing, from a loud family. Short and somewhat childish looking, she is well loved by the people at her prestigious new school. She is at first very happy to walk to school with Fumi every morning; after all, when they were little, Akira always took care of Fumi. Soon, she becomes embroiled in Fumi's love life, respecting her friend's choices and being there as support.

The book features a cast of side characters and there is a lot of 'x loves y but y loves z' type of love triangles. Author Shimura's gentle take on adolescence is never harsh and nearly always bittersweet in the heartbreaks of love and life. Akira's exuberance, offset by Fumi's shyness, creates an interesting dynamic among the groups they interact.

Sweet Blue Flowers isn't sensationalist or melodramatic. There are little if any stigmas to the unusual relationships that perhaps would raise far more eyebrows in the West. The artwork is clean and emotive and easy to follow. The story is a slow burn and Shimura is quite happy to let it unwind by itself amidst day-to-day life in Kamakura. Reviewed from an advance reader copy provided by the publisher.

More Bedside Books says

Takako Shimura's Sweet Blue Flowers is a series that has been a long time coming in English. The comic focusing on reunited childhood friends is part slice-of-life with daily activities of schoolgirls such as commuting, afterschool café visits along with school clubs and festivals, while also a drama in the form of disclosures, crushes, dating, and family dynamics. The title served as good material for a partial animated adaptation that was released in English in 2013 as well. The series also has little nods to Japanese girls' literature and culture.

What I appreciate about Sweet Blue Flowers has always been its presentations of messy feelings. Later adolescence can be an emotional time for anyone, but a few of these girls are dealing with associations and crushes that can cause extra turmoil. Shimura softly explores when and how her characters mourn disappointments and disenchantment. The first time I read this title years ago it was rather powerful just to see something like that. And since I'm talking about powerful depictions, while other titles may dance around issues, characters in this series actually discuss identity too. I'm a little surprised still how seeing words like bisexual or lesbian on the page matter even now.

Viz has released Sweet Blue Flowers under the Signature line meaning the physical treatment of their edition is top notch with a similar trim size to the Japanese edition and French flaps, along with beautiful colour pages. As is standard for Viz sound effects are fully re-touched. The fonts seem mostly well chosen. Included at the end are also some translation notes describing Japanese food or, giving a little info on historical periods or figures. However when it comes to the adaptation some of word choice or phrasing left me feeling a little disconnect. This can be seen by apparently sometimes ignoring usual English titles for works referenced in the title chapters, or just being a tad too literal or even misinterpreting the text. There is also some glossing over of how characters are addressed. People who know Akira well shorten her name since it isn't terribly feminine but, this translation does not reflect that. I don't see how Ahchan/Achan would go against the style VIZ chose since they presented another girl's nickname in entirety. Some previous translations have chosen to call Akira, Aki (DMG, Éditions Asuka in French too). That never bothered me, but can be argued as not being the original nickname either.

All in all Sweet Blue Flowers is an enduring series about maturing and girls in love with other girls finally receiving print treatment in English. I am pleased after changing multiple hands it's finally here. Whether someone is familiar with the genre and history or not, it's a story with characters that can reach out to teenagers as well as older readers.

Deltora says

This series is great. Its beautiful art shows off an amazingly accepting story about relationships of many kinds, it talks about how lines can blur and what what once a close friendship can become something else or just how unexpected a crush can be and how that can totally rock your world.

I'm kind of reviewing the whole series in this review and i just really enjoyed it, all the characters and well flushed out and even a girl you've seen in maybe 4 scenes has a very distinct personality and may even get more focus later in the story (maybe dating someone's brother, i don't know)

I should add, There are some relationships that i know some readers will not approve of or like at all, and i understand that, this book might not be for everyone, but it is for me. I try to live by the precept 'Love is Love' if people care about each other i don't care who they are or what the circumstances are, love is love. some reviews have called these books sinful and disgusting, i just don't look at things that way.

Anyway, this series for sure lives up to it's name since if i had to sum it up in one word: Sweet.

Claire says

Crying real tears over this book

April says

Disclaimer: This book found me in a Japanese bookstore talking to a girl about how much we were both exasperated with f/f manga. She pointed out *Sweet Blue Flowers* as an example of a more refreshing, realistic approach to yuri so I grabbed it and here we are. Having finished Vol 1, I owe her my thanks.

If I'm being totally honest, I think most f/f manga is amateur. It borders on sleazy with mind-numbing narratives and even worse characters. I can never tell whether the direction will be towards pleasing male audiences or alienating female audiences with hopeless caricatures or overblown plots. Thankfully, this was a very enjoyable book, and unsurprisingly as it's penned by Takako Shimura who wrote the wonderful *Wandering Son*.

Sweet Blue Flowers is a, well, sweet take on high school romance between girls. It's adorably innocent and subtle. A sort of humble adolescence permeates the story and the characters appear likable and relatable--a quality often lost in most yuri plots. Fumi is a sweetheart and starts the story struggling with what most of us have at some point in our lives: a lost love. The complex relationship between herself and her old friend Akira is reminiscent of a *ton* of relationships I experienced in high school, including the excitement and heartache. The art is strikingly bold, beautiful and delicate. I had to remember which characters were which at times since they are drawn so similar but it didn't bother me much.

All in all, *Sweet Blue Flowers* is a delightful series that plays as a typical high school love story involving angst and girls going through things. I liked it a lot and hopefully this will pave the way for more thoughtful, respectable f/f manga.

Cecelia says

I'M OBSESSED THIS IS THE CUTEST

Rod Brown says

Well, sweet is the perfect word for this little story of romance and friendship at two neighboring all-girls schools. I really love the lead characters. I wish I had the second volume right now.

p.s. I didn't realize this was by the same creator as Wandering Son, Vol. 1 until I read the other reviews here after writing my own. I liked that series a lot, and this one is even better!

Ken Yuen says

A cute manga from the author of Wandering Son. Another pretty slice-of-life film with romances and heartbreaks across the spectrum. It's pleasant enough to read, but it can be hard to follow the large cast of characters.

One problem that's my own fault was that I mistakenly assumed all the characters went to the same school (different school names and uniforms, not sure how that happened). So when I realized my mistake a third into the book, I had to start over.

I think I had this problem with Wandering Son too, but it's sometimes hard to keep track of the pacing of the plot. For example, there's one part which starts with what I believe to be a flashback, then returns to the point in the story where it ended in the last chapter. It can be confusing in that sense.

Laura says

I liked this and it is very queer, but it had some issues that I can't tell whether it is me disliking a character or me disliking the craft. I will most likely read more. Art is gentle and pretty. There are some real cute and touching scenes.
