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My Brother's Husband, Volume 1 (Pantheon Graphic Novels)



Synopsis

Yaichi is a work-at-home suburban dad in contemporary Tokyo; formerly married to Natsuki, father to their young daughter, Kana. Their lives suddenly change with the arrival at their doorstep of a hulking, affable Canadian named Mike Flanagan, who declares himself the widower of Yaichi's estranged gay twin, Ryoji. Mike is on a quest to explore Ryoji's past, and the family reluctantly but dutifully takes him in. What follows is an unprecedented and heartbreaking look at the state of a largely still-closeted Japanese gay culture: how it's been affected by the West, and how the next generation can change the preconceptions about it and prejudices against it. (Please note: This book is a traditional work of manga, and reads back to front and right to left.)

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"When a cuddly Canadian comes to call, Yaichi—a single Japanese dad—is forced to confront his painful past. With his young daughter Kana leading the way, he gradually rethinks his assumptions about what makes a family. Renowned manga artist Gengoroh Tagame turns his stunning draftsmanship to a story very different from his customary fare, to delightful and heartwarming effect. Alison Bechdel, author of *Fun Home* "Heartbreaking yet hopeful, Gengoroh Tagame's beautifully rendered meditation on the struggle for gay acceptance in today's Japan is quietly dazzling. I am already looking forward to part two! "Anderson Cooper, CNN "Beautifully

written and drawn – an eye-opening story about children and parents and how they affect each other. And I’m 11 years old, so I should know!

• Clara Ware

“The art is crisp, and the characters’ faces expressive, allowing the reader to see their hurt, confusion, and relief. A sensitive exploration of the transition some families go through when a family member comes out and a possible entry point for those needing to start conversations of their own.”

• Booklist, *starred review*

“Gengoroh Tagame’s beautiful manga novel *My Brother’s Husband* disentangles family secrets and homophobia with endearing grace. Thoughtful and fetching, *My Brother’s Husband* is the first in a two-volume omnibus about grief, reconciliation and the strength to be who you are.”

• Shelf Awareness *starred review*

“*My Brother’s Husband* focuses more on the uneasy relationship between Yaichi, a single father raising his daughter, Kana, and Mike Flanagan, who was married to Yaichi’s recently deceased (and estranged) twin brother, Ryoji. There’s something beautiful in the careful way that *My Brother’s Husband* handles Yaichi’s coming to terms with his feelings about his brother that’s rarely seen in mainstream comics. Rather than treating the tension between Mike and Yaichi as a massively dramatic point on conflict, the book instead treats it like the complicated and messy holding pattern that it is. The message that Tagame’s trying to get across – that quiet, subtle bigotry can be just as harmful as loud, bombastic bigotry – isn’t always an easy one to process. Tagame understands that and hopefully, as the rest of the book unfolds, readers will too.”

io9.com “*My Brother’s Husband* is focused on normalizing a gay relationship to those who are uncomfortable with the idea. There’s an audience and a need for works like this. The storytelling is straightforward, easy to read, particularly for those who might be new to the medium. There are plenty of panels that establish detail, so the reader gets a feel for this small family’s daily life. It’s charming and provides hope for the future.”

• Comics Worth Reading “The story provides a very interesting look at Japanese society through Yaichi’s struggle to come to terms with his brother’s sexuality, revealing some of the struggles the Japanese gay community faces at the same time. One of the most notable things about Tagame’s artwork is just how vastly different it is from nearly anything I’ve seen before. Not necessarily in terms of character designs, or settings, but in terms of the gaze itself. It’s fascinating to see the male body portrayed through the gaze of a gay male creator. There’s a softness and warmth to *My Brother’s Husband* that

makes it incredibly easy to get into. There's a strong sense of heart, honesty and earnestness. Sequential Ink "Refreshing. Transporting. Clever. Inspiring. If these are qualities that help books rise to the top of your summer reading list, your new number one is My Brother's Husband. The story moves along quietly and gently, Tagame cleverly evoking parallels between mutual misperceptions of gays and straights, older and younger generations, Westerners and Japanese. Passport Magazine "This winsome look at culture clash compares the largely still-closeted Japanese gay culture with the West, underscoring a theme of universal yearning for family. Library Journal

GENGOROH TAGAME was born in 1964 and lives in Tokyo. After graduating from Tama University of Art, Tagame worked as an art director while writing manga and prose fiction, contributing illustrations for various magazines. In 1994 he cofounded the epochal G-Men Magazine and by 1996 he was working full-time as an openly gay artist. He is the author of dozens of graphic novels and stories which have been translated into English, French, Italian, and Korean. His artwork has been exhibited in galleries across Europe and America. My Brother's Husband marks his first all-ages title, and earned him the Japan Media Arts Award for Outstanding Work of Manga from the Agency of Cultural Affairs.

I almost didn't pick this up initially, as Tagame's usual works aren't my thing. I'm glad I did, however, because 'My Brother's Husband' is one of my favorite things I've read this year. It delves into LGBT perspectives in Japan, while also comparing and contrasting them against those of us in the West. It also provides multiple complicated viewpoints, highlighting how age and relationships can alter feelings, and how indifference is not necessarily acceptance.

MY BROTHER'S HUSBAND is a gorgeous, important manga about homosexuality and the cultural differences of that between Japan and Canada. I knew, from the second I saw that this was being released, that I would love it. And I'm so happy I did. Gengoroh Tagame is a fantastic mangaka who evidently both knows and has mastered every aspect of his craft. The story is beautiful in its difficulty (both the exploration of grief and the differences about being gay in Japan versus Canada); the characters are well-rounded; and the art is phenomenal. I cannot wait for volume two.

This first volume spends a lot of time establishing the basics of what homosexuality is, why it's not a bad thing, and how homosexuality is perceived by society. If you're LGBT yourself or already

familiar with the troubles LGBT people face, it's a bit too rudimentary. But, I also kind of like that about it, since there are still people who know nothing about homosexuality, or have dire misunderstandings about homosexual men. I don't know if this book would change anyone's mind, but it could be a decent teaching aide for anyone who wants to better understand LGBT people and their relationships. The characters are likeable, and I'm interested to see where their stories go.

Wonderful slice of life manga that evokes a lot of strong emotions and thoughts around cultural norms with the lgbtq international community. Not to mention a wonderful story about family coming together and growing.

This is a slice-of-life story about a single father, whose twin brother has passed away. His twin was gay, and married a Canadian man, and while the brothers were close as children, they grew apart and hadn't really talked in quite a while. His brother's husband comes to Japan to visit their little family, cue various day-to-day interactions and an overall grappling with main character's somewhat ingrained homophobia. Nice art and a good localization, recommended. :)

This is a sad and beautiful story, captivating from the very start. It presents the story of the family as well as the story of the cultural clash - and ultimately how little of it matters to children who aren't taught the constructs.

I got this today... And couldn't put it down! I've gotten manga in the past but nothing in this genre per-se. Being a member of the LGBT community, this book has a great story and lends some insights to gay culture in Japan.. I can't wait for volume two to be out and I'm eager to find more stories out there like this.

Earth shatteringly lovely. Thank you for a memorable graphic novel. An enjoyable read this year. I recommend this novel highly.

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