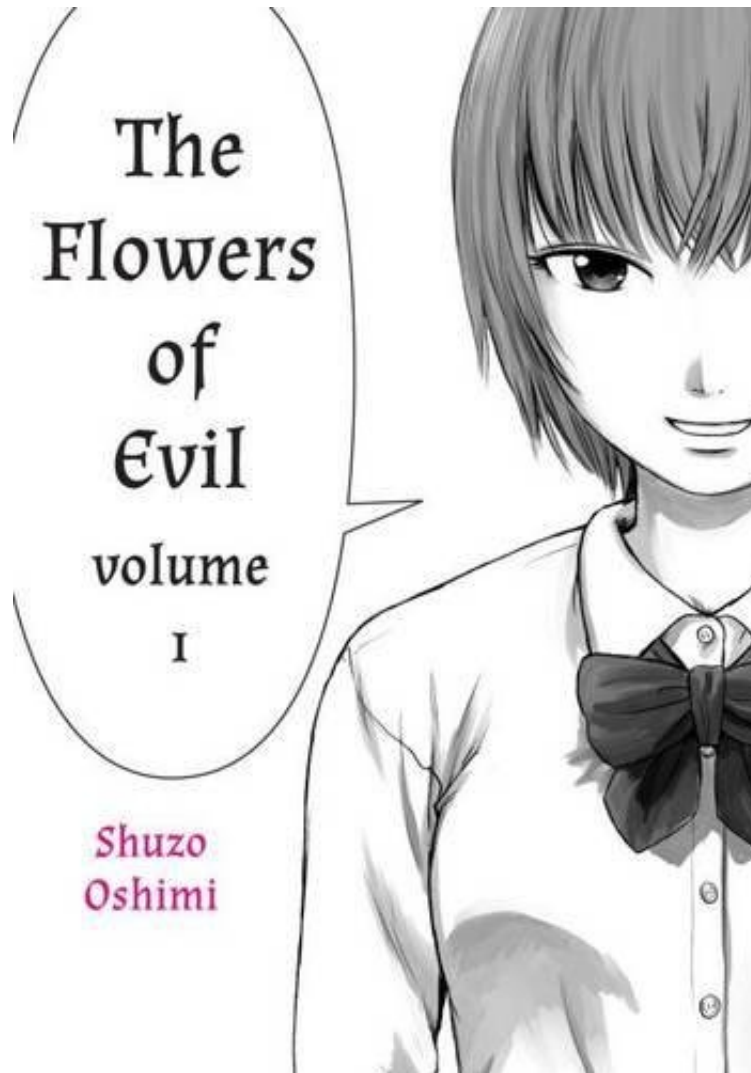


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## Flowers of Evil, Volume 1

*Shuzo Oshimi*

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**Shuzo Oshimi : Flowers of Evil, Volume 1** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Flowers of Evil, Volume 1:

12 of 12 people found the following review helpful. A Genuine Manga about Pure SadismBy Zombie JackalVertical has always had a knack for picking manga that is either outright bizarre or a classic. This falls into the former category. [Minor Spoilers] The story starts off with a normal, rather dreary boy [Kasuga] who has a crush on a girl. Kasuga then goes back after school late to retrieve his book and happen to sees his crushes gym clothes and can't resist taking a look, and ends up having to steal them. And Kasuga gets caught by a stoic girl [Nakamura]. What ensues is that Nakamura blackmails him outright and forces him to do things that just digs his hole deeper. What makes this

manga is Nakamura and the Kasuga. The girl isn't random or eccentric, everything she does is deliberate and calculating. But outright sadistic in her actions and turns our innocent main character into her human toy. The art just works for this manga, it has a subtle unique style that makes every reaction between the psycho and main character work. Sharp lines and interesting dialogue. I would highly recommend this manga because it is definitely unique, Nakamura does not blackmail him to she can extort him for cash, or force him to simple thing. She forces him to do things that creates genuine tension since you don't know what she's going to do or how to react to him. It's not your typical slice of life drama. It's a tale of a silent, manipulative devil.8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. A not-so-typical love taleBy Vitaliy FridmanThe new manga Flowers of Evil from Vertical is a really interesting look at the the world of perversion... Wait wait, I meant love. The mangaka, Shuzo Oshimi states in the book that he wants people to really recognize what "Perversion" truly is and question, "What does perversion mean to me?".The story is set in middle school with our main character Takao Kasuga, who's a definite bookworm and in particular reading the work of Baudelaire, Flowers of Evil. As most boys of his age he has a crush on the class idol, but is often too scared to even try and approach her. On the opposite side of the spectrum is Nakagawa Nakamura who is considered the class bully. After a certain event that occurs early on, she latches on to Kasuga and binds him into a contract, of which the details aren't fully explored, we just know that she has blackmail information on him. The story really develops from there and we are treated to a realistic look at how certain events can shape your adolescence.It's a perverse tale, but has some great ideas to take out of it. Reading this, I couldn't help but feel like the situations Kasuga faces, while not directly like mine, are paralleled to my youth. It's a quick and easy read and I'd highly recommend trying it out.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Perverse, Sick, yet Brilliant!By Mark A. WeissAfter watching the first season of "Aku no Hana" (Flowers of Evil), I was left with that cliffhanger ending, and wanted to know what happened next, without waiting for season two of the anime to be released in N. America. So I decided to start reading the manga. Notably, the manga's illustration style is different from the anime, which isn't traditional style at all because it is rotoscoped with life actors and, for some, it looks 'odd'. I think the manga illustration quality and style is quite nice. But the real mystery was what happened after season one ends, hence, I've been buying (and enjoying) the manga series.This is not a series for young people or the faint of heart. It's blunt, coarse, and details events that are not for the squeamish. It is a brilliant blackmail setup by a middle school girl who witnesses her male classmate succumbing to a momentary weakness. This girl is both sick and sadistic, yet brilliantly clever in maximizing the leverage she obtains in the knowledge that could destroy her classmate's reputation and scar him for life. By chapter three, the reader is trapped on a juggernaut that gets ever closer to embarrassing discovery, skillfully maintaining plausible deniability, chapter after chapter and keeping the tension not only going, but intensifying when you cannot imagine it getting anymore uncomfortable.A love triangle develops, as our male protagonist becomes infatuated with the female classmate with whom his obsession led to a certain act which made him vulnerable to the blackmail by the other female student, but it is not your average love triangle. In fact, many things are inverted, because our male protagonist is not quite right in the head, which is probably why he idolizes his favorite writer/poet, Charles Baudelaire. Wanting to understand more about our main character, I read a bit of Baudelaire. It's nihilistic and depressing work. Probably not a good idea for Japanese middle school students to be reading this kind of thing. Surprising things happen, and ironic behaviors result, which had me verbally cursing at the male protagonist as I read. Indeed, this series has tragedy entwined throughout, because persons throw away beautiful opportunities and relationships, in deference to sick, perverse relationships. Sensible minds will be frustrated by this and it is the only reason why I didn't give this five stars.As bizarre as the situations are, there are some aspects of these characters that many can relate to, and indeed, I suspect that there is a fringe end of Japanese kids who go off the deep end on a trip into hell on earth. These are the kids that didn't commit suicide, or become hikikomori--instead they engage in perverted activities, where one is the kind of 'ring leader' ordering the other to perform ever more outrageous stunts. If you enjoy watching a slow-motion trainwreck, then Shuzo Oshimi's "Flowers of Evil" will entertain well. It's not for everyone, but it is an expose on the problems faced by those living on the fringe edge of Japanese society.

Takao Kasuga is a bookworm. And his favorite book right now is Baudelaire's Flowers of Evil. While the young man may often be seen lost in thought as he rabidly consumes page after page, Takao is not much of a student. Actually when we are first introduced to the middle school teen, we find him sneaking some reading as he receives and F on a recent language exam. Nakagawa is known as the class bully. When she is not receiving zeros she is usually muttering profanities to those around her. While she doesn't care for books or their readers, she does have a thing for troublemakers. Takao may not be one, but having read over his shoulder a few times, she knows he is not very innocent. If anything he is bored and aware of it. Together, by chance, they shake up their entire rural community as Takao tries to break out of his shell in a random moment of passion and affection...not directed towards Nakamura. And contrary to Takao's predictions, the girl he was falling for, Nanako Saeki, responds by eventually accepting the bibliophile for who he is. Or at least, who she thinks he is.And therein lies the conflict. Takao is not a hero. He is not trouble-maker, either. He is a regular teen who through equal moments of cowardice and chivalry takes a long step towards adulthood as he desperately tries to cover up a dark secret. Takao Kusuga has stolen an item precious to

someone he is attracted to, and if he doesn't form a "contract" with his new best friend, she is going to tell.

Oshimi uses surreal imagery a wall of eyes, a fun-house mirror, a giant sink hole to suggest that Kasuga's normal teenage discomfort with sexual feelings has become something more powerful and destructive: shame... That said, *The Flowers of Evil* is a shockingly readable story that vividly one might even say queasily evokes the fear and confusion of discovering one's own sexuality. Recommended. *The Manga Critic* [*The Flowers of Evil*], living up to its name, is a story that starts out very much like a seed that has only just been planted. That seed may represent Kasuga's perversion, his progress towards becoming a different person, or perhaps Kasuga himself. The principle that matters is that this story will continue, that with Nakamura's aide and instruction, we shall eventually see this seed sprout into a flower. What will its color be?... Vertical has truly picked a wonderful, new manga to add to their already colorful repertoire.

**Monor Manga Impressions About the Author** At only 30 years of age, Shuzo Oshimi is already considered a seasoned veteran of the Japanese comics community. Winner of the most important comics awards for newcomers, the Tetsuya Chiba Award in 2001, Oshimi has been penning quirky slice-of-life dramas now for a decade for major manga publishers such as Kodansha and Futabasha. Raised in the slow laid back hills of Gunma, in mid-eastern Japan, Oshimi wished to someday escape his community for bigger pastures. Living solely off of comics and books, he is a man of words and that shows in his very humanist stories. While he has drawn nine series in the past decade, Oshimi's star began to climb just recently in 2008 with the release of his first hit *Drifting Net Cafe*. This horror-themed homage to the legendary Kazuo Umezu work, *Drifting Classroom*, was adapted into a live action series and propelled Oshimi onto an international stage. He would soon reach new heights in 2009 with his most recent series *Flowers of Evil*. In 2010 and 2011, the property quietly landed on numerous must read lists and has helped revitalize the shonen genre.