

## Four Shojo Stories

*Moto Hagio, Keiko Nishi, Shio Sato*  
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#2860033 in Books 1996-03 Format: CLV Original language: English PDF # 1 8.50 x 5.50 x .50l, #File Name: 1569310556261 pages MangaViz Graphic Novel | File size: 65.Mb

**Moto Hagio, Keiko Nishi, Shio Sato : Four Shojo Stories** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Four Shojo Stories:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By serathanks3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A Bit Pricey, Maybe, But Worth It By M. Smith It's difficult, but not impossible, to find a reasonably-priced copy of Four Shojo Stories, which was pulled from shelves shortly after its publication due to the compilation not being authorized by the Japanese publisher. It's probably the only real manga rarity in English due to that fact, so snagging it for \$40 isn't really a bad deal. Of the four stories included in the compilation, two are sci-fi works by shoujo creators and the other two are by josei artist Keiko Nishi. I liked those by Nishi least, though they weren't bad. The second one in particular had a melancholy vibe that I liked, but none of the characters were sympathetic. I'd expected to like Moto Hagio's "They Were Eleven," since I've seen it praised before. I wasn't disappointed. It seemed to drag a little initially (at 120 pp, it was by far the longest story in the collection) but picked up steam and by the end it was clear that all the stuff that happened at the outset had served a purpose. Fans of sci-fi in general but also fans of shoujo series that feature what I call "gender hijinks" would probably enjoy this story. The surprise for me was Shio Sato's "The Changeling." I'd never heard of Sato before, but I liked her story just about as much as Hagio's. In it, a competent and boyish female space pilot received a signal from a previously uncontacted planet and went to investigate. Her opinions on the inhabitants she encountered were thoughtful and different than I'd expected. The story stuck in my head after I had finished and made me wish something else by Sato would get licensed. It also had a cute

final panel. While the contents of *Four Shjo Stories* might not be uniformly stellar, they're still enjoyable. It's too bad they probably won't see the light of day in a readily-accessible, \$8.99 sort of package any time soon. 18 of 19 people found the following review helpful. The best English-language manga compilation ever printed! By A Customer In his introduction to this wonderful graphic novel, translator Matt Thorn called shjo manga: "...a unique forum in which Japanese girls and women can discuss and debate among each other (and now you) what it means to be a Japanese girl, woman, a human being in relationships with other human beings." The hallmark of all shjo manga is its focus upon human relationships and emotions; it is the characters that drive the shjo manga tale, not external conflict or action. This introspective, personal focus confers upon shjo manga an amazing literary quality unique to the comic books of any culture or country. *Four Shjo Stories* is definitely the best compilation volume of this unique art form ever printed in English-translation. Each of the four short stories contained within was originally serialized in comic book form in Viz Communications extremely short-lived Viz Flower Comics imprint, and was selected for its maturity and literary quality. It shows. Unlike many examples of shjo manga, which span multiple volumes and thousands of pages, *Four Shjo Stories* contains only short tales with definite conclusions. The book is truly stand-alone, and is all the better for being so. These are not "just comic books". The stories are equal parts philosophical and poignant. I've included brief summaries of each of the four stories, but, unfortunately, no poor words of mine will prepare the reader for the quality, sophistication, and delicate beauty that each of these tales possesses. "Promise" by Keiko Nishi A mysterious boy swears to a little girl that they will meet again. Years later, the boy reappears, somehow unchanged, and teaches the now embittered girl how to live. Raw and emotionally charged. "They Were 11" by Moto Hagio Ten students board a ghost ship adrift in space for fifty-four days. It is the last portion of their examination; they must learn to cooperate. However, there aren't ten students, there are eleven! Who is the imposter, and what does he want? An exhilarating classic with an important lesson by one of Japan's premier shjo manga artists. "The Changeling" by Shio Sato In this story, humanity has seeded the universe with colonies. A young woman answers the summons of one of these "seed civilizations", only to discover utopia. But, is it utopia? And, what terrible connection does these people have with the "noble race" of their past? A delightful, eminently believable story. "Since You've Been Gone" by Keiko Nishi The interplay between loyalty and betrayal is complex, and tragedy shows a husband whom he truly loves. Subtle and disturbing, even more so by its brevity. Though only printed a few years ago in 1996, *Four Shjo Stories*, is, for reasons that are known only to the translator and publisher, out of print. It is shameful to think that the English-speaking world may never again be exposed to manga of this quality. Nonetheless, if you can locate a copy of *Four Shjo Stories*, I heartily encourage you to do so. No one, whether he be a lover of manga or great literature or both, will be disappointed.

An unprecedented collection of stories by the greatest shojo manga artists of our time! \* PROMISE by Keiko Nishi \* THEY WERE 11 by Moto Hagio \* THE CHANGELING by Shio Sato \* SINCE YOU'VE BEEN GONE by Keiko Nishi \*

From BooklistGr. 8<sup>+</sup>-12. These four graphic novels in one volume constitute a fascinating introduction to the world of shojo manga, comics created by Japanese women for Japanese girls and women. A brief introduction by translator Matt Thorn gives a history of the genre and information on the three artists in the collection: Keiko Nishi, Moto Hagio, and Shio Sato. The black-and-white illustrations are primarily pen and ink, although some cleverly incorporate watercolor-like techniques. Nishi, in particular, utilizes unusual angles and perspectives to emphasize a character's mood. The artistic styles of all three artists are clearly geared toward women, but the stories will appeal to both sexes, encompassing a wide range of subject matter--from an sf tale imbued with elements of philosophy and religion to a realistic story about a philandering husband who finally realizes where his loyalties lie. These are not lightweight comics. Even the straightforward "romance" tale offers thoughtful characterization and real poignancy. Highly recommended for any collection that includes graphic novels. Debbie Carton