

# Gay for You? Yaoi and Yuri Manga for GBLTQ Readers

Compiled by Leyla Aker, Robin Brenner, Christopher Butcher, Erica Friedman, Scott Robins, Snow Wildsmith, Eva Volin, & Alex Woolfson

## **Yaoi/BL**

### **Age Called Blue** by est em (NetComics, 1 volume)

Scott's note: A poetic and angsty look at the tumultuous relationship between two members of a punk/rock band and how their love for one another eventually pulls the band apart. This less traditional yaoi title will appeal to teens and fans of more European-style comics or art-comics. Est Em's art evokes a little bit of Paul Pope here.

### **Antique Bakery** by Fumi Yoshinaga (Juné Manga, 4 volumes)

Chris's note: A PG-rated series about men working in a bakery. Addresses traditional gender roles and male friendship in a direct and funny way, but real depth and weight is given to the gay characters and relationships as the story develops.

### **Black Winged Love** by Tomoko Yamashita (Netcomics, 1 volume)

Leyla's note: Short story collections are usually a tough sell, but this collection is well worth a reader's time. Yamashita is another mangaka who I'd love to see more of for English-language audiences. Like Kunieda, she's incredibly strong with characterization--no cookies from the cutter here--and with story construction, which for her ranges from comedic to tragic, from BL to shonen ai to josei, from short stories to volume-length works. Net Comics has released another one of her volumes, Dining Bar Akira, which is also list-worthy.

### **Bondz** by Toko Kawai (801 Media, 1 volume)

Chris's note: Two really hot guys sleep together, profess to regret it, and then have to navigate the very muddy waters of coming out and their attraction to one another. Dirty. The other 3 stories collected with it are only okay. :)

### **Border** by Kazuma Kodaka (June Manga, 3+ volumes)

Eva's note: I love that, as pretty as her men are, and as cracky as the story, the men are undeniably men. Border starts off spicy and stays that way, but the stories all make sense, have plots, and denouements.

### **Don't Blame Me!** by Yugi Yamada (Juné Manga, 2 volumes)

Robin's note: Yamada follows the Mr. Darcy school of romance: snarky bickering until the couple realizes it's been love all along. Just with more sex. Following adventures of a university film club, this tale is as much an ode to college's reckless mix of passion and creativity as it is a romance. A few side plots, including fangirls, porn, and love between brothers (must we?), veer into BL clichés, but the main pairing is messy and tender. If you like her style, **Close the Last Door** is as compelling about adults, though with sillier notes.

### **Future Lovers** by Saika Kunieda (SUBLime, digital only, 2 volumes)

Alex's note: The book that \*every\* hard core yaoi fan friend of mine told me I had to read. I wasn't disappointed. Top-notch art where the bishonen ukes still look like guys, an openly gay

romantic lead (a rarity in yaoi), very believable character interaction and some sex that's actually, well hot (also a rarity in my experience with yaoi). A very compelling, page-turning story of two guys with very different personalities who fall in love. Leyla's note: Seconding Alex on this one. With one possible exception, all of Kunieda's titles are top-notch, and I wish she were better represented here.

### **Ichigenme: The First Class Is Civil Law...** by Fumi Yoshinaga (801 Media, 2 volumes)

Chris's note: Probably the most realistic depiction of a mature gay relationship that I've come-across in yaoi, the relationships felt really strong, and well-observed. Lots of sex (particularly in the second volume), and it does not feel overly designed/pandering to its intended female audience, largely owing to Yoshinaga's skill as a storyteller.

### **Little Butterfly** by Hinako Takanaga (June Manga, 1 omnibus edition)

Alex's note: Very sweet romance with lovable high-school aged characters and well-drawn art in the shojo tradition. Good humor, well-paced plotting and an all-around good time. Some hardcore yaoi friends I've talked to found the plot twists to be yaoi clichés, but IMHO, it's a great introduction to the special joys yaoi offers gay readers.

### **Love Pistols** by Tarako Kotobuki (SUBLime, digital only, 2+ volumes)

Scott's note: My first experience reading yaoi—a bizarre story about sexual conquests, gay relationships and characters evolved from animals other than monkeys. The series follows a lot of the traditional dom/sub and older/younger themes found in most yaoi but turns the genre on its head with the addition of these half-animal characters. This makes sexual scenes ridiculous but also sexy and fun, especially when it's revealed that males can be impregnated. Might appeal to members of the gay 'bear' community or any other community where animal metaphors and sex are found.

### **The Moon and the Sandals** by Fumi Yoshinaga (Juné Manga, 2 volumes)

Robin's note: As Chris notes looking at **Ichigenme**, Yoshinaga's skill elevates her titles beyond clichés. Here we have a student in love with a teacher, an easily-led object of affection, and a girl pining away for her gay friend. Yoshinaga promptly upends expectations. Sometimes hesitant, sometimes impulsive, her characters are charmingly true to life. The second volume is filled with sex – character driven sex, but sex nonetheless – but also features a rare storyline about coming out in the workplace.

### **Only Serious About You** by Kai Asou (June Manga, 2 volumes)

Robin's note: I'm not usually a sucker for adorable moppets in romances (in fact, I usually find them irritating), but this series won me over. It's a sweet, short series that feeds the need for a rom-com trifle about finding family and finding the balance between what you need and what you want.

**Rin!** by Satoru Kannagi and Yukine Honami  
(Juné Manga, 3 volumes)

Alex's note: The main reason to get this is for the art -- no one draws huggable boys like Yukine Honami. Her penciled style combines traditional manga elements (such as the larger than life eyes) with beautiful naturalism and compelling expressionality. And while there are no surprises here plot-wise, the romance is satisfying, believable and yes, very sweet. Much fun.

**The Rule of Standing on Tiptoe** by Puku Okuyama  
(eManga, digital only, 1 volume)

Robin's note: I get a lot of teens asking for more yaoi, but have had a problem lately finding anything as sweet, romantic, and funny as the long out of print **Only the Ring Finger Knows**. This title is a great new one for those teens not really ready for mature content. I'm sad it's not in print for our library collection, but at least I can recommend it here!

**Upcoming**

**Devil's Honey** by Isaku Natsume (SUBLime)

**Happy End Apartment** by est em (JManga)

**The Scent of Apple Blossoms** by Toko Kawai (SUBLime)

**Related Titles**

**Wandering Son** by Takako Shimura  
(Drawn & Quarterly, 3 volumes)

Robin's note: This is an outstanding series, beautifully translated and presented by Drawn & Quarterly. Too often transgender characters in manga are comic relief or wacky sidekicks, but this title depicts transgender issues with clarity, honesty, and refreshing realism. Absolutely gorgeous artwork and a slow pace that suits the contemplation perfectly.

**Yuri**

In English:

**Girlfriends** by Morinaga Milk

(Jmanga.com, digital; Seven Seas print coming soon; 5 volumes)

Erica's Note: Classic Schoolgirl Yuri romance, by a master of the genre. Also available in French.

**Iono-sama Fanatics** by Miyabi Fujieda  
(Infinity Studios, 1 volume published in English)

Erica's note: A fun Yuri fantasy. Out of print, still available online.

**Kimi no Tame nara Shineru** by Kuzushiro  
(Coming soon to Jmanga.com, digital, 1+ volume)

Erica's note: What was famous diarist Sei Shonagon really like? Probably not like this. A laugh-out-loud funny Yuri gag comedy about Heian period Imperial life.

**Love My Life** by Yamaji Ebine  
(JManga.com, digital only)

Erica's Note: A wonderful Josei Yuri (although JManga categorizes all Yuri as Seinen) Yuri manga story about college student Ichiko and her lover Elly. Sweet slice of life, not about coming out as much as it is about living life.

**Poor Poor Lips** by Hayako Goto  
(Jmanga.com, digital only, 3+ volumes)

Erica's Note: Extremely poor Nako finds job in a gem shop. Her boss Ren says she's a lesbian, but that Nako isn't her type. But that may not be true...It's a cute, rather more endearing gaga comic than you might expect.

**Rica 'tte Kanji!?** by Rica Takashima  
(ALC Publishing, 1 volume)

Erica's note: Coming Summer 2012, an omnibus of 20 years of Rica's work, in print and digital format.

**Strawberry Panic Omnibus** by Sakurako Kimino  
(Seven Seas, 2 volumes manga, 3 volumes novel)

Erica's note: Strawberry Panic is a parody of many typical Yuri tropes

**WORKS** by Eriko Tadenō  
(ALC Publishing, 1 volume)

Erica Notes: Collection of Josei Yuri short stories, from coming out to a May-December office romance.

**Yuri Monogatari** by various creators  
(ALC, 6 anthologies to date)

Erica's note: Yuri anthology in English, artists and writers from all around the world (conflict of interest, well, yes, duh. Still, I think it's great!).

In French:

**Aoi Hana** by Takako Shimura  
(Asuka, 5+ volumes)

Erica's note: Fantastically excellent series - all the Yuri tropes, like Strawberry Panic, but done with elegance, grace and strength. This is available as Fleur Blues in French, but I'd really like to see it in English.

**Hanjuku Joshi** by Akiko Morishima  
(Taifu, 2 volumes, 1 volume coming out this year)

Erica's Note: A sweet, silly school girl romance paralleled by a more adult relationship.

**Sasamekikoto** by Ikeda Takashi  
(Taifu, 9 volumes total, 1 coming out in French this year.)  
Erica's Note: A comedic look at Yuri tropes that settles into a great schoolgirl Yuri love story.)

Erica's wish list for titles that SHOULD be translated into English.

**Gunjo** by Ching Nakamura  
(1+ volume)

Erica's note: Dark, violent, dysfunctional story about a woman and the lesbian who is in love with her; on the run from the police after the lesbian kills the woman's husband. Sounds kind of "meh" it's actually genius. Reading it is like eating the most delicious razorblades ever.

**Maria-sama ga Miteru** by Oyuki Konno  
(35 volumes novel, 6+ volumes manga)

Erica's note: The anime is in English, we really need the novels to come out here, but they never will.

**Ame-iro Kouchakan Kandan** by Fujieda Miyabi  
(1+ volume)

Erica's note: There is no "plot," but the women of the Amber Teahouse do nothing in an incredibly pleasant way.