

THE SERIES ORIGINALLY RAN FROM 1984 AND WAS SOON ADAPTED INTO AN ANIME. IT ALSO INSPIRED A VIDEO MINI-SERIES, TWO THEATRICAL FILMS, A COMPUTER GAME, AUDIO DRAMAS, AND VARIOUS OTHER SPIN-OFFS. ITS WESTERN RELEASE IS CONSIDERED A MILESTONE THAT HELPED JAPANESE COMICS GAIN TRACTION AMONG READERS IN EUROPE AND THE US.

KIMAGURE ORANGE ROAD IS A COMEDY SERIES IN THE BEST SPIRIT OF 1980S SLAPSTICK HUMOR. HOWEVER, IT'S NOT JUST A ROM-COM; IT'S PACKED WITH ACTION, SENSATIONAL (IF OFTEN HILARIOUSLY ABSURD) EVENTS, HEARTFELT MOMENTS, STRONG EMOTIONS, THE GLITZ AND GLAMOUR OF THE DECADE IN ITS JAPANESE FLAVOR, BEAUTIFUL GIRLS, CLUELESS BOYS, AND EVEN A GRANDPA WHO ALSO HAS POWERS. IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL THIS CHAOS IS THE CONFUSED KYOSUKE, TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO WITH HIMSELF, TORN BETWEEN THE CHARMING, BUBBLY HIKARU AND THE RESERVED, DISTANT MADOKA, WHO GRADUALLY SHOWS HER ICE QUEEN PERSONA TO REVEAL A WARMER, MORE VULNERABLE SIDE.

AS IF THIS TENSE LOVE TRIANGLE WEREN'T ENOUGH, KYOSUKE AND HIS YOUNGER TWIN SISTERS HAVE... PSYCHIC POWERS. THESE INCLUDE TELEKINESIS, PRECOGNITION, CREATING ILLUSIONS, AND EVEN TIME TRAVEL. THEIR MIDDLING COUSIN AND MISCHIEVOUS YOUNGER COUSIN ALSO SHARE THESE ABILITIES. ADD IN TWO CLUELESS CLASSMATES, AND YOU'VE GOT A RECIPE FOR ALL SORTS OF DISASTERS: ROMANTIC, SOCIAL, FAMILIAL, ACADEMIC, AND MORE.

YUSAKU KASUWA IS A 15-YEAR-OLD BOY WHO HAS JUST MOVED TO A NEW CITY. IN A PARK, HE ACCIDENTALLY MEETS A GIRL WHO IMMEDIATELY CATCHES HIS EYE. HOWEVER, THINGS GET COMPLICATED WHEN HE LEARNS THAT MADOKA HAS A ROUGH, REBELLIOUS PAST AND A FIERY TEMPERAMENT. THEIR RELATIONSHIP MIGHT HAVE A CHANCE, BUT THERE'S A MAJOR OBSTACLE: KYOSUKE ALSO CATCHES THE ATTENTION OF MADOKA'S BEST FRIEND, HIKARU, THE YOUNGER GIRL QUICKLY CLAIMS HIM AS HER OWN WITHOUT EVEN ASKING HIS OPINION, AND KYOSUKE, BEING A SPINELESS FOOL, CAN'T BRING HIMSELF TO TELL HER THE TRUTH, ESPECIALLY SINCE HE'S TERRIFIED OF MADOKA, WHO IS QUICK TO ANGER AND EVEN QUICKER WITH HER HANDS.

THE CHARACTER OF MADOKA IS WIDELY REGARDED AS THE FIRST TSUNDERE, AND HER TRANSFORMATION FROM A COLD, GANG-AFFILIATED DELINQUENT TO A WARM AND DEVOTED FRIEND IS ONE OF THE MOST COMPELLING EVOLUTIONS OF THIS ARCHETYPE.

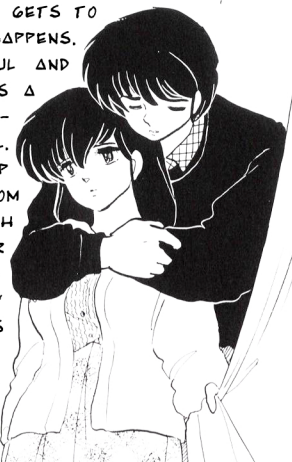
THE GAGS ARE FUNNY? SOMETIMES RUSTIC, OCCASIONALLY SIMPLE, BUT NEVER CRUDE. THE CHARACTERS, EVEN THE SUPPORTING ONES, ARE DESIGNED WITH CHARM AND CARE, AND THEIR ADVENTURES ARE WELL-THOUGHT-OUT AND SKILLFULLY EXECUTED. THERE ARE ALSO MOMENTS WHEN DEEPER EMOTIONS COME TO THE FOREFRONT, GIVING THE SERIES A MORE PROFOUND TONE OVER TIME.

THE MANGA, CREATED BY IZUMI MATSUMOTO, IS UNDOUBTEDLY A MUST-READ FOR ANYONE NOSTALGIC FOR THE 1980S, BUT ALSO FOR THOSE WHO SIMPLY ENJOY QUALITY ENTERTAINMENT THAT OFFERS MORE THAN JUST SLAPSTICK HUMOR.

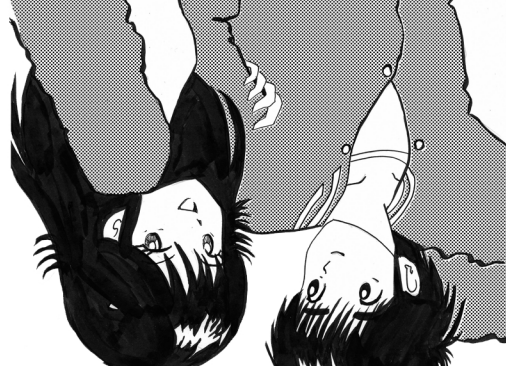


YUSAKU GODAI LIVES IN A RENTAL HOUSE AND IS DEEPLY UNHAPPY. HE'S SURROUNDED BY A BUNCH OF ODDBALLS—A FREELOADING LAYABOUT, A GOSSIPY DRUNKARD, AND A PROMISCUOUS WAITRESS. UNDER THESE CONDITIONS, STUDYING IS NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE, AND HIS ACADEMIC LIFE IS IN SHAMBLES. BUT THEN, ONE DAY, A NEW MANAGER MOVES IN. SHE'S YOUNG, BEAUTIFUL, QUIET, MYSTERIOUS? AND, OF COURSE, YOU CAN GUESS HOW THIS IS BOUND TO END.

HOWEVER, BEFORE IT GETS TO THAT POINT, A LOT HAPPENS. KYOKO, THE BEAUTIFUL AND RESERVED MANAGER, IS A WIDOW AND NOT INTERESTED IN MEN AT ALL. THAT DOESN'T STOP THE STUDENT FROM GAZING AT HER WITH PUPPY-DOG EYES, NOR THE HANDSOME TENNIS COACH FROM OPENLY COURTING HER. THINGS GET EVEN MORE COMPLICATED WHEN YUSAKU STARTS DATING HIS CLASSMATE KOZUE.



# JAPANESE COMICS



# MY FAVORITE READ #01 DEC 2024 COMICS

THIS PUBLICATION USED ART CREATED BY IZUMI MATSUMOTO AND RUMIKO TAKAHASHI.  
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LOOK FOR UPCOMING ISSUES AND OTHER ZINES IN MY FREE DISTRO:

**I READ COMICS** IS A SERIES OF SHORT PUBLICATIONS ABOUT ME AND MY COMIC READING. IN IT, I INTRODUCE MY FAVORITE CHARACTERS, THE MOST IMPORTANT ALBUMS, CREATORS, AND OTHER ISSUES RELATED TO THE BROAD CONCEPT OF COMICS.

IN ALL THIS, THERE'S ALSO THE BAND OF ODDBALLS LIVING IN THE IKKOKU BOARDING HOUSE, KYOKO'S FAMILY, AND A BIG, SHAGGY DOG. AND THAT'S JUST THE BEGINNING. RUMIKO TAKAHASHI, WHILE WRITING THIS SERIES, DREW FROM HER PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS. SHE CRAFTED A GALLERY OF EXTRAORDINARY, COLORFUL, LIVELY, AND FUNNY CHARACTERS, EACH OF WHOM, HOWEVER, HAS THEIR OWN DARKER, LESS COMEDIC SIDE. THE STORY OCCASIONALLY DELVES INTO TOPICS MUCH HEAVIER THAN UNREQUITED LOVE. THESE THEMES, THOUGH, ARE SEAMLESSLY WOVEN INTO THE FAST-PACED COMEDIC NARRATIVE, SO MUCH SO THAT READERS MIGHT NOT EVEN NOTICE THEM AT FIRST—ONLY UPON REFLECTION DO THEY REALIZE TAKAHASHI'S SKILL AND MASTERY IN TELLING STORIES ABOUT PEOPLE AND THEIR LIVES.

THE ESCAPADES OF THE YOUNG, BROKE, PERPETUALLY INDECISIVE STUDENT BEAR A STRIKING RESEMBLANCE TO THE ROMANTIC TROUBLES THAT MIDDLE SCHOOLER KYOSUKE FINDS HIMSELF ENTANGLED IN, THOUGH THEY OPERATE ON A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT LEVEL (AND WITHOUT SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS). THE VIVID CHARACTERS, EVEN IF SOMETIMES BASED ON JUST A FEW STRONG TRAITS, GIVE THE AUTHOR PLENTY OF ROOM TO SHINE, TRANSFORMING THIS SLICE-OF-LIFE ROMANTIC COMEDY INTO SOMETHING MORE THAN MERE ENTERTAINMENT. AMIDST POVERTY, LACK OF PROSPECTS, AND A SENSE OF FUTILITY, LOVE EVENTUALLY BLOSSOMS—NOT JUST ONE LOVE, BUT SEVERAL—AND THE ROCKING BOAT THAT IS THE SUBURBAN BOARDING HOUSE, AFTER MANY STORMS, FINALLY FINDS ITS WAY TO A SAFE HARBOR.

MAISON IKKOKU IS PERHAPS THE MOST GROUNDED OF TAKAHASHI'S WORKS, WITH A MUCH STRONGER SLICE-OF-LIFE EMPHASIS. THIS MAKES IT NOT ONLY AN ENTERTAINING READ BUT ALSO A DEEPLY SATISFYING ONE, OFFERING SOMETHING MEANINGFUL, SPEAKING TO UNIVERSAL ISSUES, AND REMAINING RELEVANT EVEN DECADES LATER.

BOTH SERIES, KIMAGURE ORANGE ROAD AND MAISON IKKOKU, THOUGH SEEMINGLY SIMILAR YET DIFFERENT IN TONE, ARE AMONG MY FAVORITES.

