

# Manga

Need a gift? Need a library shelf? Need a whole library?



# What is Manga

**Manga originated in Japan from centuries-old art traditions, evolving into modern comics influenced by both Japanese and Western styles.**

- The word *manga* (漫画) combines *man* (“whimsical” or “entertaining”) and *ga* (“pictures”).
- Its roots trace back to **12th–13th century picture scrolls** like *Chōjū-giga*, which used sequential images to tell humorous stories.
- In the **18th–19th centuries**, artists like **Hokusai** popularized the term *manga* with sketchbooks of playful drawings.
- Modern manga as we know it—multi-panel comics with speech balloons—emerged in the **late 19th and early 20th centuries**, influenced by Western comic strips and Japanese publications.
- After **World War II**, Osamu Tezuka (creator of *Astro Boy*) revolutionized manga with cinematic storytelling, laying the foundation for its global popularity.

So, manga’s “origin story” is a blend of **ancient Japanese art, Edo-period sketches, Western comic influences, and postwar innovation**, making it both deeply traditional and strikingly modern.

- ◆ Rabbit Hole Project: Dig deep and uncover and share the bigger origin story of this format of communication!



# Danger Warning

- ◆ As with all comic books, not all manga is suitable for “all ages”
- ◆ Big eyes, playful characters, or bright covers don’t necessarily mean the story is wholesome. Some series with “innocent” artwork explore dark, violent, or sexual themes.
- ◆ Safest titles: Pokémon; Platoon; Yo-Kai Watch; Kirby Manga Mania; Unicorn:Awakening; Cinnamoroll; Legend of Zelda; Barakamon; Young Miss Holmes; Hikaru no Go; Cowa!: Happy Happy Clover; Yotsuba&!





# Where Manga links into English Language Arts

- ◆ Exploration of text and story that deepens our understandings!
- ◆ Shows how text is understood differently depending on worldviews and perspectives
- ◆ These are texts that are socially, culturally, geographically and historically constructed.
- ◆ Shows how language shapes ideas and influences others while also bringing in visual supports/inspiration!





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ROMANCE DAWN



The best selling manga of all time and has enough volumes for its own shelf

One Piece is worth reading because it's an epic, character-driven adventure that blends heart, humour, and high-stakes storytelling better than almost any long-running series. It follows Monkey D. Luffy and his diverse crew as they chase big dreams, challenge injustice, and grow together through unforgettable arcs. The worldbuilding is massive yet cohesive, filled with mysteries, unique islands, and meaningful themes about freedom, friendship, and fighting oppression. Despite its length, the emotional payoffs, creative battles, and steady character development make it incredibly rewarding. Readers stay for the laughs—but stay even longer for the depth, surprises, and genuine inspiration embedded in every voyage.





Super popular and decently long

Naruto is compelling because it mixes high-energy action with a deeply emotional coming-of-age story. It follows Naruto Uzumaki, an underdog ostracized by his village, as he works to earn respect and pursue his dream of becoming Hokage. Along the way, the series explores themes of perseverance, loneliness, friendship, and the cycle of hatred, giving its battles real emotional weight. The world is rich with ninja traditions, jutsu systems, and political tensions that add depth to every conflict. Readers connect with its flawed, relatable characters and the way they grow through hardship. Naruto delivers excitement, heart, and a message about never giving up.





Together with one piece and Naruto are known as the big three because the sales of them effectively let manga reach a western audience

**Bleach** hooks readers with its stylish blend of supernatural action, mystery, and character-driven drama. It follows Ichigo Kurosaki, a teenager who unexpectedly becomes a Soul Reaper and must protect both the living world and the afterlife from dangerous spirits. The series stands out for its sleek aesthetic, intense battles, inventive powers, and memorable cast—each with their own motivations and secrets. As the story expands into the Soul Society and beyond, the stakes rise and the lore deepens, revealing complex hierarchies and moral gray areas. Bleach is ideal for readers who love fast-paced action, cool worldbuilding, and a story layered with identity and destiny.





Classic and one of the most influential mangas of all time

Dragon Ball Z is a must-read for anyone who loves high-energy battles, iconic characters, and classic heroism at its purest. It follows Goku and his friends as they defend Earth from ever-stronger threats, pushing their limits through training, transformation, and sheer determination. The series helped define modern action manga with its explosive fights, tense rivalries, and unforgettable moments like Super Saiyan breakthroughs. Yet beneath the spectacle is a story about loyalty, family, and striving to be better than you were yesterday. DBZ is thrilling, fun, and timeless—perfect for readers who want a fast-paced, adrenaline-filled adventure that shaped an entire genre.



Sailor Moon is a captivating read because it blends magical-girl fantasy with heartfelt friendship, romance, and empowerment. It follows Usagi Tsukino, an ordinary girl who discovers she's a guardian destined to protect Earth from dark forces, all while navigating school, identity, and growing up. The series shines through its emotional depth, diverse team of Sailor Guardians, and themes of love, loyalty, and inner strength. Its stylized art, cosmic mythology, and mix of humour and drama make every arc engaging. Sailor Moon is perfect for readers who want a story that's both enchanting and inspiring—full of magic, courage, and hope.



THE face of magical girl manga





Some of the best world building  
and most in depth power systems

Hunter x Hunter is a masterclass in storytelling that blends adventure, strategy, and emotional depth. It follows Gon Freecss, a boy seeking his father, a legendary Hunter, and explores themes of friendship, morality, and ambition. Unlike typical shonen series, it subverts expectations with complex characters, unpredictable plot twists, and intricate power systems like Nen. Each arc feels fresh, ranging from thrilling tournaments to dark psychological battles. The series challenges viewers with philosophical questions while delivering intense action and heartfelt moments. If you enjoy layered narratives, clever tactics, and character-driven drama, Hunter x Hunter offers an unforgettable experience.



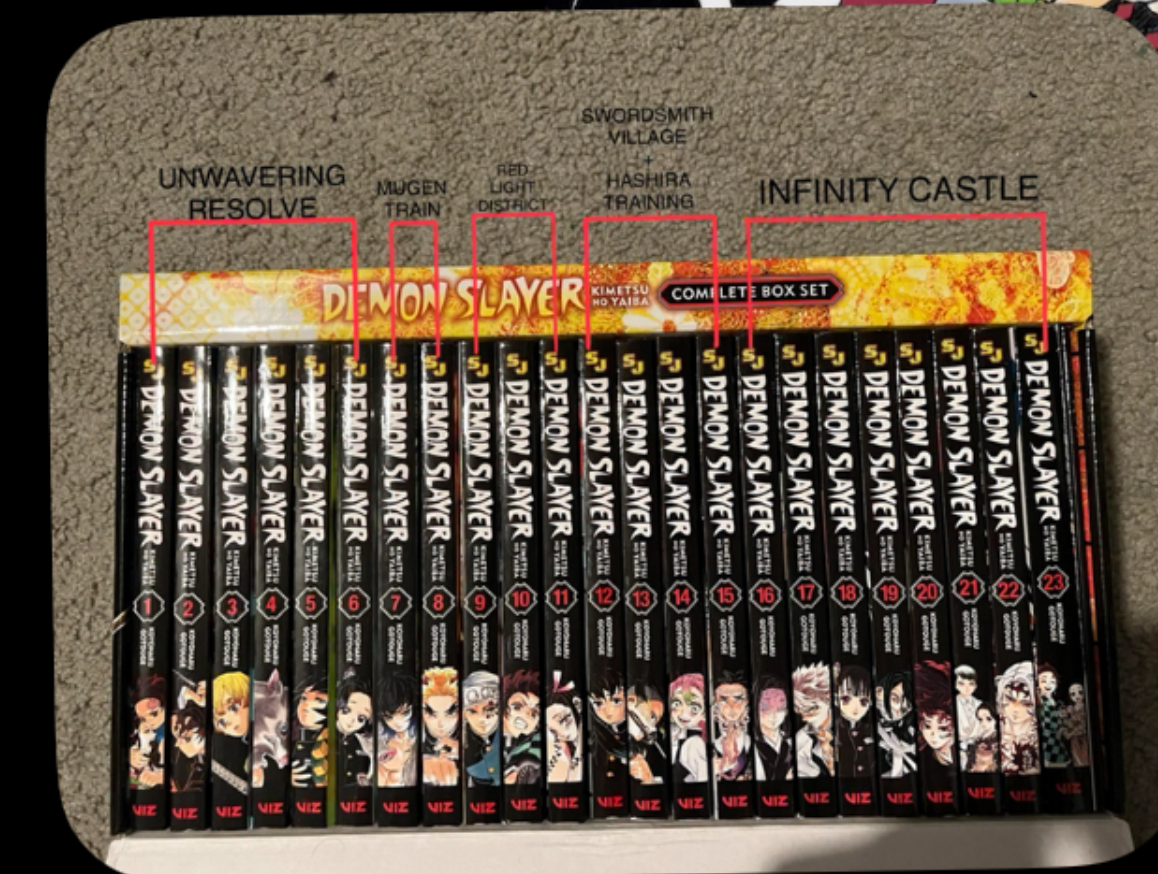


More modern and one of the series to bring anime into the mainstream

My Hero Academia is a thrilling blend of superhero action and heartfelt storytelling set in a world where most people have superpowers called “Quirks.” It follows Izuku Midoriya, a boy born powerless who dreams of becoming a hero. The series shines through its inspiring themes of perseverance, morality, and what it truly means to be a hero. With dynamic battles, clever power mechanics, and a diverse cast of characters—each with unique motivations—it balances intense action with emotional depth. If you enjoy stories about growth, friendship, and overcoming odds in a richly built world, this anime is a must-watch.



Demon Slayer is a visually stunning and emotionally gripping anime that combines breathtaking animation with a heartfelt story. It follows Tanjiro Kamado, a kind-hearted boy whose family is slaughtered by demons, leaving his sister Nezuko cursed. Determined to save her and avenge his family, Tanjiro joins the Demon Slayer Corps, facing relentless battles and moral dilemmas. The series stands out for its gorgeous fight choreography, rich world-building, and themes of resilience, compassion, and sacrifice. If you love intense action, deep emotional connections, and jaw-dropping visuals, Demon Slayer delivers an unforgettable experience that resonates long after the credits roll.



Also very recent and pretty short but considering the movie that came out recently surpassed 600 million worldwide and it hasn't even been a whole month should speak for itself



JoJo's Bizarre Adventure is a wildly creative and stylish anime that spans generations, each arc following a different member of the Joestar family in their battle against supernatural forces. Known for its unique art style, imaginative powers called "Stands," and over-the-top personalities, JoJo blends action, mystery, and humor with dramatic flair. Every part feels distinct, offering fresh settings—from Victorian England to modern Japan—while maintaining interconnected themes of courage, destiny, and family legacy. If you enjoy bold storytelling, inventive fights, and unforgettable characters wrapped in a truly bizarre yet brilliant world, JoJo is an experience like no other.



Jojo



This series contains extreme violence, gore, and mature themes.



Attack on Titan is a dark, gripping anime that combines intense action with profound themes of freedom, survival, and morality. Set in a world where humanity is on the brink of extinction, walled off from giant man-eating Titans, it follows Eren Yeager and his friends as they join the fight to reclaim their world. The series stands out for its shocking twists, layered characters, and exploration of political intrigue and human nature. With breathtaking animation, relentless tension, and philosophical depth, Attack on Titan is perfect for those who crave a story that challenges expectations and keeps you questioning until the end.

Attack on titan is considered one of the best



This series contains extreme violence, gore, and mature themes.

Jujutsu Kaisen is a dark, fast-paced anime that blends supernatural horror with explosive action and heartfelt character arcs. It follows Yuji Itadori, a high schooler who becomes host to a powerful curse after a fateful encounter, thrusting him into the dangerous world of Jujutsu sorcerers. The series excels with its fluid, jaw-dropping fight choreography, deep lore on curses, and a cast of complex, charismatic characters—each with unique abilities and motivations. Themes of life, death, and the value of human connections run throughout, making it emotionally resonant. If you crave intense battles, sharp humor, and rich world-building, Jujutsu Kaisen delivers.



4 Replies

Great newer series and not that long



This series contains extreme violence, gore, and mature themes.



Very gore heavy and dark themes but also insanely fun (similar to jujitsu kaisen above)

Chainsaw Man is a bold, unpredictable anime that mixes brutal action with dark humor and raw emotion. It follows Denji, a destitute teenager who merges with his pet devil to become Chainsaw Man, gaining chainsaw powers in exchange for his heart. The series stands out for its gritty tone, shocking twists, and exploration of human desires—love, survival, and freedom—against a backdrop of grotesque devils and relentless danger. With stylish animation, complex characters, and themes that challenge traditional shonen tropes, Chainsaw Man is perfect for viewers who crave something edgy, chaotic, and deeply human beneath the blood-soaked surface.



This series contains extreme violence, gore, and mature themes.

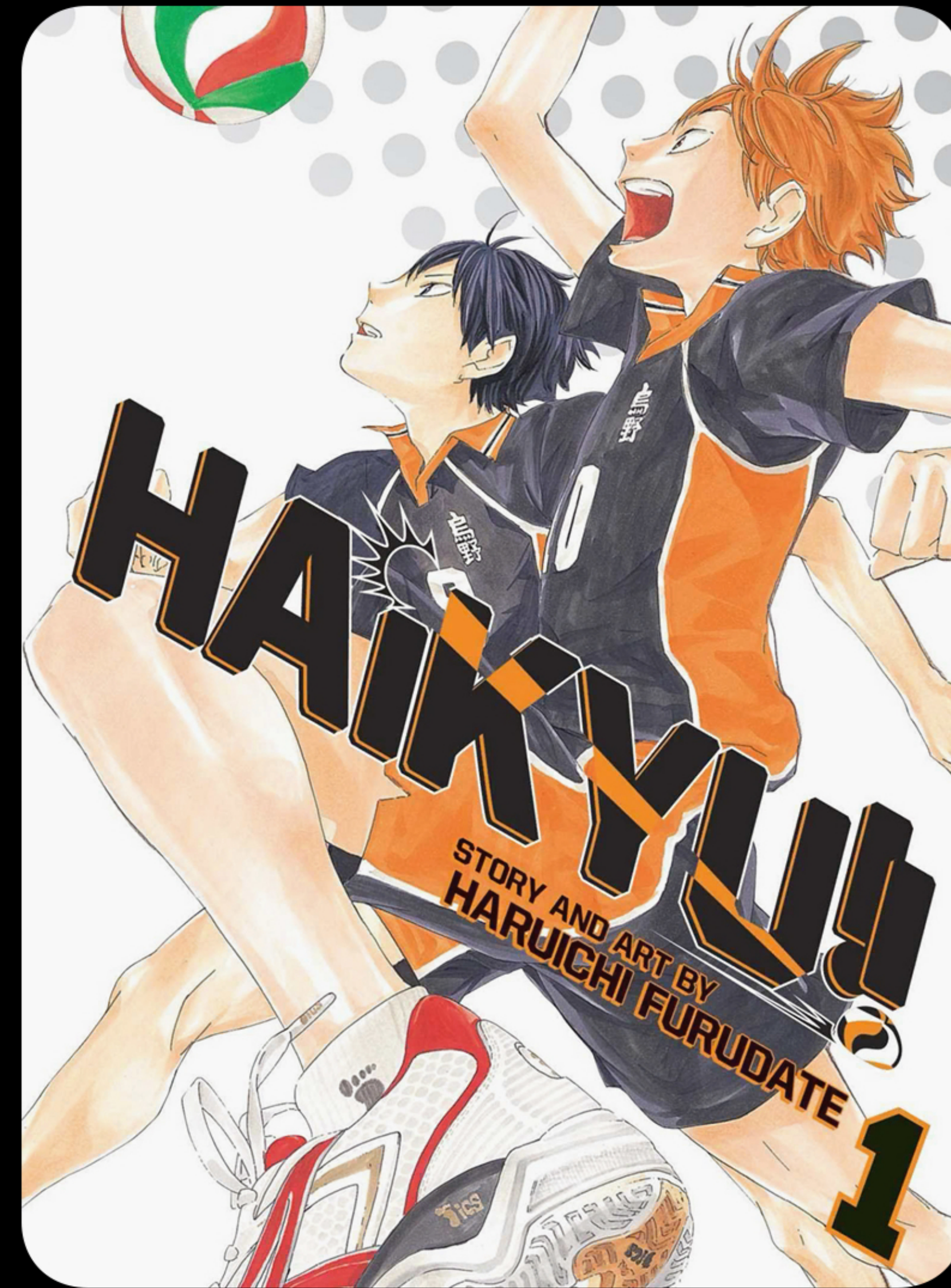
Berserk is a dark, mature epic that explores themes of ambition, fate, and the human struggle against overwhelming odds. It follows Guts, a lone mercenary with unmatched skill, whose life becomes entwined with Griffith, a charismatic leader with grand ambitions. Set in a brutal medieval world filled with war, betrayal, and demonic forces, Berserk stands out for its deep psychological complexity, moral ambiguity, and hauntingly beautiful yet violent storytelling. With stunning art and a narrative that questions the nature of power and sacrifice, Berserk is perfect for those seeking a raw, emotionally intense tale that pushes the boundaries of fantasy.



Berserk... makes the past 3 that all have brutal murder scenes look like Sesame Street so keep away from kids



Haikyuu!! is an exhilarating sports anime that captures the spirit of teamwork, perseverance, and personal growth through the lens of high school volleyball. It follows Shoyo Hinata, a determined player with big dreams despite his short stature, and his rivalry-turned-partnership with the talented setter Kageyama. The series shines with its dynamic animation, strategic gameplay, and emotionally charged character arcs, making every match feel like a battle of wills. Beyond the sport, Haikyuu!! explores themes of resilience, camaraderie, and chasing goals against all odds. If you love inspiring stories with heart-pounding action and relatable characters, this anime is a must-watch.



In other news we have a good sports story

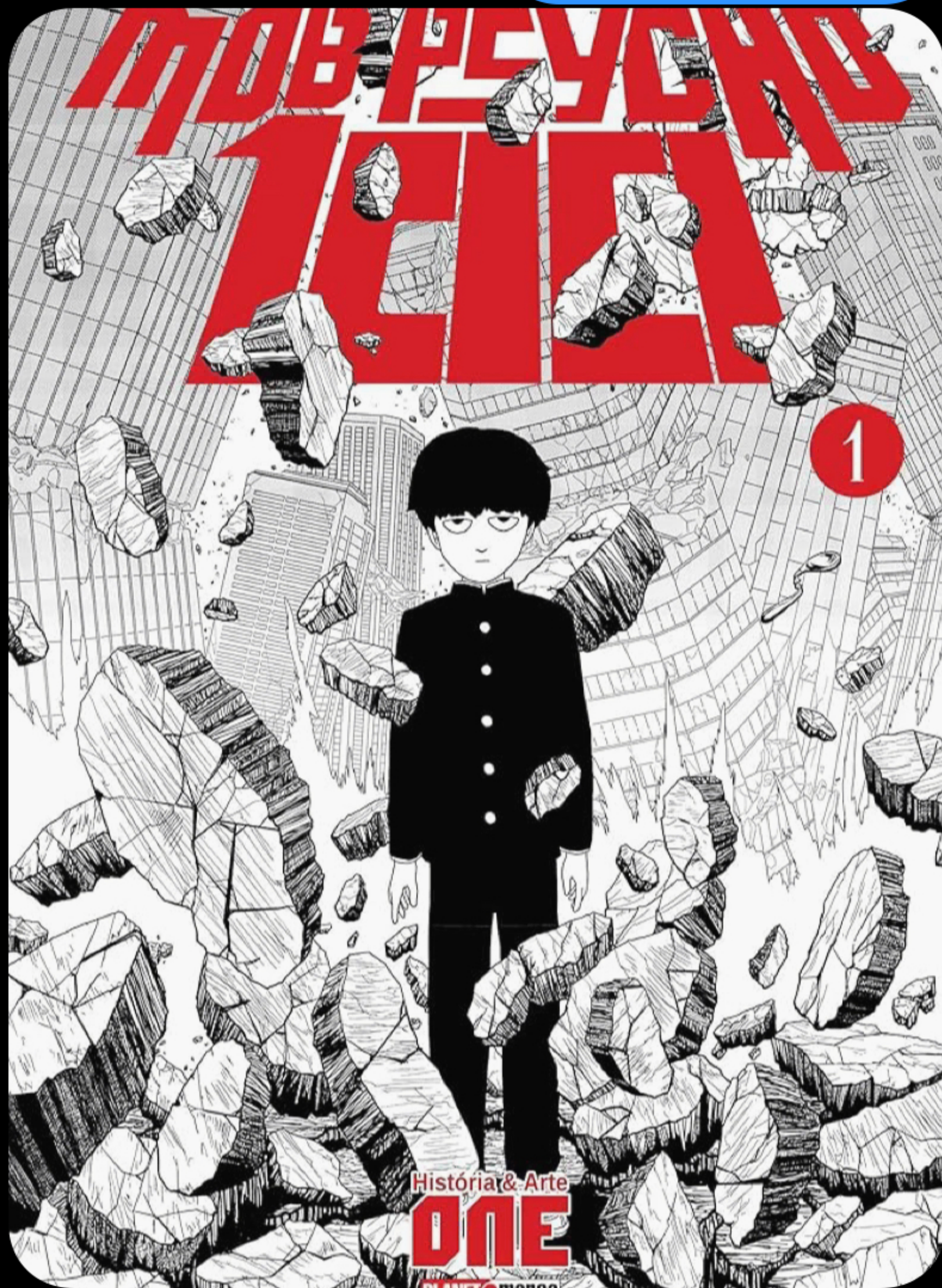




Comedy gold

One Punch Man is a hilarious yet thought-provoking anime that flips the superhero genre on its head. It follows Saitama, an ordinary man who becomes so powerful he can defeat any opponent with a single punch—leaving him bored and searching for meaning. The series combines over-the-top action with sharp satire, exploring themes of purpose, ambition, and what it means to be a hero. Stunning animation, epic battles, and quirky characters keep the story engaging, while its humor and existential undertones make it stand out. If you love clever parodies mixed with jaw-dropping fights, One Punch Man is a must-watch.





Comedy gold and beautiful story arcs

Mob Psycho 100 is a unique blend of supernatural action, heartfelt storytelling, and quirky humor. It follows Shigeo “Mob” Kageyama, a seemingly ordinary boy with overwhelming psychic powers, as he struggles to live a normal life and control his emotions. The series stands out for its striking art style, fluid animation, and deep themes about identity, self-worth, and human connection. While packed with explosive battles and psychic showdowns, its true strength lies in emotional depth and character growth. If you enjoy stories that mix absurd comedy with profound life lessons and jaw-dropping visuals, Mob Psycho 100 is a must-watch.



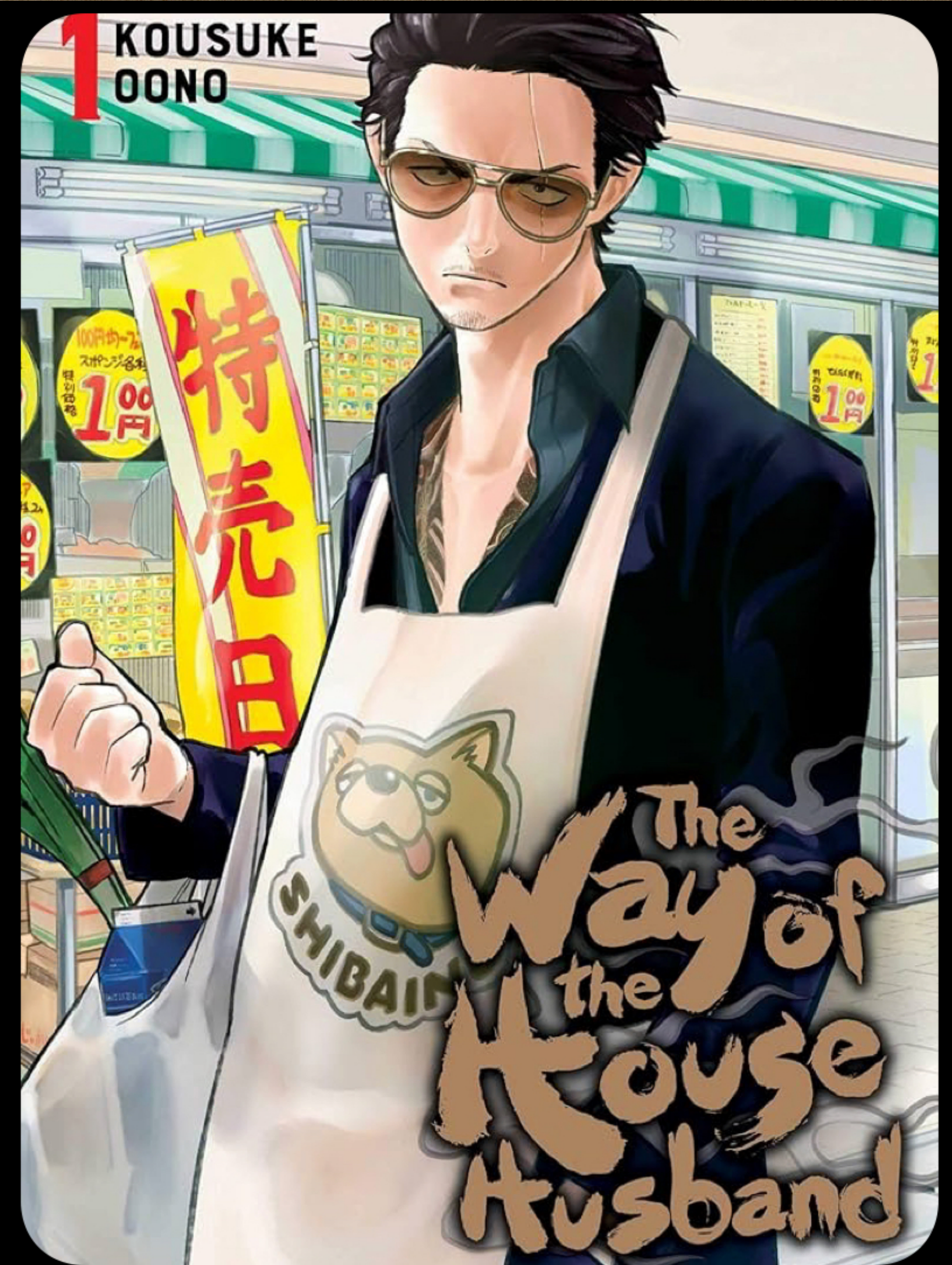
Record of Ragnarok is an intense, high-stakes battle anime that pits humanity against gods in a tournament to decide mankind's fate. When the gods deem humanity unworthy of survival, the Valkyries propose a final chance: 13 humans versus 13 gods in one-on-one duels. The series stands out for its epic, larger-than-life fights, creative matchups, and emotional backstories that explore human resilience, ingenuity, and spirit. Each battle blends mythology, history, and strategy, making it both thrilling and thought-provoking. If you love dramatic showdowns, godly powers, and stories that celebrate humanity's will to survive, Record of Ragnarok is a must-watch.



Cool interpretations of mythology and historical figures fighting to the death



The Way of the Househusband is a hilarious slice-of-life comedy that flips expectations in the best way. It follows Tatsu, a former legendary yakuza boss who abandons his life of crime to become a devoted househusband. The series thrives on absurd humor as Tatsu applies his intimidating demeanor and “underworld” skills to everyday domestic tasks like cooking, cleaning, and shopping. With its sharp comedic timing, quirky characters, and heartwarming moments, it’s a refreshing take on family life and redemption. If you enjoy lighthearted, laugh-out-loud stories with a unique twist, The Way of the Househusband is an absolute delight.



Ex yakuza is the perfect husband and hilarity ensues



Kaguya-sama: Love is War is a clever romantic comedy that turns love into a psychological battlefield. It follows Kaguya Shinomiya and Miyuki Shirogane, two elite student council members who are secretly in love—but too proud to confess. Instead, they engage in hilarious mind games, each trying to make the other admit first. The series shines with sharp humor, witty dialogue, and over-the-top strategies that parody romance tropes. Beneath the comedy, it explores vulnerability, pride, and the complexities of relationships. If you enjoy smart, laugh-out-loud storytelling with heartwarming moments, Love is War is an absolute gem.





# FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST™



Considering it held number one on one of the biggest anime sites for over 10 years

Fullmetal Alchemist is a deeply emotional and intellectually rich anime that blends action, philosophy, and world-building into a masterpiece. It follows brothers Edward and Alphonse Elric, who commit the forbidden act of human transmutation, losing their bodies in the process. Their quest to restore themselves leads them into a world of alchemy, political intrigue, and moral dilemmas. The series explores themes of sacrifice, the value of life, and the consequences of ambition, all while delivering thrilling battles and unforgettable characters. If you love stories with heart, mystery, and profound questions about humanity, Fullmetal Alchemist is essential viewing.

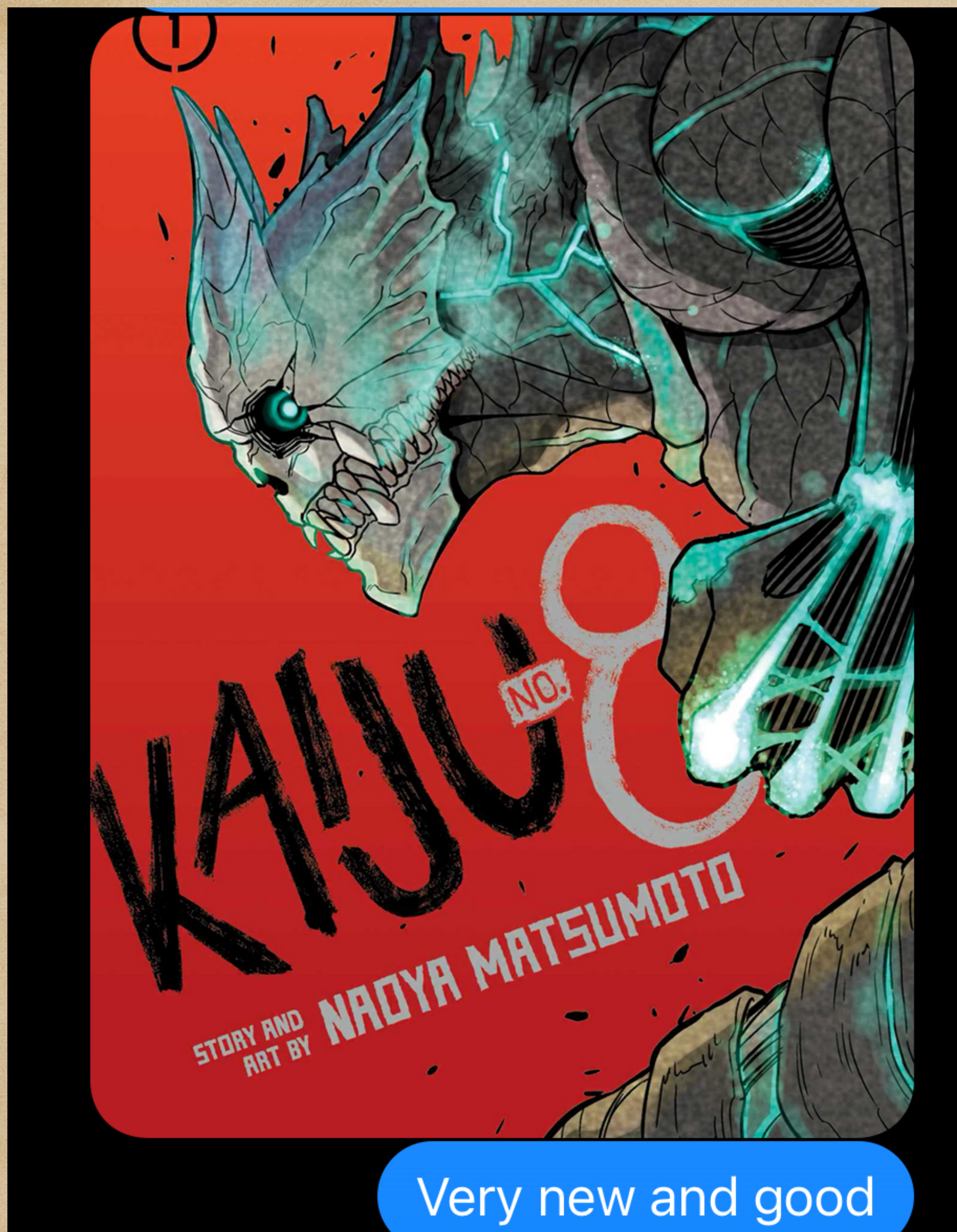


Spy x Family is a charming blend of espionage, comedy, and heartwarming family dynamics. It follows Twilight, a master spy tasked with a critical mission that requires him to create a fake family. He marries Yor, an assassin hiding her identity, and adopts Anya, a telepathic child—none aware of each other's secrets. The series shines with its clever humor, thrilling action, and emotional depth as these unlikely individuals learn to bond. Themes of trust, love, and belonging make it more than just a spy story. If you enjoy witty plots with wholesome moments, Spy x Family is a must-watch.



First series to surpass it and a great slice of life

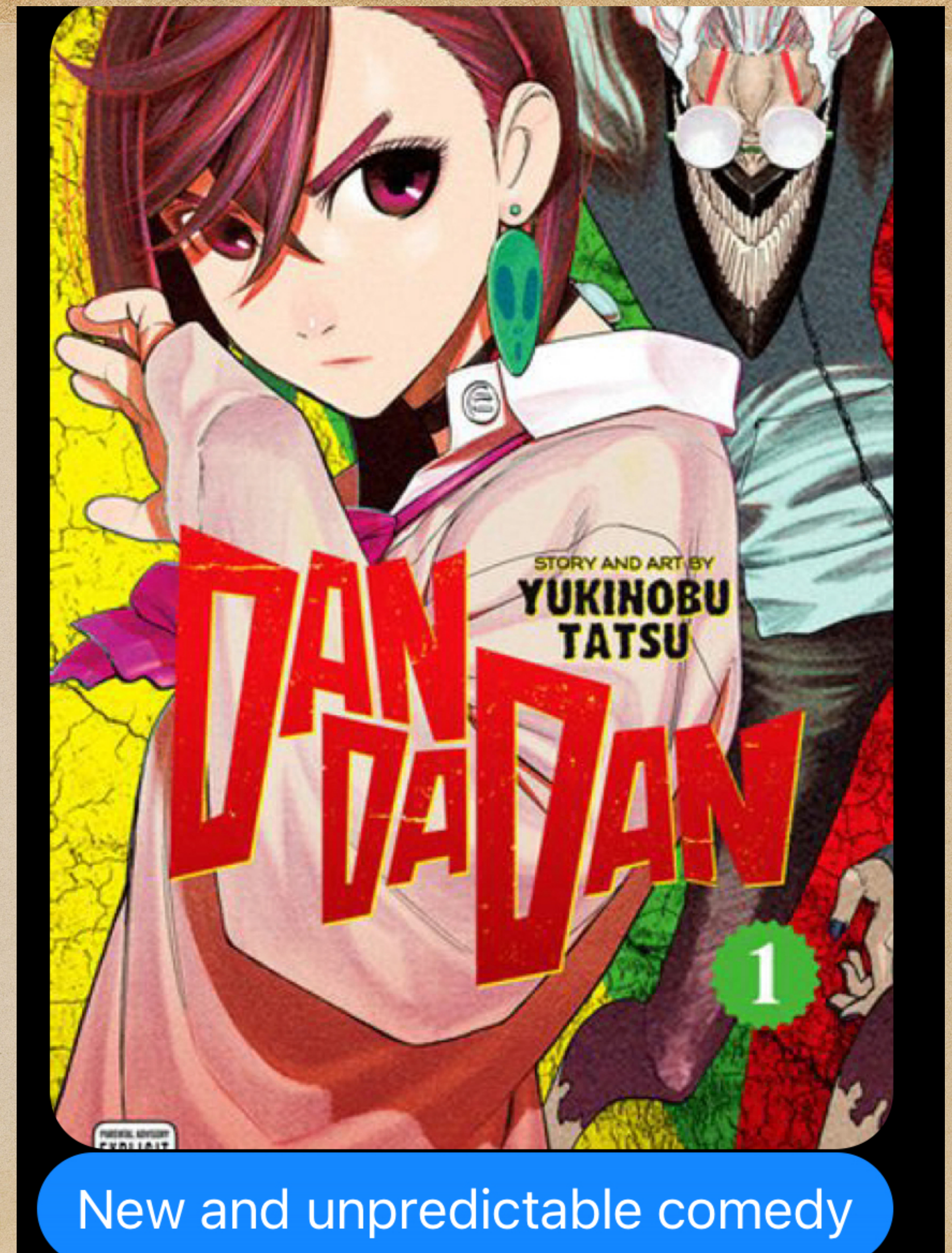




Kaiju No. 8 is a thrilling action series that combines monster mayhem with heartfelt human drama. Set in a world plagued by giant creatures called Kaiju, it follows Kafka Hibino, a man who dreams of joining the Defense Force but ends up merging with a Kaiju himself. This twist gives him incredible powers—and a dangerous secret. The series stands out for its fast-paced battles, creative monster designs, and themes of perseverance, identity, and chasing dreams despite setbacks. If you love intense action, emotional stakes, and a fresh take on the monster genre, Kaiju No. 8 is a must-read/watch.



Dandadan is a wild, genre-blending ride that fuses supernatural horror, sci-fi, and rom-com into one thrilling package. It follows Momo Ayase, a girl who believes in ghosts but not aliens, and Okarun, a boy who believes in aliens but not ghosts. Their worlds collide when they encounter both—and gain bizarre powers in the process. The series stands out for its breakneck pacing, jaw-dropping art, and hilarious yet heartfelt character dynamics. With over-the-top battles, creepy entities, and tender emotional beats, Dandadan is perfect for fans who crave chaos, comedy, and creativity all rolled into one unforgettable experience.



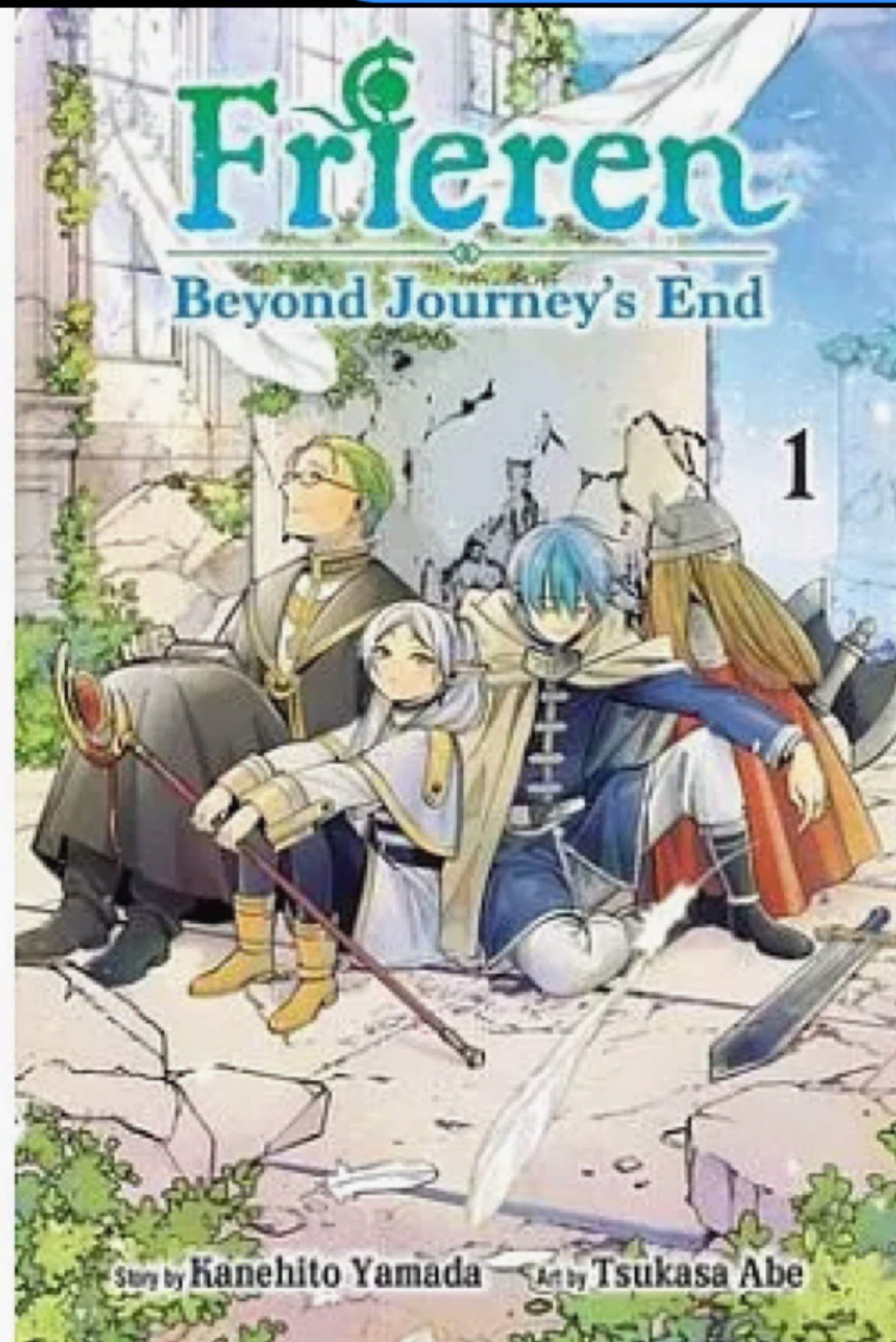


Black Clover is an action-packed fantasy anime that celebrates perseverance and rivalry. It follows Asta, a boy born without magic in a world where magic is everything, and his rival Yuno, a prodigy blessed with immense power. Determined to become the Wizard King, Asta compensates for his lack of magic with relentless training and a rare anti-magic sword. The series shines with its high-energy battles, creative magic systems, and themes of hard work, friendship, and never giving up. If you love underdog stories, intense rivalries, and epic magical showdowns, Black Clover delivers a thrilling and inspiring experience.



Cool fantasy story



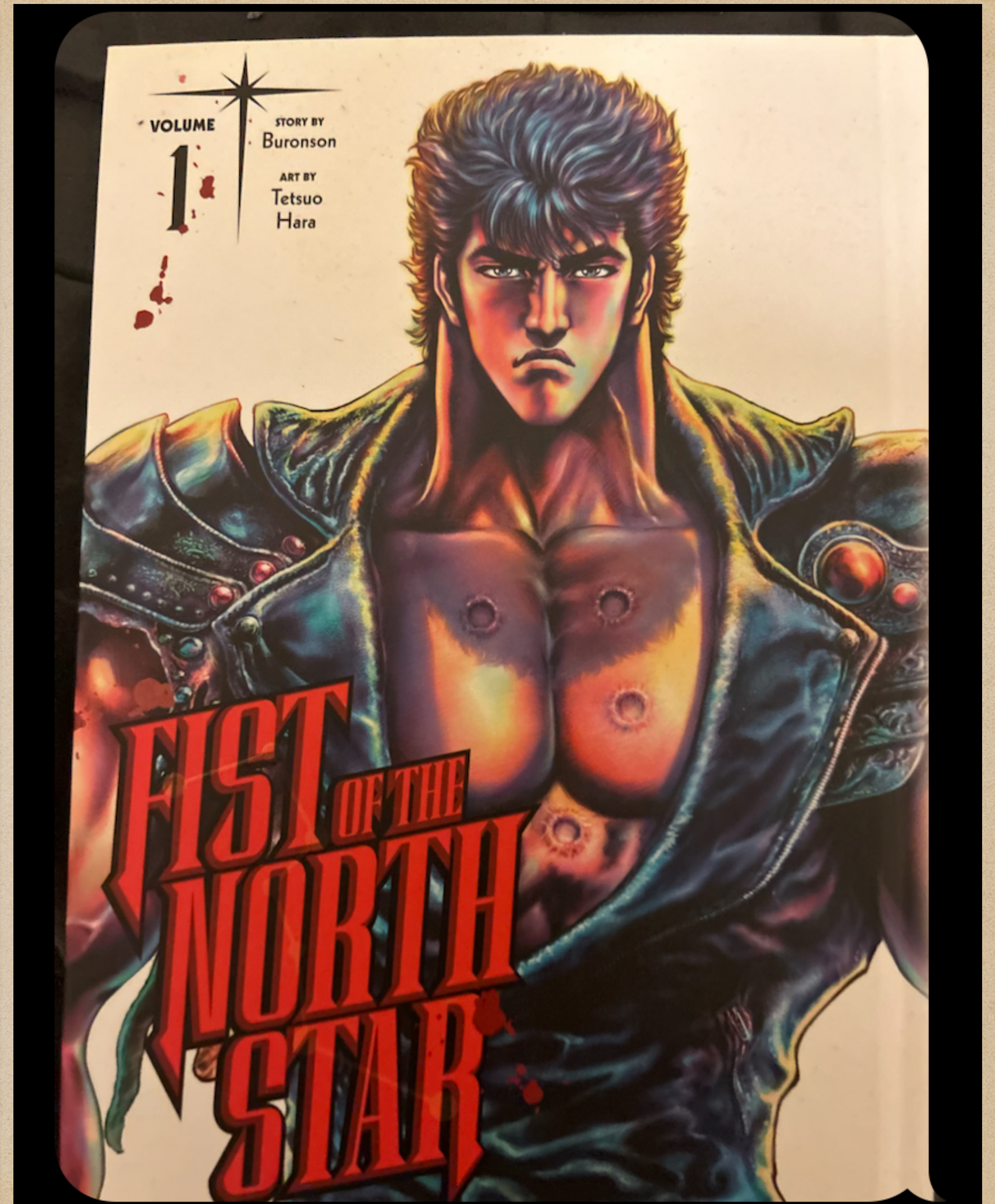


One of the best stories of all time

Frieren: Beyond Journey's End is a beautifully introspective fantasy that explores life, memory, and the passage of time. After defeating the Demon King with her party, Frieren—a long-lived elf mage—faces the quiet aftermath of victory. As decades pass, she realizes how fleeting human lives are and embarks on a journey to understand emotions, connections, and what her companions truly meant to her. The series stands out for its gentle pacing, stunning art, and profound themes of grief, legacy, and cherishing the present. If you love emotional storytelling with magical undertones, Frieren offers a deeply moving experience.



Fist of the North Star is a legendary post-apocalyptic martial arts saga that combines raw emotion with brutal action. Set in a desolate world ravaged by nuclear war, it follows Kenshiro, a stoic warrior and master of the deadly Hokuto Shinken technique, as he protects the weak and seeks vengeance against those who wronged him. Famous for its iconic “You’re already dead” line and explosive combat, the series explores themes of justice, survival, and humanity in a lawless wasteland. If you love classic anime with intense battles, unforgettable catchphrases, and a gritty, emotional narrative, Fist of the North Star is essential viewing.







子狼と親  
KAZUHI KOIKE  
GOSEI KODAMA

# LONE WOLF & CUB

3

SHUNTO

Lone Wolf and Cub is a timeless samurai epic that blends intense action with profound themes of honor, vengeance, and fatherhood. It follows Ogami Ittō, the shogun's former executioner, who becomes an assassin-for-hire after being framed for treason. Traveling with his young son Daigoro in a baby cart, Ogami seeks revenge against the clan that betrayed him. The series stands out for its cinematic storytelling, philosophical depth, and brutal yet poetic sword fights. It explores morality, loyalty, and survival in feudal Japan. If you love gritty, character-driven tales with emotional weight and stunning historical detail, Lone Wolf and Cub is essential.





Vagabond is a breathtaking masterpiece that combines stunning artwork with profound storytelling. It reimagines the life of legendary swordsman Miyamoto Musashi, exploring themes of strength, purpose, and self-discovery. Unlike typical action manga, Vagabond delves into philosophy and human nature, portraying battles not just as physical struggles but as existential ones. Takehiko Inoue's art is widely regarded as some of the best in manga history, with cinematic panels and meticulous detail. If you crave a story that is both visually spectacular and emotionally deep, Vagabond offers an unforgettable journey into the soul of a warrior and the meaning of life.

This series contains extreme violence, gore, and mature themes.



# Manga Unit Project Ideas/Rabbit Holes to explore:

## Cultural Identity & Global Perspectives Through Manga

**Project Idea:** Research how manga reflects Japanese (or Canadian or other) cultural values, history, and social issues, then present how these perspectives expand students' understanding of global literature.

### Focus:

Representation of family, honor, gender roles, or societal pressures.

Historical influences (post-WWII Japan, modernization, globalization).

How manga contributes to world literature and challenges Western literary dominance.

## Visual Rhetoric & Storytelling in Manga

- **Project Idea:** Explore how manga uses **visual language** (panels, pacing, symbolism, character design) to tell stories, and compare this to literary devices in traditional texts.
- **Focus:**
  - How panel layout creates rhythm and tone.
  - Symbolism in art (e.g., exaggerated expressions, use of nature imagery).
  - Reader engagement through multimodal storytelling.

## Comparative Literary Analysis: Manga vs. Canonical Texts

- **Project Idea:** Compare a manga series with a canonical Western or global literary text studied in class.
- **Focus:**
  - Themes such as morality, identity, power, or fate.
  - Narrative techniques (visual storytelling vs. prose).
  - Cultural context (Japanese society vs. Western traditions).

What Manga did we miss?!?