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Comics & Graphic Novels

Please! Teacher Official Fanbook
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The overwhelming popularity of manga today among young people has had its effect on the graphic novel industry. An example of that is this *Fanbook*, a compilation of stories and interviews with artists and writers, assembled with stills from the anime TV series and DVD movie Please! Teacher (Onegai Teacher).

In the series, Kei Kusanagi, a teenager, is subject to spells of "stagnation" that arrest his development and make him appear younger than his eighteen years. Mizuho Kazami, his teacher, is really an alien; Kei sees her one night with her spaceship, and realizes the next day that she is also the school's new biology teacher. Mizuho tries to gain his silence. After a series of "accidental" meetings in which she tries to seduce him into keeping her secret, the two are married, and try to keep their relationship a secret. The resulting subterfuge makes for many awkward situations and relationships.

Despite the improbable plot, fans will want the information in this book. Aficionados of the books, movie, and TV presentations about Kei and Mizuho will want to see what their creators have to say about the process of turning their story into a popular series. Visuals include stills from the movie and thumbnails from the series, sketches for continuity art, and costume drawings. The artwork is lovely, with huge-eyed characters and rich colors. There is considerable emphasis on the "voluptuousness" of Mizuho and her family; there is also a lot of sexual innuendo in the stories and the drawings, along with provocative views of the various female characters. The book includes story synopses, character bios, and artist commentaries on how and why they drew or imagined the characters the way they did.

Much manga today is aimed at young girls; this one, with its romantic relationships among the various characters (while Kei is married to Mizuho, his schoolmate Koishi has a crush on him; Mizuho's family, aliens though they are, are opposed to her marriage to Kei, because an arranged marriage was supposed to take place), is no different, although the story is

seen largely through Kei's eyes rather than Mizuho's.

The preoccupation with dreams that fail to come true, the ennui of teen years (which, in Kei's case, has led to his "stagnation" malady), and the quest for impossible romance are just some of the series' themes. This book also includes a wealth of fan material, including the writeup of an end-of-filming tour and a reunion interview with the voice actors. Fans of the series will be eager for its wide variety of inside information about the making of the series and its commentary by series creators.

Marlene Satter