



Kamikaze Girls

By Novala Takemoto

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Life in the boondocks of rural Ibaraki prefecture is anything but glamorous, and to escape her humdrum existence, Momoko, a "Lolita," fanaticizes about French rococo, dreams of living in the palace of Versailles, and decks herself out in the finest (and frilliest) of 18th century haute couture from an expensive Tokyo specialty store. Her dreams of an idyllic existence are rudely interrupted by the appearance of Ichigo, a tough-talking "Yanki" motorcycle-chick (on a tricked-out moped) who's part of a girls-only biker gang known as the Ponytails. Together, this unlikeliest of duos strikes out on a quest to find a legendary embroiderer, a journey that takes them to back-alley pachinko parlors, chic boutiques, and epic bike-punk battles. Novala Takemoto's hit novel [ital.] Kamikaze Girls [ital.], already a cult-classic in Japan and the inspiration for an internationally acclaimed film of the same name, is more than a quirky coming-of-age tale, it's a new way of life.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This charming example of *shojo* (manga for adolescent girls) adapts a popular novel/movie and adds two original stories dealing with the same characters and/or set in the same commercial milieu. Momoko is ultra-sensitive and feminine, picturing herself as a pampered French princess while meticulously embroidering frilly clothes. Ichigo is a member of a girls' biker gang who hides softer emotions and dresses like a feisty boy. When the two young people are thrown together, each helps the other develop new skills for survival—and for living as a whole woman. Artist Kanesada continues Takemoto's story by writing and drawing an additional episode in Ichigo's maturation, then concludes with a tale about a schoolgirl who falls in love with an older man in the garment industry. The book is more character-driven than much manga, and the page layouts do an unusually good job of weaving together different levels of the action, as readers can simultaneously see what the characters are doing, saying and thinking. There's something creepy about young girls calling themselves "Lolitas" and imagining that having sex with a grownup will transform them into grownups, too. Still, there's also a genuine sweetness about these stories as the characters grope uncertainly with new roles and take chances that can pay off wonderfully. (*Feb.*)

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About the Author

Born January 26, in Uji City, Kyoto. Aquarius.

Debuted with the novel "missin'" in 2000. Was a candidate for the Yukio Mishima Prize for literature two years in a row with "Emily" in 2003, and "Lolita" in 2004. Other novels include "uloko hime," "twins," "A Child Abandoned by Deus," and "calps alpis." His sequel to "Kamikaze Girls" was published in June of 2005.

Official website: <http://www.novala.net/>

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Belinda Timmer:

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