

Hikaru no Go, Vol. 1: Descent of the Go Master

Yumi Hotta , Takeshi Obata (Illustrator)

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Hikaru no Go, Vol. 1: Descent of the Go Master Yumi Hotta , Takeshi Obata (Illustrator) **DESCENT OF THE GO MASTER**

Hikaru Shindo is like any sixth-grader in Japan: a pretty normal school boy with a two-tone head of hair and a penchant for antics. One day, he finds an old bloodstained Go board in his grandfather's attic - and that's when things get really interesting. Trapped inside the Go board is Fujiwara-no-Sai, the ghost of an ancient Go master who taught the strategically complex board game to the Emperor of Japan many centuries ago. In one fateful moment, Sai becomes a part of Hikaru's consciousness and together, through thick and thin, they make an unstoppable Go-playing team. Will they be able to defeat Go players who have dedicated their lives to the game? Will Sai achieve the "Divine Move" so he'll finally be able to rest in peace? Begin your journey with Hikaru and Sai in this first volume of Hikaru no Go.

Hikaru no Go, Vol. 1: Descent of the Go Master Details


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Author : Yumi Hotta , Takeshi Obata (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Hikaru no Go, Vol. 1: Descent of the Go Master for online ebook

JM says

This review is for the series.

Sports manga based around the Chinese board game go. Hikaru finds an old go board in his grandfather's attic. He seems to be the only one who can see the blood stains on it - and he's *definitely* the only one who can see the Heian-era go player, Sai, who hovers over Hikaru's shoulder and frets at him because he won't play go. Despite this, it's not Sai who sparks Hikaru's interest in go - it's Touya Akira, the player Hikaru's own age whose drive and passion (and scornful hair-flicking) captivate Hikaru from the moment he meets him.

I'm so completely smitten with this series. They're all such *dags*, and then you get the pics with Touya in his perfectly pressed school uniform with his hair blowing back in the imaginary wind and his go stone dramatically held between two fingers - *such* dags. It's fantastic. I don't pretend to know the genre very well, but the rest of the manga I've read has all been so superhero and tortured souls, and then you have Hikaru and the Go Club. And I love. And the art is so gorgeous.

It's the dynamic between Hikaru and Touya that truly makes this series, though. Their rivalry is intense and fierce, but it's not about grinding the other into the dust - it's about being obsessed and moving forward and basically being in love with each other. Touya wakes Hikaru's love of go and puts steel into his sunny disposition, and Hikaru is the only one who can make the perfectly-pressed and well-behaved Touya Akira lose it and yell and wave his arms around and they are *perfect*.

Alex says

Count me in for the rest of the series. (Emy, this is your fault.)

Eric Ellefson says

Huh... I read this because I've been telling my students for years I would like to read a graphic novel. Today, a student put it in my hands and said I really had to read this book. I did not have high expectations. It was disappointing even then.

Not great. While I am curious about the game go, that's about all that was interesting. Character development was limited. Very flat. No one even changed. Hikaru started as a twit and ended as a twit.

Seriously, what is a reader supposed to take away from this book?

And why on earth do you end a book literally in the middle of a scene. This seems nothing more than a terribly bogus way to sell the next book.

Tawnie says

Grades: 7 to 12 Genre: Manga, Sport/Game

One day while rummaging in his grandfather's attic, Hikaru Shindo finds a Go board, a traditional Japanese board game, with a mysterious blood stain on it. Fujimara no Sai was a champion Go Player and is now a ghost who has been haunting the board for years. Sai doesn't want to move on in life until he has preformed the "Hand of God," a very difficult Go move. In an attempt to appease Sai, Hikaru goes to a Go parlor and lets Sai use his body to play Go with another young Go player there, Akira Fujisaki. Akira is the son of a professional Go player and someday dreams of going pro himself, so he is shocked and humiliated when someone his own age beats him. Hikaru develops a desire to play Go himself and when he reaches middle school he joins the Go club and starts to build his own skills with the help of the friends that he makes there. Sai becomes a great Go tutor for Hikaru and a strong bond develops between the two. Akira and Hikaru become rivals in their desire to be the best Go player in Japan. While this manga is based on a game, it reads like many popular sport mangas revolving around the various matches that Hikaru plays on his quest to be the best, but without the life or death scenarios or the screaming crowds. The reader also doesn't have to be familiar with Go to understand this game, as they learn about it along with Hikaru. This manga is also different in how the reader can follow Hikaru as he grows from elementary student to young adult. Obata's detailed art style works well for this manga and the reader can actually see the changes in the characters as they age.

Nguyen Nguyễn says

4.5 Bô? na?y hay ne? tuy kê?t co? h?i phiê?n lo?ng 1 xi?u vi? cho Sai ?i luôn ko l??i t?? biê?t :"((nh?ng xe?t la?i vâ?n râ?t hay.
nh??c m??i nh?? hôm trc ch?i game Âm d??ng s? nhân vâ?t chi?nh y chang Sai luôn la?m mi?nh la?i c??
muô?n ?o?c la?i

thefourthvine says

This is an incredible manga series (and, for that matter, anime - although for the anime, I'd really recommend the fansubs, as the English release is agonizingly bad). And the thing is, it *shouldn't* be this good. It's about a bunch of Go-obsessed people. Who talk about Go. And play Go. And argue about Go.

And yet it's the most compelling, involving, and fun manga I've ever read. Partly, this is because of the characters - Shindou Hikaru, Touya Akira, and Fujiwara-no-Sai are realistic and interesting, and the relationship between Shindou and Touya is, well, very slashy, if you're me. But it's entrancing whether you read it that way or not. The secondary characters are likewise engaging. And the artwork is incredible, especially in the later volumes.

And it has no typical manga elements. There are no battles, just shouting matches over Go games (and refusal to play Go games, and playing Go games with the wrong people or in the wrong way). No one levels up, although they certainly get better at Go. The only really typical manga element is the destined rivalry, and it's *between guys playing Go*, not ninjas or whatever.

Oh, I'm doing this badly. And that's because I really can't communicate the joy of Hikaru no Go in words.

But it's fabulous all the same, and I recommend it to anyone and everyone.

Snow Bunny says

[4.5 stars] Review on the whole series.

I'd noticed Hikaru no Go since I was in middle school, back then HnG was pretty popular in my country. But I hadn't have any interest in picking this manga up until a dear friend of mine told me this is his all-time-favorite manga and how it meant to him. In addition, I've been a huge fan of Obata-sensei since Bakuman so one time I went and looked up other works of sensei, Hikaru no Go was there! I was so surprised! And I felt like I definitely have to read this manga.

The manga was so good I couldn't stop reading. I stayed up all nights and picked it up whenever I had free time. Believe me, I don't know a single thing about Go but still felt so attracted to it. And the manga wasn't created to teach us how to play it but how it meant to all the players and the ones who love it.

I could feel all kind of emotions through out the whole series. Even I couldn't understand all of the match completely but I could still tell how it went, who was having advantages and who was about to turn it all around. The authors did an amazing job in pulling the readers in the matches, the tension was so real, the players was so real, the whole world of Hikaru no Go felt so real but also so miraculous, unlike many other mangas.

It's fun to see how Obata-sensei's art style changed through each chapters. In the first chapters, the drawings look really 90's Jump but with time they become more unique, sharp and deep. And I admire Yumi Hotta-sensei's writing skill and knowledge of Go. All of the matches were so amazing and the players' skills were so well-expressed. It takes master skills and knowledge in Go in order to write such awesome manga about it.

And all of the characters are so passionate, amazing and believable. The competitive and supportive relationships between all of them make Hikaru no Go an amazing manga. It's hard not to fall in love with all of them, seeing how they love Go, how they always fair-play and shows respect towards each other but also try their best to prove themselves nonstop.

The ending is open and many people find it unsatisfying. For me, I think Go and Go players will always go on, and this is just an opening for them and just a chapter in the history book of Go. There will always be new generations with passion inherited from the previous generations.

Like Hikaru Shindou said: "The reason I play Go inside me is clear: To link the far past to the far future."

Junta says

Hikaru no Go (Hikaru's Go) is my all-time favourite manga series. It's a coming-of-age story about a boy, Hikaru Shindou, who learns how to play Go, the board game, after he finds an old board in his grandfather's shed. The board is haunted by the spirit of Fujiwara-no-sai (nicknamed Sai), the best Go player in history from the Heian period (around a thousand years ago).

If the author (Yumi Hotta), artist (Takeshi Obata) or the art above sound/look familiar to you, it's because they're the same duo from *Death Note*. Just like Ryuk, the shinigami (Japanese god of death) whom only the

protagonist can see, hear and talk to in *Death Note*, Sai becomes a permanent presence in Hikaru's everyday life. Hikaru is initially disinterested in Go but slowly becomes enthralled as he plays and studies, growing under Sai's unbounded knowledge and love for the game.

From playing at the school club and local Go salons, Hikaru applies to become an insei - a student at one of the national Go institutions with aspirations of becoming a professional. Go is very popular in Japan, among other East Asian countries, and the whole insei system, as well as the actual games of Go seen in the series, are true and proper to reality, with assistance from Go professionals in the production. Japan has these institutes for Go and Shogi (Japanese chess), with the youngest becoming insei and turning pro before finishing junior high school (often thus bypassing school thereafter).

We follow Hikaru, his rivals and friends as they fight for qualification (only three out of dozens can turn pro each year), and later in the series we step into the world of professional Go, where we not only follow the matches and competitions but the many facets a professional's life has. The series was a big hit (serialised in the magazine *Shonen Jump* 1998-2003), giving birth to a Go boom and generation of players in Japan (and later other countries) who took up the game.

I adore this series because as a chess player I can relate to Hikaru's life (though not the Sai bit, obviously). Chess has been by far the biggest passion in my life after I learnt how to play when I was 6 or 7, and in over 15 years since then, I've been fortunate enough to play thousands of games in tournaments, travel to over a dozen countries to compete, and make some lifelong friends.

Hikaru's life as an insei is something I wish I could have experienced - playing and studying the game full-time, every day, from youth alongside rivals and friends who share the same passion, the same love, the same world hidden inside the squares, the pieces and moves.

I find the characterisation top-notch in this series - energetic Hikaru, who visibly matures over the series; Sai, kind and curious, striving for The Divine Move; Akira, Hikaru's charismatic rival who is constantly far ahead in the Go world, yet is obsessed with Hikaru and the source of his talent after being trounced by the latter just after he had met Sai (how can this beginner play like a top professional?!); fellow inseis Isumi, Ochi, Waya, and professionals Kiyotaka Toya (Akira's father), Ogata, Kuwabara, Kurata who each leave an impression...

With a chess friend and fellow Hikaru no Go fan, I remember amusing ourselves by finding players in the Australian chess scene (including ourselves) who resemble each character. Needless to say, fiction clicks with you if you can really relate to the content, and my experiences growing up with chess are the reason I was enthralled by *Hikaru no Go*, probably more than any novel. I read the series as a kid, watched the anime in my teens (I recommend the subbed over dubbed), and have re-read the series in manga cafes and ramen shops when I've been to Japan. If I had read the series before taking up chess, maybe I would be playing Go now instead?

I must share my two favourite lines from the series - I've read/watched them countless times, but every time I see these lines, I can't help but feel touched, and my eyes water up in a flash. I don't think any other lines in any other forms of fiction affect me like this. Since they're late in the series and they aren't major plot giveaways, you can feel safe viewing them unless you're intent on reading or watching the series without any spoilers.

- 1.(view spoiler)
- 2.(view spoiler)

I once wrote a post on a chess blog I have with friends (quite inactive these days) relating to the series here.

July 22, 2015

Nicolo Yu says

I've always sports stories and manga is the best source for sequential storytelling for this medium. I've tried this out in the Shone Jump anthology and just amazed by the realistic art style used by the artist. The story is also unlike any other since it involves a board game. It could have been boring but the writer approaches it like a teaching since she is also learning the game herself.

I will definitely be following this title.

7jane says

Hikaru is a middle school student who finds a go board in the attic that has a spirit of a great Heian period go player attached to it. Although Hikaru is reluctant (understatement) of starting to play the game, he is eventually persuaded to do so. Soon he finds himself facing more experienced people even though he hasn't even really *learnt* to play properly - good thing he has his ghost to help him. And this is only the start...

I liked this story, though I don't have an intention to read more volumes of this. The art style really lightens the mood, and the story has its funny and serious (very serious moments). Who knows, maybe I'll someday have a try at go myself? (Though not in competitions :) .) Good one to read by anyone interested.

Natalie says

When Hikaru discovers an old board game and accidentally releases Sai, the ancient spirit inside, he becomes involved in the intensely competitive world of go. Speckled with humor and cultural tidbits about how to play go, the opening volume of this series draws readers in (though you won't necessarily learn to play go from the asides). The art is well-done.

I'm not sure how long the plot can be dragged out - the idea of a kid being forced to play go is amusing at first, but unless this follows in The Prince of Tennis 1's footsteps and becomes a bit outlandish, I'm not sure it can be sustained over 20+ volumes. That said, I look forward to reading the next volume.

Minh Nhân Nguyễn says

5 sao

Chu?n m?c là t? chính xác nh?t ?? mô t? b? manga này. N?i dung chu?n m?c, nét v? chu?n m?c. Nh?ng không ph?i th? gì khuôn m?u c?ng có th? khi?n ng?i ta yêu thích, quý m?n nh? b? này ?ã làm ???c. B?i vì ngoài nh?ng y?u t? hoàn h?o ?ó, nó còn mang "cái h?n" ? bên trong (à c? ngh?a ?en và ngh?a bóng :p).

P/S: l?n này Kim tái b?n quá ??p quá ch?t l??ng luôn, quan tr?ng là ??c l?i khi?n mình th?t s? mu?n theo dõi tí?p câu chuy?n, nên quy?t ??nh s? s?u t?m l?i tr?n b? này (thêm m?t l?n n?a ^_^), dù d?o này h?u nh? ?ã b?

h?n manga r?i :D

Immen says

I'm not going to add all 23 volumes, but yeah, I've read them all, multiple times, and also watched the anime, which is exactly faithful to the book, multiple more times. Yes, it's about a board game. It's yet another coming-of-age-story-framed-by-playing-a-sport-where-we-count-board-games-and-ballet-as-sports story (Japan, you have weird genres), but goddamn, it's really good! It's got the best characters, the best art (by Obata Takeshi (who also did <>)) (This guy has an evil sense of humor when it comes to 13-year-old formal wear)), and the best arc. Actually, a lot of people have beef with how the series wrapped, but let me point out that the series ends gloriously, with some serious thematic and plotwise closure, at the end of Vol 17. Yes there are 5 more volumes, and then the series just cuts off. I don't care! Just think of the last 5 as delicious fanfic written by the original author and illustrated by the original illustrator! Why would you complain about the existence of these 5 books??

Anyway. I fucking love this series.

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I actually opened this tab because I wanted to make some comments about my experience reading Chinese vs. English translations of manga, and maybe pontificate about <>'s treatment of ambition and selfishness, which I think is really compelling and really Asian. Maybe i'll do that later.

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### **Kanna Oghara says**

I've already watched an anime in Japanese before I read this comic. Therefore, it was really sweet memories for me. I want to read a next volume as soon as possible. Also, I expect that it will be helpful for me to learn English.

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### **Supermomochan (PeachyFishyBooks) says**

This was so nostalgic! I forgot how much I love this series! I have had "Get Over" (the theme song from the show) stuck in my head all day....XD

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