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Author : ??? , Nagata Kabi

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Alexis Sergio says

Deeply personal and heart twisting, *My Solo Exchange Diary* is a story of learning to learn to have hope for yourself. Nagata's life and struggles being portrayed so honestly was something wild and raw. I can't help but root for her and I hope she is doing well in her life. Volume 2 is coming out soonish so I will be able to see but I hope she can find love. Lots of great thoughts in here that could really help you understand emotions more. This is a great story for queer folks looking for solidarity in the drama of trying to live an adult life.

Alex says

Kabi doesn't hide anything from her readers, and it's such a wonderful experience to find something of myself in her experiences and feelings occasionally. She's so brutally honest about her depression that it makes the entire ordeal easier to think/talk about, without feeling taboo. A great sequel, looking forward to the next!

Rod Brown says

A solid follow-up to the unique first volume. The author continues to make use of sex workers to alleviate her loneliness and lack of human contact. She also continues to struggle with depression and anxiety.

I like how she formats the book as diary entries that she writes to herself, cheering on her future self or consoling her past self as she struggles through multiple attempts to move out of her parents' house and tries to establish some independence as she nears 30.

The possibility of actually entering a real romantic relationship lends the book energy as it enters the closing stretch.

D says

A sequel of sorts for *My Lesbian Experience with Loneliness*, *My Solo Exchange Diary* gives us another look at mangaka Nagata Kabi's life and what happened to her after her manga had been published.

We go back to the themes Nagata has already explored in *My Lesbian Experience*: her lack of self-esteem, her dependence on her family and their approval, her loneliness, and also her growth as a person. We see a lot more of the latter in *My Solo Exchange Diary*, where she finally manages to move to her own place and get out to meet more people.

So actually when I first read *My Lesbian Experience* I was so excited about it and sent Snapchats of some of the panels I loved to a couple of friends, who agreed that Nagata got 'it'. She knew about the feeling of helplessness and just drifting in life with no concrete goals. She knew the feeling of loneliness and failing

(but wanting) to connect. And of course, she knew what it was like to be clueless about life even as she enters her thirties.

As a 30-something person myself (it looks like Nagata was born one year before I was but I'm too lazy to check), I've always wondered about this. Do people my age really have it all figured out? Are we really adults at this point or are we just faking it?

I'm not sure how good my sample is because I'm surrounded by like-minded friends (and I am after all a millennial; one of the older ones, but still a millennial) but from what I gather our thoughts and experiences reflect Nagata's more than what society expects our thoughts and experiences ought to be. Reading this and *My Lesbian Experience* is like that moment from *The History Boys* that often get quoted about books: it's like someone reached out and held your hand.

Still full of hope, even if she has a hard time accepting praise and the good turn in life she has experienced, even if she finds herself too focused on herself to return someone's love, even if she realises (and admits to herself) that she came from a family that didn't love each other, Nagata moves on. And so, I guess, should we.

Tatiana says

Although I didn't enjoy this one as much as the first one, I still really liked it. I'm curious what the sequel will hold!

usagi ?? says

4.5/5 stars.

Sarah Schanze says

I've been looking forward to this ever since reading Kabi's first book. I really admire her bravery in being so brutally honest with herself and exploring her feelings. It's messy and confusing and there's no real clear answer to anything, and that makes it wonderful and real. I look forward to future volumes.

Laura says

Raw, painful, resonant exploration of life, family, relationships, and loneliness. Truly excellent. Definitely touched on many relatable issues in my own experience. Art is extremely expressive, capturing feels in the most visceral of ways.

Katja says

A very good book with its brutal honesty and relatable situations of growing up, discovering self, finding love... It shows how learning to know and accept yourself isn't an easy task and even victories along the way don't guarantee happiness from that point onwards.

It's not quite as striking as *My Lesbian Experience With Loneliness* but it expands on themes explored in that. Like how Kabi still gets depressed and lonely and how she longs to find human contact. And there's a lot of interesting thoughts brought up, like what is independence. Kabi's family relationships get a lot of panel time and many of the things she goes through are similar to what many of us have experienced too.

Great read.

Derek Royal says

I wasn't sure what a solo exchange diary was before this book, and now I find the idea fascinating. This is the first volume of Nagata Kabi's own solo exchange, where her present self talks to and comments upon what her former self had thought and done. In this first volume, you clearly see an author grow in many ways -- e.g., leaving the safe (and restrictive) confines of her family's home to her own apartment, learning to get into her own natural rhythm, becoming more disciplined as a writer, and finding a potential lover. At the same time, there's a sense of forlornness and regret that accompanies her accomplishments. It's a curious balance that works. I'd like to read future volumes.

Sofia says

Nagata Kabi's work story is very important to me because how relateable her experiences have been, especially with her family and living situation. I hope for the best for her and with the progress she makes, I hope I am able to as well. Lots of love to her?

Maggie Gordon says

My Solo Exchange Diary is much less about sex than the cover implies. Instead, Nagata Kabi takes on her issues of anxiety and depression, particularly as they relate to her family and living situation. It's another brutally honest look at mental illness and its challenges, and I do wish marketing would stop trying to make the books look so sexy as the topic is so much more nuanced.

Jhosy Lephor says

I don't know what to write in this review. This series has become very personal to me. Things that I never realized in my life were described here that caught my attention and began to make sense. This is a very intimate and striking reading as well as exciting. From the drawings that illustrate what goes

on in the head of author to the narrative, everything is quite incredible.

I can't wait for the next volume.

A very interesting thing is that the author tells in the story that despite the cover and the genre being sold in the lesbian category, the story doesn't revolve around her life as a lesbian or a romance, but rather about her recovery and the day to day of a person battling with depression that happens to be homosexual.

Neko McEvil says

Nagata once again manages to touch me on a deeply personal level. Her first work *My Lesbian Experience With Loneliness* is probably one of my favourites in the graphic novel/mangas I read this year as I could relate to several of her experiences with mental illness and coming out and I read it in one sitting despite it being 3-4 AM before I went to bed because I could not put it down. It made me cry and realize things about myself which is often the best takeaway one can get from a memoir.

For that reason, I am thrilled that this book did the same, even if it was not to the same degree as the first one. It took me a little while to get into it, about the first 20 pages, but after that it was a breeze. I will not recommend that you read it while already going through a depressive period as that was what I did and I almost ended up giving up, but once I was in a better headspace I was able to get into it much better.

Overall it is a very personal and raw depiction of what is essentially a continuation to what Nagata was already dealing with in her first work: mental illness, loneliness, parent-child relationships, awkwardness, love and most importantly, hope. All in the form of a series of "letters" Nagata sends her future self in a diary, like being a pen pal to herself. Definitely an interesting read that you should not miss.

Rebecca says

This is much darker than *My Lesbian Experience with Loneliness*, and it does come with a trigger warning for depression to the point of briefly mentioned suicidal thoughts. More than the previous book, the author is really trying to work through something, and she comes close to it without ever quite getting there. If you've ever suffered from anxiety or depression, her experiences will be very familiar...and for some readers, that might not be a good thing.
