

*Feel free to refer to or quote this data, but please acknowledge the source. The headings are my own attempt to organize the comments; please organize them as best suits your own research or commentary. I have not corrected the writers' spelling and punctuation.*

— Dru Pagliassotti

---

**16. Any other reasons why you like boy's love manga? If not, please go ahead to the next page.**

**“PURE” LOVE WITHOUT GENDER**

- The intimacy between characters, regardless of gender and gender-constructions
- I guess it's mostly just the romantic notion that two \*people\* can be in love, regardless of sex/gender... the connection between two personalities, even, not necessarily souls... though that's quite lovely in itself...
- BL manga tends to have a certain style to it which het manga lacks. Gender is no longer an issue; personalities and relationships are more important than either being "the man" or "the woman".

**PRO-GAY ATTITUDE/FORBIDDEN & TRANSGRESSIVE LOVE**

- Because traditional society is against same sex relations, esp. male-male, this manga genre gives insight to readers showing that it's the same kind of relationship that is seen in the dominant society. No matter appearances, everyone feels the same emotions even if it's on different levels. Just because people have different sexual preferences, does not mean that they cannot feel.
- It's nice to see gay romances that go beyond skin deep.
- I like it's transgressive nature and the way it can \*sometimes\* deal with things like love and sex beyond the cliches or parameters imposed by society or occidental culture.
- The stories are usually very interesting as the characters have to deal with their love being "wrong" in the eyes of the ignorant
- boy's love relationship are balanced when in heterosexual relationship women are dominated Boy's love story are also more strong and intense because of the forbidden aspects
- A pretty boy is a rare thing, deserving only another. In my opinion, a girl couldn't appreciate a beautiful man as another man could. I love watching men wade through

sinful emotions that women carelessly breeze through. Yaoi manga is seen as 'wrong,' which can make it all the more interesting. It's beautiful and I live for it.

## **IDENTIFICATION/SELF-ANALYSIS**

- some storylines can be very intricate & realistic, which intrigue me as I develop a kind of respect for the manga artist to have produced not only an excellently-planned story from her mind, but also managed to put it in pictures - arranging and designing page layouts in such a way, that the readers can empathize with the characters and feel what they feel from merely pictures alone. That ability of manga, especially boy's love manga, appeals to me not only because I have an interest in homosexual relationships, but also because seeing and feeling everything the characters see and feel is an immensely emotional experience. Very emotionally stimulating, and it makes me happy to read manga done by mangaka who really understand humans - they're like unofficial psychologists and I really appreciate that realism they put into their stories - the double standards, complex personalities, etc. I also enjoy the subtle actions and expressions shown in manga as indirectly it reflects the Japanese culture. In the manga storyline as well, it helps give me an idea of the Japanese culture and lifestyle, and definitely have a feel of its diversity - I enjoy that as I'm also interested in the Japanese society. Also, seeing as my tolerance for bad storylines extends further in boy's love manga than in shoujo manga, I attribute it to my penchant for being attracted to good-looking characters. And when both of the main characters (or more) in boy's love manga are present, the interest is magnified. And when interest is magnified, there more keen I will be to empathize with the characters, and this again comes round to how I enjoy being emotionally stimulated.
- I can relate to either character in BL. No role is assigned; many people see a seme and a uke and believe they represent the male and the female. This may be true in our placement of gender roles and behavior, but they are still both men, so I can chose to relate the seme or the uke, or both.
- I'm in the military, I live in a man's world, and I'm happy with that. I don't care for other women, and I'd rather see two hot guys get it on together than introduce some idiot Mary Sue. Maybe it's the rival factor--when there are no women, then I don't have to think, "I wish I was as pretty/smart/powerful etc etc etc" as the woman who is actually - scoring- with the boy/man that I am attracted to. Two guys, twice the opportunity, no rival!
- Most females in Japanese comics are uninteresting, stereotyped, and I can't relate to them. Naturally, I don't have that problem with yaoi.
- I like it because it to me is very beautiful and it helps me get to know myself better.

- There are several stories that I can relate to. It comforts me and makes me realize that in reality, events that previously happened to me didn't happen only to me. Fictional characters can heavily relate to real people and their situations.
- I think it is easier to relate to a character. In hetero manga I automatically relate to the female because I am a woman. In yaoi or boys love I can relate to either character more easily.
- I've always been fascinated by same sex male couples, since when I was a child. I never realized it until I was older, of course, but then I looked back and understood I've always been that way.
- Don't know if this is a reason or not but I've been told that I'm a gay guy born to a girl's body.

### **MELODRAMATIC/EMOTIONAL ELEMENTS**

- I like the idea of boys, who are supposed to be the stronger of the 2 sexes, be submissive to other boys. It makes everything so much more romantic and because the love is forbidden by society, the agony felt and obstacles faced are more...harsh the normal BGR.
- I like to read about men being gentle and careing. I love the devotion they have to each other, and the willingness to be together no matter what.
- Male/male relationships seem to have an element of tension in them. It's easier to imagine sparks flying between two males--whether it involves fighting, strong attraction, or rough sex--than between two females, or a male and a female. In real life I prefer women over men, but because of this tension, I tend to favor BL works over straight or lesbian ones. I also like that the characters' 'roles' (male/female, seme/uke) aren't as rigid in BL works and can even lead to conflict, as it does in the popular manga *Seikimatsu Darling*.
- I like men who can express feelings (esp. feminine feelings) w/out looking too feminine
- Because it allows access into a space that I know in reality I can never breach - male+male emotional interaction even if it is an idealised fantasy
- It has guys angsting about other guys. Guys angsting about girls isn't as fun for some reason, as most shoujo manga is about girls anyway.

### **DISLIKE FOR STANDARD ROMANCES/SHOUJO**

- I only love Yaoi, Gay and Shonen Ai Manga!! shoujo ai and yuri are damn fucking disgusting and gross and I would never support such a gross genre.

- it seems interesting, unlike the usual girl likes boy, boy protects girl kind of story. it's something new.
- I find it to be more intellectual and entertaining than boy/girl manga.
- In a lot of shounen ai works, there are few or no female characters. This appeals to me because I don't think very many manga authors are good at writing girls -- female characters in manga are always boring. I'd rather have a manga full of sexy guys interacting with each other than one where badly-written and boring girls are getting in the way.
- A lot of female characters, sadly, suck, or do some more than their male counterparts, so I read about only the men.
- Girls in manga are often annoying or overbearing, especially in romance manga where it's often lots of guys falling for one girl (like Miaka in Fushigi Yuugi). So, get rid of the girls and focus on the boys. and you'll have double my attention.
- It is very often more well-written than shoujo, although both have romance and relationships as the main theme. The dialogue and storyline are often much better than in the average shoujo manga. Also, it is clearly evolving, whereas shoujo seems to be sticking to the same basic principles/storylines it followed in the 70's.
- I like reading relationships that aren't as burdened by the members' gender roles as heterosexual relationships in manga can be.
- Often in hetero manga the woman is helpless or annoying, and in hetero hentai the focus is very strongly on the woman. I like seeing men in romantic situations, and in erotic scenes actually seeing a male face.
- Reading Shoujo/about shoujo-girls pissed me off, so I turned to boys love manga.
- It isn't that I'm turned off by heterosexual relationships; rather, I am often turned off by anime/manga leading females, who are often somewhat naive, airheaded, or otherwise unappealing. Two males together increases the chance that I will find both halves of a relationship attractive, physically and otherwise.
- more fun and exotic than 'normal' heterosexual manga/stories.
- It's sweet, usually without going over the top.
- It fills a need for adult women like me who want to read about relationships in manga that aren't meant for young girls.

- The usual problems between m/f relationships don't really apply in m/m situations. For example, a male partner cannot get pregnant.
- Maybe because it's less mainstream than the typical boy-meets-girl romance? Romeo and Juliet have been shoved at me since before I realized what they were; Romeo and Mercutio is something a little different, something that brings up a whole new set of emotional issues.
- I associate sexual relationships with power relations/issues of domination strongly and since women are conventionally the suppressed party, reading BL manga takes these issues away and allows me to relate (ironically) to the characters from a comfortable distance (because of the gender "barrier"/difference).
- I find it easier to relate to characters in a romance that aren't the typical, blonde bimbo female.

### **A FEMALE-ORIENTED ROMANTIC/EROTIC GENRE**

- As I mentioned, it is more tailored to female tastes than traditional hentai, which tends to not even show the male in some circumstances.
- One thing that isn't exactly "why", but that I like about BL manga/fandom/anime...it's a chick thing. Yes, technically one could say it's about gay men, but BL manga is usually as much about gay realism as much as the "lesbian" porn guys watch. Online and with friends and at cons, it's really a female space (like romance novels). Though the occasional guy is more than welcome to join us, they're going to be in the minority... and that's kinda nice. It's by women for women.
- The main reason I love boys' love manga is because I know it was made by a woman for me, another woman. It's a way to celebrate female sexual desires out of the confines of heterosexual relationship definitions. It's a very empowering genre.
- My first exposure to anime-style erotica was in hentai I found online. However, I was dissatisfied because I found it to be too male-oriented, with lots of pictures of sexy women but not of guys. When I found boy's love manga, I not only found the pretty boys I was looking for, but also a degree of depth and characterization lacking in hentai. I like how psychological boy's love manga can be - it's not only erotic and beautiful, it can occasionally be very emotionally complex.
- When I read a BL manga or watch an anime, somehow, I feel I am free to enjoy it without being forced to accept a role. It gives me a strange sense of freedom and almost luxury - I feel that this is something that has been made specifically for me as a woman, but it does not come with any demands or restrictions on me as a woman. Another reason is that good BL manga and slash combine good characterization and interesting storyline with erotica; this is a combination I rarely find in the mainstream. Erotica without good story and characterization seems dull to me.

- Sometimes while reading a story about a hetero-sexual relationship I feel like I'm expected to believe the characters love each other simply because one is male and the other is female. I like watching the characters having to reflect on why they like this other person - reasons that do go beyond the "I'm suppose to be attracted to this person." Granted a good chunk of yaoi/BL also expects the reader to simply believe that they love each other, but it is a step closer.
- I like romance, but feel that heterosexual fiction is inadequate - which leaves only BL
- Love between men can be about selfless sacrifice for noble causes; love between men and women is almost invariably about domesticity, settling down and becoming good citizens. I believe depictions of love between men avoids the taint of using love to tame men away from their greater aspirations and beliefs and turn them into helpmates for women's domestic goals.
- I don't like the way that women are portrayed in heterosexual romances.
- BL (or same-sex) stories in general often offer a new "twist" to storylines that may seem very "run-of-the-mill", or unoriginal if the relationship was heterosexual. Often, the author is taking a common storyline, but because the romantic pairing are both men (or women), it becomes somewhat of a new story. After you've read enough BL manga though, a lot of it becomes cliché, so one may become more choosy, and start to seek out BL stories that are more specific to a person's tastes.

#### **PURE ESCAPISM/LACK OF REALITY**

- situations sometimes are unlikely to happen in real life
- I'm transgendered (female to male) and while BL manga is unrealistic, it's escapism.
- I like boy's love manga for the faerie-tale quality that permeates most of the ones without sex in it... It's hard to describe, exactly, but there's a feeling of "other" about manga in general and boy's love more acutely that appeals to me.
- It expands my imagination
- Besides the very obvious attraction of boys and more boys, one of the most important factors in my on-and-off affair with BL is that there's something very unreal about them (even the most realistic of them - soshite koi ga hajimaru comes to mind, as a friend once called it a "reality BL"). Like most manga (and similar j-media), BL makes no pretense at sticking to the real world or even, for the most part, logic. There is hardly ever any explanation for why characters are gay (or if they even are - it seems fairly common for characters to be Straight, But With One Significant And Highly Romantic

Exception), and in the series in which seme/uke conventions are more closely followed, the entire thing often becomes a sort of bewildering dash through pure illogic and a lot of non-con. This whole thing is really just to say, of course, BL is completely random and seriously amusing, and is therefore a much more entertaining read, to me, than Western homoerotic fiction ever has been.

- It's just something different, something that helps me escape the monotony and narrow-mindedness of the world I live in.
- It is just absolutely adorable. I can't really explain /why/ I like it. I just do!
- It really makes me happy. I make sure to keep some time on the side everyday to read a chapter of manga/doujinshi, read a fanfic, play a Boy's Love game, etc. It makes my day. This surge of happiness, I really don't know anything else that makes me truly this happy. I also love the plot of these stories. Some are typical love stories, but others are very exotic, very imaginative.
- A "forbidden" feeling I get. Also, it's so fun to talk about such manga with my friends, who also like it.

## **ART AND AESTHETICS**

- I also like boy's love manga because the art usually is beautiful and delicate, and portrait boys in a really pretty way. Shoujo manga do that too, but the main character is always a stereotype female, which is kinda annoying.
- I like the artists who draw them, they have nice styles. Also, I like to learn how to draw and take some ideas about drawing from the artists and put it into my own work.
- Attractive artwork, good stories, appealing characters
- I prefer characters as black and white line drawings, it removes it from reality.
- The drawing is more artistic than in Hentai Manga most of the time.
- The art.
- beautiful artwork
- I like the aesthetical side of it and if the plot is good, it can result fabulous
- I enjoy erotic fiction and the depictions of sex in boy's love manga is aesthetically appealing.
- I Love the art in most boy's love books

- The art work is usually very beautiful with men shown as strong yet not bulky. It shows pretty men being strong but weak at the same time.

## **PURE ENTERTAINMENT**

- It's a genre, it's very stylized, some of the genre conventions entertain me. As a lesbian with many gay male friends, I find stuff like "seme/uke" and such utterly silly -- but it's a fun silly.
- At the risk of sounding like "I only read Playboy for the articles," I do happen to prefer those with inventive/appealing plotlines and characters.

13 They have just as wide a range of genres as heterosexual manga. I read the ones I read because I like the plot, not necessarily because it's about two boys.

- Fan community has more interesting writers
- Some of the writing is excellent, on par with better-known "general audience" manga.
- I like the stories; I try to choose those which portrays realistic relationships between the characters (without taking in consideration if the story takes place in a fantastic world).
- I love the stories! I like to read manga with complex and interesting storylines and if it has the romance between two handsome men or boys the most I surely like it.
- I love emotionally charged stories. They make me feel the characters and allow me to escape into that world.
- Sometimes boy's love manga can be very sad and depressing, very emotional and dynamic. Character development is key.
- I like boys love manga for more than the pretty boys. I enjoy boy's love manga for the story line. There is some truly masterful storytelling at work behind these boy's love manga. Plus, I enjoy being subversive in a homophobic household. :D
- The stories are usually well-written with good plot, and the characters are often endearing.
- I like the fact that it's different.
- A lot of it can be uncomfortably violent. A lot of it is really pretty badly drawn with a stock story-line that is more about sex than anything else. Boy's love manga isn't a realistic or accurate representation of any real-life romance, but I don't have a gripe with



that more than a lot of people seem to take it as a truthful depiction of gay relationships or assume that BL is intended for a gay audience.

- I have to like the characters, and if the characters fit well together then I will read it, that's why I sometimes prefer doujinshi as the couple characters which I think fit even if they are not paired in the official anime or manga
- The Angst Factor
- I love getting wrapped up in characters and their lives, and I usually go on to read and/or write fanfiction about it.
- I originally started by way of doujinshi- so my favorite boys love stories are ones where the characters are/become dimensional.
- I also like boys' love manga it's rare to see some of the issues tackled in them anywhere else...
- In general I think there is more focus on emotions and motivations in boy's love manga than in most other varieties and that's what attracts me to any written works.
- I get ideas of how I could possibly improve my own plot or artwork. Plus it is interesting to see the various places the artists, especially the foreign ones, draw. I can also learn about another culture through their story telling.

### **AROUSING/SEXUALLY TITILLATING**

- I enjoy it because it's an escape. I only read stuff that I know will have a happy ending, that and watching guys go at it is incredibly hot. ^\_^
- There is a level of melodrama in ALL romantic manga that I am unable to tolerate in text-only stories, but the addition of the pictures makes even the cheesiest and most contrived situations compelling and enjoyable. I can't tolerate serial romance novels, bodice-rippers, or most chick lit, I can't get enough BL schoolboy angst, forcible sex blossoming into love, and doe-eyed boys mooning over their older brother's best friends. Also, I've always found same-sex sexual situations very exciting, especially m/m, and the majority of women I know feel the same way, despite U.S. media representations of female sexuality to the contrary. That this appetite is acknowledged and fed in any way in any part of the world, makes me terribly happy. I only hope more companies start licensing titles for U.S. release.
- I like looking at pictures of boys having fun with each other, enjoying the experience and all that naughty bits in manga style.
- It turns me on. The art I find beautiful and the stories suck me in and put me through the wringer.

- I enjoy that it presents men as the passive objects of desire rather than women. I also like it because it can be intensely graphic and sexual in a way that I find titillating.
- If someone chose 13, they don't read enough. I'm surprised that I chose 14, but I guess it's my way of saying that rape-sex (forcible sex) is my favorite.
- I like to imagine that I am there, watching the situations as a fly on the wall.
- I find it arousing in a way that straight romance/smut fails to accomplish very often anymore.
- i like to see the dominate male character taking the shy or weak smaller male. sometimes i would like to be that male that gets dominated
- I like seeing guys suffer in the story.
- It's fucking hot.
- I love looking at naked men....^\_^.....Especially when they are having sooooo much fun!
- More often than not, yaoi/shounen-ai is more "real" than many other types of manga out in the market. I get sick of magical girls, girls in skimpy outfits saving the world from the Big Bad, etc. Characters put in flimsy situations without substance or reality. sure I enjoy those types of manga...without question. But there is so much of it out there, that it is refreshing to read the humorous, fun, sarcastic, outlandish-in-a-good-way, adventurous, realistic, stylish, rollercoaster ride of smotional storms set within a good majority of shounen-ai manga. Of course, we still get to drool over the beautiful art and fantasize about the more erotic yaoi manga. Gorgeous art of beautiful men wrapped together in an embrace can rev your heartbeat and make you smile. It's pleasure. Pure, simple; whether sexual or no [although most often it's not sexual at all. That's not the point..um...usually.]
- It is a perfect blend of intimacy, romance, pretty boys and hot sex.
- It's not really something I can explain, but for some reason it's just hot.
- they are sexy
- Hum..... I'm a Girl, I prefer looking at two gorgeous bopys together than at other women. Besides, most porn, hentai,etc... is made for men, focusing on the girl.

###