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Beck: Mongolian Chop Squad #1by [Kat Avila](#)

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Publisher**TOKYOPOP**<http://www.tokyopop.com>**Credits**

Writer: Harold Sakuishi

Artist: Harold Sakuishi

Distributor: Tokyopop

Translator: Stephen Paul

ISBN: 1-59532-770-3

Grade: 7

"Frankendog." A friend had turned over the **Beck: Mongolian Chop Squad** manga and was staring at the multicolored, patched-up dog that was pictured there. It looks creepier because it's smiling. Beck had Koyuki's petting hand for a snack; yours could be next. On the front cover is a petrified Koyuki with an electric guitar strapped on, looking as if to say, How do I get out of this gig?

Yukio Tanaka is a seriously bored 14-year-old grandma's boy whose days are a "mind-numbing succession of tedious hours," as he puts it. "Just stare at this panel for ten minutes to get an idea of what Yukio's life is like," writes creator



Harold Sakuishi at one point.

He tries to help an elderly lady from being taken advantage of and gets beaten up for his trouble. He sees some kids teasing a weird-looking dog and tries to stop them; the dog still doesn't trust Yukio and bites him. But Yukio meets the dog's owner, Ryusuke Minami, a charismatic troublemaker who may turn out to be a guardian angel of sorts, a catalyst for change in Yukio's life.

Another wild card is the lovely Izumi Ishiguro who has been crowned Miss Higashi Middle School two years in a row. Yukio and Izumi once took a calligraphy class together. She sweetly calls him by her nickname for him, that is, Koyuki.

Koyuki's life is changing. At least his taste in music is, from Okinawan pop singer Chiemi Kuniyoshi to hot U.S. band Dying Breed. "All that weird music ... from another country ... I've never heard anything like it," he thinks. Will Western music be his way out of his life's gutter?

Harold Sakuishi's characters seem awfully familiar since they remind me of the Tokyo I know: maladjusted returnees (children of Japanese businessmen who sometimes have a hard time in Japan because they've lived abroad too long), mixed race Japanese, horny expatriates or U.S. military, and American school (ASIJ [American School in Japan]?). And the art style is more realistic than your average manga.

Osamu Kobayashi was the director for the hit TV anime series. At an Anime Expo 2005 press session, he commented that from an animation perspective it's really hard to move realistic art. He adjusted the **Beck** manga to fit the film and held back the humor to make the anime more realistic and dramatic. Kobayashi wanted to present Koyuki as a complex character with many sides.

You might like **Beck: Mongolian Chop Squad** if you know someone resembling one of the characters, or you could picture yourself as a character in the manga, or you think "Frankendog" Beck is the pet you've always wanted.

Written: August 23, 2005

Published: September 1, 2005

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