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## *From Far Away #1*

by [Kat Avila](#)

*Reviews may contain information that could be considered 'spoilers'. Readers should proceed at their own risk.*

### **Publisher**

**Viz**

<http://www.viz.com>

### **Credits**

Writer: Kyoko Hikawa

Artist: Kyoko Hikawa

Distributor:

Translator: Yuko Sawada

ISBN: 1-59116-599-7

### **Grade: 8**

Not surprising from the daughter of a sci-fi writer, high school student Noriko Tachiki has a recurring dream of a beautiful but alien place. Then, an explosion from a terrorist bomb propels Noriko into a land where its rulers are falling over each other to find the Awakening, a being who can make someone the master of the world.

Noriko may be the Awakening. A mysterious traveling warrior, Izark Kia Tarj, reaches her first at the Golden Nest in the perilous Sea of Trees, but his plans for the Awakening are much different from anyone else's. It's too bad Noriko doesn't know Izark's language and has difficulty



communicating with the emotionally cool hero. Should she trust Izark for now? As they settle at an inn for the night, Noriko thinks, "To him, I must be like a stray dog he adopted."

A nice design detail is that the language of Izark and his fellow countrymen is typeset within double-border speech balloons. When Noriko tries to learn Izark's language, her second language is reset in single-border balloons and her native speech in double-border balloons. Her thoughts are boxed. And like many shoujo manga, there are the usual decorative flowers floating in the background during girly Noriko moments.

Kyoko Hikawa has populated *From Far Away* with imaginative creatures such as tamed winged dinosaurs, giant carnivorous "flower insect" worms, and smooth-skinned llama-like "horses." She also has created intriguing villains.

I liked Kyoko's composition on page 84 featuring the despicably cruel mercenary Keimos. She has a long shot of him standing on the back of a winged dinosaur, then she zooms in for a powerful close-up of his releasing a "remote punch," the effect of which can be seen in the top left panel as a rival soldier flies off his mount. The bottom left panel is a sound-effect segue back to where Izark and Noriko are hidden as they leave behind the Sea of Trees.

*From Far Away* is light fantastical reading, easy to process and enjoy after a stressful day. The heroine Noriko is a sweet and likeable character, though there is a level of violence during fight scenes that may turn off more delicate readers.

Written: March 16, 2005

Published: April 1, 2005

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