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Love Mode #2by [Kat Avila](#)

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Publisher**Blu**<http://www.blumanga.com>**Credits**

Writer: Yuki Shimizu

Artist: Yuki Shimizu

Distributor: Blu Manga

Translator:

ISBN: 1-59816-011-7

Grade: 8

*NOTE: The quality-conscious translation of Yuki Shimizu's **Love Mode** maintains Japanese name order. In my review, I convert the names to Western-style with the given name first, surname last (except in direct quotes).*

"The strong adult smell...of tobacco and cologne. Aoe...Reiji...that was the first time I've seen him smile.... It's strange...just from that one thing...I feel so happy." — Naoya

When it rains, it pours. First, Naoya Shirakawa receives the bad news that his foster parents are under pressure to cut their association with him, then he is knocked unconscious when a jilted lover drops a potted plant on Naoya's head instead of on the guilty party, that is, Reiji Aoe. After Naoya

leaves the hospital, his bad luck spirals out of control until he is homeless, penniless, and emotionally broken down by night's end. There's only so much a resilient high school kid can bounce back from.

An unlikely hero steps in. Yakuza-like Reiji Aoe is the gruff young owner of an upscale male escort service, in addition to other nighttime entertainments. Naoya's hell evokes Reiji's protection, despite the distrustful boy's reluctance to accept help. Uncharacteristically, Reiji starts to fuss over Naoya much to the amusement of Reiji's older brother Dr. Kiichi Aoe and Reiji's private secretary Shuhei Kashima. In a welcome change, Naoya's presence encourages Reiji to express unconditional affection and to become a more accessible human for it.

Love Mode's Reiji and Naoya are unlikely candidates for letting any real affection into their lives. Unique circumstances have thrown them together, and you pray they can find a little warmth and happiness in each other's company.

I hadn't cared much for the first volume featuring the gentle Katsura Takamiya and the childish Izumi Sakashita, but the second volume of ***Love Mode*** with the tough-luck "Christmas Children" story arc pulled at my heartstrings and it was fun to see Reiji Aoe fight himself from falling in love. While Yuki Shimizu's drawing style isn't especially memorable, her character design for Reiji is attractive.

After the main story, there is a second shorter "C - Children" story with Katsura and Izumi, plus a bonus three-page holiday story "Parallel Sweet Valentine" incorporating both couples.

Written: April 30, 2006

Published: May 1, 2006

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