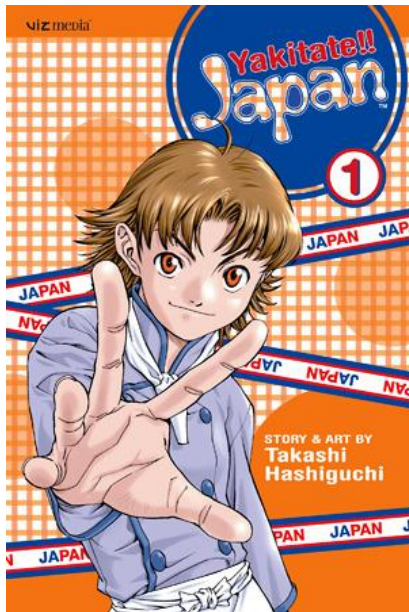


SPOTLIGHT ON BOOKS



Despite having the good fortune to visit Japan a few years back, I had no idea about Japanese baking. My first exposure was a mere year ago (and now, many butter rolls ago) when a Japanese bakery, Ja-Pain, opened in the Centre Square Mall; the winners of last year's Win Your Space competition run by the City of Yellowknife.

Imagine my surprise then when an anonymous donor recently gifted Yellowknife Public Library an entire manga series devoted to Japanese bread.

In *Yakitate!! Japan*, sixteen year old Kazuma Azuma knows that Japan isn't exactly known for its baked goods, not even among Japanese people, and he sets out to change that. It helps that he's been blessed with "hands of the sun," hands of the perfect temperature to cultivate yeast.

It may not seem like the most compelling of books, unless perhaps you're a hardcore foodie, but it's surprisingly entertaining. In the first volume, the story revolves around a baking competition where the prize is a job at a prestigious bakery. Kazuma is immensely likeable if not a little naive and he befriends another competitor named Kawachi who is secretly trying to sabotage him. Will Kazuma catch on and feel betrayed? Will Kawachi be won over by Kazuma's charms? And are Kazuma's enthusiasm and miracle hands enough to take him all the way?

These answers don't come in the first volume but it definitely provides enough incentive to continue.

John Mutford, Library Manager

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