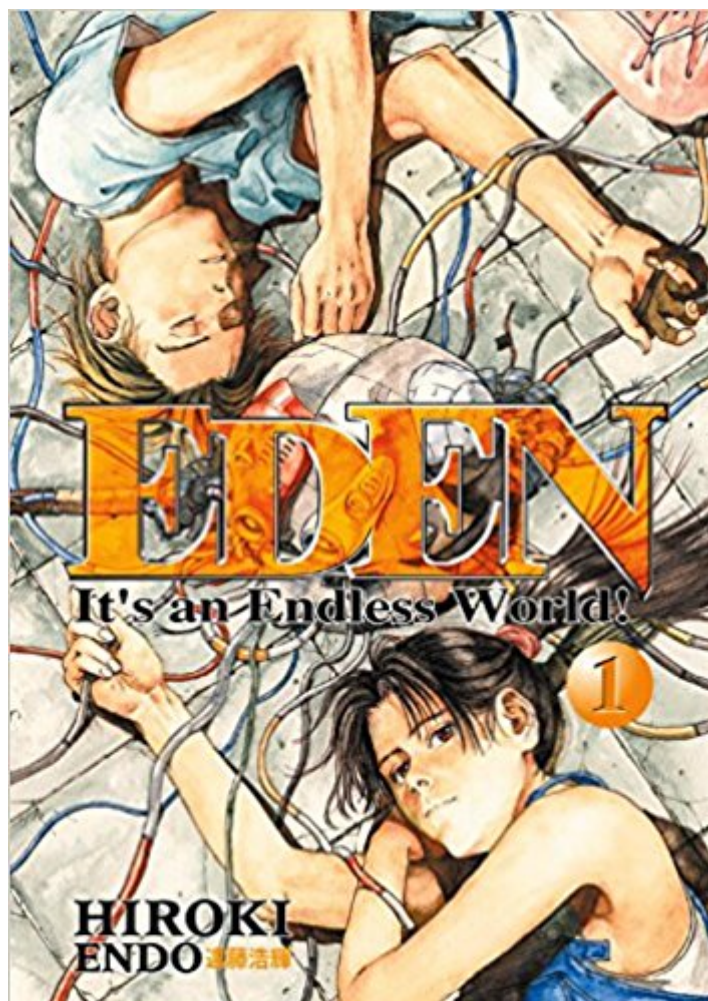


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Eden: It's An Endless World!, Vol. 1 (v. 1)



Synopsis

Eden Volume One is both a brilliant love song to the post-apocalyptic survival genre and the beginning of a deep exploration on man's role in the natural order. In the near future, a large portion of humanity is wiped out by a brutal, new virus that hardens the skin while dissolving internal organs. Those who aren't immune are either severely crippled or allowed to live with cybernetically enhanced bodies. Taking advantage of a world in chaos, a paramilitary force known as the Propater topples the United Nations and seeks world domination. Elia, a young survivor searching for his mother, travels towards the Andes Mountains with an artificially intelligent combat robot. When he encounters a group of anti-Propater freedom fighters, a maelstrom of unique characters unfolds. Graphic, cyberpunk, and philosophical, Eden is a place where endearing heroes face a constant struggle for survival and violent surprises wait around every corner!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A gay man, near death from the paralysis that has killed billions already, and two teenagers--one his best friend's son--live in a huge experimental facility, now dilapidated, that was built to foster plague-resistant individuals. The teens are its only success stories. Now the boy's father, his brain joined to a mechanical body, returns with soldiers and UN personnel. Amid revelations of friendship betrayed, a fight breaks out. With the help of an AI the boy has reanimated, the teens prevail. Twenty years later, the boy's son, accompanied by the same AI, explores a deserted city, and three men and a seeming girl capture him. Endo mutes manga distinctives for realism's sake (e.g., eyes look normal, not the size of saucers), keeps the violence short and sharp, inserts a few low-key

satiric jibes at late-twentieth-century sociopolitics, and paces the narrative to facilitate milieu and character development. He conjures a postapocalyptic aura of near-palpable mystery. Why did what happened occur? Fortunately, this is just volume 1. Ray OlsonCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

Eden is an awesome manga. If any manga has achieved a literary state it has to be this one. For example, it doesn't exactly present characters the way other manga do, by showing what they look like, and having them act out in a way that would be characteristic. What Eden did in this volume was present the setting first, and have the characters interact with that setting. Being a post-apocalyptic tale, the setting is key, and having certain people react a certain way to the setting will reveal a lot about that character. Personally, I thought this was brilliantly done, and I felt that I knew Elijah, the main character, well enough to like him, even though he was only in three short chapters of this volume. The story in Eden--in this volume at least--begins with two teenagers, Enoch and Hannah, as they care for their guardian Layne, who's dying of a disease that hardens the skin and turns the insides of a human to mush. While caring for Layne, these kids learn of their responsibility to human-kind, as well as the tragic past that aided in bringing about the apocalypse in which they are living in. Later, the story moves to young Elijah, a boy whose only companion is a robot named Cherubim, as he goes about the everyday job of survival, including scavenging and hunting, as well as dreaming of girls. Though admittedly the story is slow, and very little is given away as to what direction Eden is heading in, I can't knock it for the simple brilliance in which it is unfolding. Hiroki Endo put an emphasis on presenting the stark setting and conditions of living in the volume, and also made it clear that it is an intelligent plot no matter how slow it is. The back cover states that Eden is "a brilliant love song to post-apocalyptic survival genre" and I would have to agree on that. Eden is a smart story rivaling even Akira, and one I highly recommend for fans of darker, smarter manga.

Having read the first three volumes so far, I'm blown away. I haven't found a manga this engaging since Akira. At first glance, what appeared to be a typical "post-apocalyptic" story is actually deeply fascinating on multiple levels, most especially characterization. The technological elements are as well done as anything by Shirow (Ghost in the Shell), perhaps even better, as they are more clearly explained and shown to be a logical extension of present-day technologies. The future the author has created here is totally coherent and convincing. Like the best sci-fi, you feel like you are simply glimpsing one aspect of an enormous world. The visual storytelling is extremely well done. The battle

scenes are clearly sequenced and paced in a way that is very cinematic. I found myself racing from panel to panel, my eyes frequently bugging out at dramatic and gory moments that are perfectly presented in service to the larger narrative and the emotional content. The characters are quite convincing and engaging. This is a fantastic piece of entertainment!

Eden Volume 1 is a great addition to the genre of post-apocalyptic literature. While the scenario of a government conspiracy-related pandemic is nothing new, Hiroki Endo's iteration in Volume 1 is worthwhile reading. This book's intricate plot and great character development give the series a strong start. This review comments on three elements of artwork: scenery, characters, and action. The review then discusses plot and storytelling. Finally, it concludes with brief thoughts on the overall series. The characters are drawn with distinctive features without resorting to over-the-top hair profiles and character designs, for which manga is known. The more subdued character design allows the artist to demonstrate the subtle deterioration in health over time, as the infection takes over a person's body. I believe this is one of the book's most distinctive visual characteristics. The artwork is superior to the average manga, with an emphasis on electronics and machinery in interior scenes. Exterior scenes show an interesting mixture of real-world places and architecture. The setting in the first half of the book closely resembles Biosphere 2 in Arizona, while the cityscapes in the second half closely resemble Hong Kong (i.e. Lippo Center). Seeing these buildings somewhat confused me where the intended setting for this story is, but this is fiction after all! And the scenes are beautiful nonetheless. The characters are well developed. Endo successfully introduces a large cast, and is able to give each motivation and weaknesses without being stereotypical. Character development is excellent, and one of the best reasons to read this volume. Volume 1 has the most interesting plot of the Eden series, with big, visionary ideas and layers of conflict. The pacing is good with well-timed flashbacks, dialogue, and action. Each element purposely advances the story, unlike the gratuitous ultra-violence and raunchy sexual dialog of later volumes. Overall, this volume has great artwork and a compelling story--what more can be asked of a manga? I recommend Volume 1.***However, I do not recommend later volumes of Eden, where the overall series takes a bizarre tangential direction, losing Volume 1's focus of survival in a post-apocalyptic world. Every subsequent volume feels detached, like a different genre all together. Volumes 2 and 3 are simply futuristic war stories, with emphasis on brutality and mutilation. Volume 4 is a coming-of-age Yakuza story. Volume 5 is a ghost-in-the-machine story. Volumes 6 and 7 are street gang/drug cartel stories. And so on...I only mention these later volumes because they feel like completely different stories that simply reuse the same characters. Some of the later volumes are interesting in their own

right, but together, the books begin to feel like schizophrenic, unfocused storytelling. While reading the later volumes, I got the impression that the original virus piece of the story becomes simply an excuse to explain the ridiculous cyborg-like weaponry implanted into the bodies of villain characters. I believe Eden's original premise of a pandemic-induced societal collapse is so powerful, but is wasted and eventually forgotten halfway through Volume 2.

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