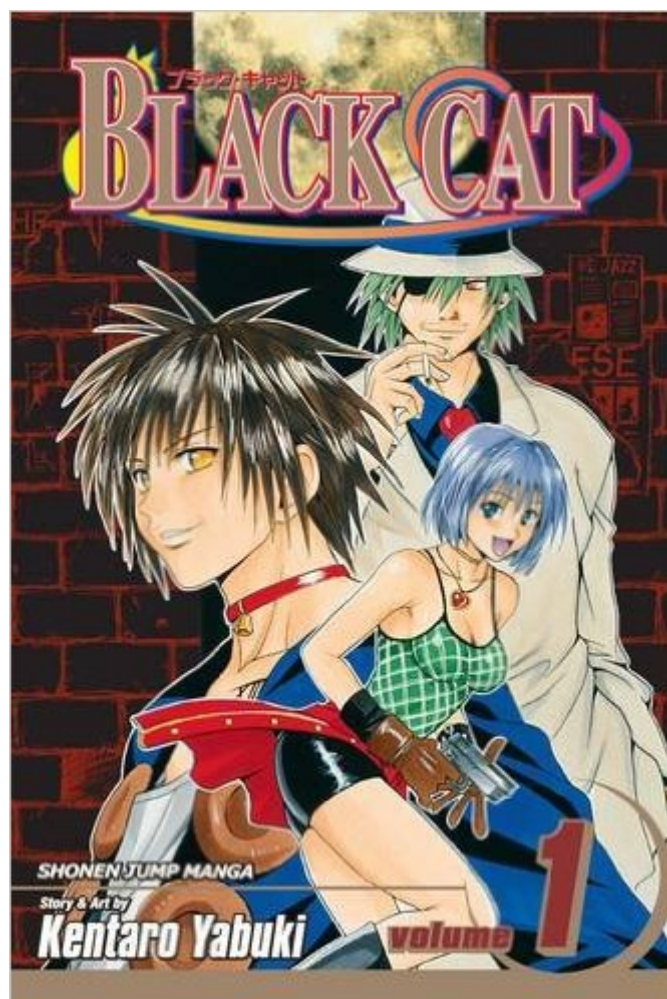


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## Black Cat, Vol. 1



## Synopsis

Two years ago, Train, a high-level assassin known as Number XIII in Chronos, left the secret society to live by his own rules. Since then, Train has been a sweeper, a bounty hunter, catching criminals and bringing them in alive. But his main mission is to find a former Chronos member who killed his best friend.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I first heard about Black Cat in the pages of Shonen Jump magazine; simply a one-page "Manga from Japan!" preview sort of thing. Then a couple months later, the same magazine printed the first chapter as a preview with the promise that the graphic novels would be released beginning in March of 2006. Well, it came out early, so I snagged a copy as soon as I heard about it, and I was NOT disappointed! The story is not that original; it's a bit like Cowboy Bebop meets Trigun. Quite a bit like Cowboy Bebop character-wise, mildly like Trigun setting-wise and in the fact that the main character is an untouchable, carefree gunslinger. That doesn't deter from the fact that it is still a great and interesting story; a very successful re-hash of old ideas. Train, with the not exactly secret identity of Black Cat, has become a Sweeper (bounty hunter who hunts lesser criminals) in order to leave his past life working for the enigmatic organization Chronos behind. Of course, what good is a shady past if it doesn't haunt you? Various people from Chronos come after Train, and they either want him to come back or to die. Train's partner Sven (my favorite character thus far) is an ex-cop who wears an eyepatch over his right eye and smokes more cigarettes than I had thought humanly possible. He's very skilled with a gun, though his true forte is tact. Being a former cop, he is much

more wise about the situation every time than Train seems to be. Rinslett is introduced about halfway through the first volume; a sexy thief who always works in disguise (VERY much like Faye Valentine from Cowboy Bebop...though Faye didn't wear too many disguises if memory serves).

They say that a black cat crossing your path can be a sign of bad luck. But fortunately manga fans won't find the first volume of "Black Cat" to be unlucky. While it doesn't forge new territory, Kentaro Yabuki crafts a funny, snappy, action-packed little opener to this series, and gives it plenty of room to expand later on. Train Hartnett and his partner Sven are sweepers -- bounty hunters who wander around, catching wanted criminals. But a mafia hit man finds out a shocking secret the hard way -- Train was once the Black Cat, serving the secret Chronos organization. He's a superhuman gunslinger with a belled choker, a giant unbreakable gun, and a reputation for being bad luck personified. But while chasing a dine-n'-dasher, Train runs into an old friend, who is determined to bring him back to Chronos, or kill him. And when he and Sven rescue a damsel in distress, they find themselves being hired by a notorious thief, Rinslet, who wants the sweepers to work for her. Train can't pass up the opportunity. Her target is a mobster who is developing some kind of secret weapon -- and when Train infiltrates his mansion, he finds that the man is using nanotechnology to create shapeshifting superhumans. But he doesn't know that one such little girl has left the mansion -- and Sven has taken the deadly child under his wing. "Black Cat" has an unusually smooth opening volume -- Kentaro Ysbuki doesn't bother introducing the characters to each other, or throwing in a ton of infodumping. Just a lot of hints, elusive memories, superhuman gunplay, and slightly goofy banter between Train, Rinslet and Sven.

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