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No Longer Human, Part 2

Osamu Dazai



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Furuya's adaptation of *No Longer Human* takes place nearly seventy years after Dazai's original. Set in modern day Tokyo, Dazai's tale details the life of a young man originally from a well-off family from Japan's far north. Yozo Oba is a troubled soul incapable of revealing his true self to others. A weak constitution and the lingering trauma from some abuse administered by a relative forces him to uphold a facade of hollow jocularity since high school. The series is composed of three parts, referred to in the novel as "memorandums," which chronicle the life of Oba from his teens to late twenties. The comic is narrated by the artist, Furuya himself playing the role originally held by the author Dazai, who makes appearances at the start of each volume. In many ways, it could be said that Furuya has traveled a path that may be similar to Dazai's. Maybe that is what led these two together after 100 years.

In the second volume, comic artist Usamaru Furuya has become obsessed over Oba's behavior. Noticing how tormented this young man must have been, he begins to question whether he should continue reading these memoirs. He fears he may see his own future going down the same path. But, despite his fears he reads on now smitten with Oba and the cast of fre-nemies around him.

Oba's Second Memorandum focuses on his college days. Increasingly paranoid about keeping up appearances he begins to neglect his studies and his ambitions of becoming an artist are now a thing of the past. He is spending money left and right. And soon finds himself in a destructive cycle of drinking and self-loathing. Spurred on by a fellow aspiring artist, he begins to take advantage of his family spending money like water to maintain his bad habits.

So when the money well dries up, he tries to escape life entirely; fearing that his family and in turn the world has abandoned him. But his charms continue to linger. From here he begins to take advantage of his unique personality to live off the one-sided love of the women around him. Whether it be the experienced bar owner or the or the single-parent comics editor, Oba's heart never truly opens up but if these women give him another chance on life, he is willing to take it as long as their own personal expectations do not overwhelm him.

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