

# Review of “Spring Blooms” (Haru ga Saku)

Written by Oyasuminasai

Translated by Mytherrus

When reviewing a doujinshi, there are a plethora of things to consider: the source material, potential sequels, how the work stands alone, and how it stands in conjunction with other works in the same universe. Oyasuminasai’s Spring Blooms ticks all of the necessary boxes to be considered a great doujinshi. It’s honestly a shame that this is only available on a hentai website, which has affected the quality of the compression.

One can also not ignore the translation and translator either. Mytherrus achieves a good balance between preserving the original tone and getting the nuance of the characters relationships across. Some of the word choice feels clunky, especially with Zouken, but its is overall an acceptable translation. The typesetting looks great and the flow of each bubble and square feels intentional. This is definitely difficult to achieve given Japanese’s vertical typesetting and the bubbles designed for that purpose, making the typesetting admirable.

## The Story

While Oyasuminasai doesn’t have any spoilers in his work (as indicated in the foreword) this review certainly will. First, some context about Fate/Stay Night and other adaptations of TYPEMOON’s original works. The Fate story essentially follows a series of wars between powerful mages that has been going on for centuries. The original story follows Shirou Emiya along three potential paths; the one that concerns the doujinshi and the one that we will be discussing is the final path “Heavens Feel”, which also focuses on Sakura Matou, the main character of this doujinshi. Fate/Zero is the story of the generation before Shirou and Sakura, which introduces the three other characters in the story: Kariya, the heir of the Matou family and surrogate father of Sakura; Aoi Tohsaka, Sakura’s biological mother who (due to a complex agreement between mages) sold Sakura off to the Matou family; Makiri Zouken, a 500 year old insect mage who lengthens his lifespan through consuming the souls of the living and the patriarch of the Matou household.

Oyasuminasai's story occurs right before the start of Heaven's Feel and covers an important issue that I feel is missed by the original work: the trauma suffered by Sakura. Sakura has been suffering Zouken's torture for years, all to make her a more powerful mage. PTSD being a very sensitive topic, it is definitely difficult to handle and Oyasuminasai handles it wonderfully. The imagery is not too grotesque and you definitely get a sense of how deeply it has been affecting Sakura and not allowing her to function in her daily life. Extremely tasteful and worthy of even being included with the rest of the canon works. My one issue is that I would have liked the doujin to be a bit longer. The PTSD flashbacks are very welcome in creating that atmosphere of despair and depression, but it was definitely confusing on my first read through. A few more pages to flesh out each flashback and cement which events are happening in the past and which in the present would be much appreciated.

## **The Translation**

Moving away from Oyasuminasai's doujinshi and into Mytherrus' translation, we can see how much care has been taken to make the work both reflect the original as well as look as professional as possible. I can tell that a lot of care went into getting Zouken and Sakura's tone correct, which are definitely the hardest characters to translate. I could spend all day nitpicking and finding small areas where the translation was subpar, but in the end that eventually comes down to the translator themselves and the personal choices made.

The cleaning and typesetting, unfortunately, is where I can see both that Mytherrus put in a lot of work but is also where a lot of flaws come through. The font (CC Wildwords, an industry standard) has an unnatural sharpness to it compared to the rest of the page. This is clearly due to a lack of good software as it seems as if the text is just overlain on top of the image instead of integrated into it using Adobe PhotoShop. This isn't something that a casual reader would even notice, but then again that's my job. There is also a bit more compression artifacting in the translation when comparing to the original. Whether this is due to the typesetting/cleaning software used or due to the download Mytherrus used itself being compressed is unknown, but it does slightly reduce the quality of the final product.

As for the typesetting work itself, I have absolutely no complaints. This is something that the average reader would gloss over, but the shape of the text within each bubble is made to fit the

bubble expertly. Fitting English's horizontal text into bubbles intended for Japanese vertical text is no easy feat and Mytherrus accomplishes this wonderfully. Sufficient respect is given to the whitespace in each bubble where the original author intentionally left whitespace and the textual motifs are also nicely preserved. The balance and roundness of the text in each bubble is also beautiful to look at and flows wonderfully when reading. If it weren't for the software and compression issues this would have been a perfect typesetting job.

## **Final Thoughts**

If I had one word to describe this entire work, it would have to be 'Faithful'. Oyasuminasai's doujinshi is extremely faithful to the foundation of TYPE MOON and the other canon Fate works. The characters and voices and character designs are executed wonderfully and are a treat to fans of the original. Mytherrus' translation is also extremely faithful to the Japanese and to the intricacies inlaid by Oyasuminasai.