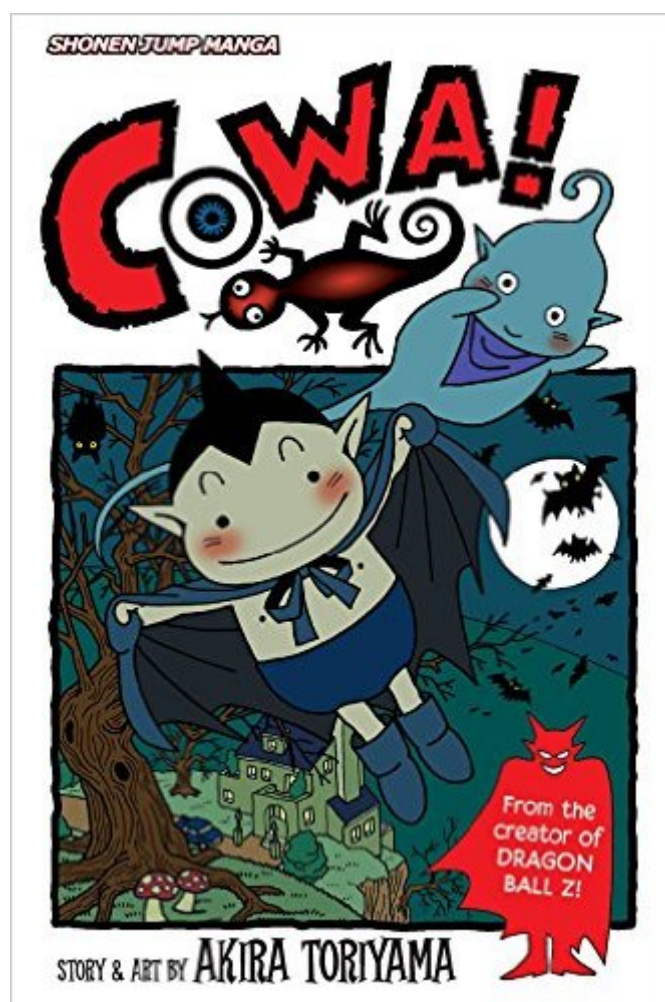


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# COWA!



## Synopsis

A contagious Monster Flu is spreading around town like wildfire. Can the town's troublemaker, a half-vampire, half-werekoala and his friends get the medicine in time to save everyone?! Paifu, a half-vampire half-werekoala, is always getting into trouble with his best buddy, Jos the ghost. But when the Monster Flu sweeps through town, the fun and games are over. If the sick monsters don't get the medicine they need in a month, everyone will die! With all the adults sick, it's up to the boys to get the medicine and save the day! Paifu and Jos are off on a big adventure, but will they get the medicine in time...or will they become victims themselves?!

## Book Information

Series: COWA!

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Age Range: 8 - 10 years

Grade Level: 3 - 5

## Customer Reviews

Akira Toriyama is a mangaka well-known for creating best-selling manga series *Dr. Slump* and the *Dragon Ball* series. And also for his artwork on video games such as the *Dragon Quest* and *Tobal* series. But while his longer series is well-known in the United States, for many people, they are unaware of his shorter manga series. Having created one-shots and shorter stories since the late 1970s, one of Toriyama's 1997 short series *Cowa!* will now be released in the U.S. courtesy of Viz Media. Having suffered from an arm injury in 1997, Toriyama was unsure if he would work on a manga again. Knowing he could not work on a long series, he began working on *Cowa!*, a 14-chapter short series serialized on Weekly Shonen

Jump.Ã¢ÂÂCowa!Ã¢ÂÂ is a series that revolves around young monsters living in Batwing Ridge. While humans and monsters do co-exist, both avoid each other. The series focuses on a young half-vampire and half-werekoala named Paifu. While a bit mischievous, Paifu has good heart and he often hangs out with his friend Jose Rodriguez (a shapeshifting ghost). Both are night creatures and they attend school during the night. One day, Paifu wants to see something scary, so he takes Jose to the Redfox Coast to see a human killer. It turns out to be Mr. Maruyama, the former champion sumo wrestler. And while on MaruyamaÃ¢ÂÂs raft, when Maruyama tries to make a cross with twigs, he finds out that Paifu will turn to a wild, tall, werekoala and the only way to bring him back is to show him something round. But Maruyama explains to the children that the death he caused was throwing an opponent out of the ring and the person landed wrong and died. Disgraced from what happened, Maruyama left to Batwing Ridge to get away from everyone. The following morning, Paifu goes to the homes of his friends, to find out that everyone is suffering from a monster flue and if not treated, the monsters will die in a month. The only cure is medicine made by the witch of Horned-Owl Mountain in the west, 750 miles away. But with all of the town nearly sick, they need someone strong to take them to the Horned-Owl Mountain, so Paifu asks Maruyama to take them. Maruyama agrees if he is paid \$10,000, so he can buy a new boat and Paifu lies and tells him that the town will do it. So, Paifu, along with Jose and his rival Arpon go along with Maruyama to get medicine for the town. But are these young monsters ready to venture out into a new world, full of humans, bad people and also bad monsters?

JUDGMENT CALL: Akira Toriyama may not be known in the U.S. for writing childrenÃ¢ÂÂs manga, the fact is that Ã¢ÂÂDr. SlumpÃ¢ÂÂ and Ã¢ÂÂDragon BallÃ¢ÂÂ were based on the life or adventure of child characters. Granted, Arale of Ã¢ÂÂDr. SlumpÃ¢ÂÂ is a robot and Goku of Ã¢ÂÂDragon BallÃ¢ÂÂ is often engaged in fights and battles, but Ã¢ÂÂCowa!Ã¢ÂÂ is not more about the fighting (as there is some action featured) but more about teamwork, friendship and these four individuals trying to do whatÃ¢ÂÂs necessary to save the people of the village. The character designs do not resemble other works of Akira Toriyama but the fact that Toriyama managed to create something new and different was quite refreshing. If anything, the series is upbeat and fun and while about monsters, itÃ¢ÂÂs not scary nor is it too violent. And most importantly, the manga is rated for Ã¢ÂÂAll AgesÃ¢ÂÂ. But for parents wanting to know if there is violence, there are scenes when bad guys try to take land from a family that Paifu and the others are visiting. And to protect them, Paifu and Maruyama take on the badguys. There is no depiction of people getting smacked around or getting roughed up badly. But there are mild action moments throughout this graphic novel. The overall manga is a quick read that readers will probably finish with an hour.

But the story is quite enjoyable that I would love to see Akira Toriyama revisit *Cowa!* again. If you are looking for a lighthearted manga that both young and old can enjoy, *Cowa!* by *Dragon Ball* and *Dr. Slump* creator Akira Toriyama is recommended!

This manga carries the traditional Toriyama story-telling magic. There is adventure; there is courage, and there is friendship. You have to love the interaction between the two main characters and how the story turns out. It looks like a children book on the cover but it is written for all people, young and mature. This manga will make a good Disney movie.

*Cowa!* is a manga version of a classic folk tale: A motley crew of misfits goes on a quest to save their village and encounters a series of perils along the way. Paifu, the main character, is mischievous, impulsive, and irresponsible, but goodhearted as well; he steals a watermelon in the first chapter but gives it to a needy friend. Paifu is half vampire, half were-koala, so whenever he sees a cross, he turns into an enormous raging koala--until he sees something round, which switches him back. His best friend, Jose, is a shape-shifting ghost who reluctantly goes along with Paifu's schemes, although his tendency to fart when he is nervous often gives the game away. Completing the trio is the comically aggressive Arpon, who challenges everyone to fights and ends up flat on his face every time. The three little monsters befriend a washed-up former sumo wrestler named Mako Maruyama, a gentle giant with a fearsome reputation: He was billed as the strongest man in the world but left wrestling after he accidentally killed a man. When the monster flu threatens to decimate their town, Paifu tricks Maruyama into taking him and his friends to a far-off mountain to get the medicine they need. The three little monsters start out by fighting over who sits by the window of Maruyama's pickup truck but end up tangling with gangsters, a giant rubber monster, and a cranky witch. Toriyama is the creator of the popular *Dragonball* and *Dr. Slump*, and he keeps the story moving with plenty of well-drawn fight sequences. It's strictly cartoon violence, though, with plenty of bruises but no gore. The characters use guns and swords, but they generally turn out to be ineffectual, and the fights are resolved by a combination of quick thinking, drawing on one's inner resources, and Maruyama's iron fists. Indeed, *Cowa!* has a real sweetness about it despite the bad behavior of some characters. Many of the bad guys, such as the rubber monster and Maruyama himself, end up being pretty nice once you get to know them. When a friend is in danger, even mischievous Paifu rises to the occasion and finds new abilities he never knew he had. Thanks to a general air of irreverence, though, the book never comes across as saccharine. Toriyama's art is

expressive yet simple. He brings out Paifu's energy, Jose's timidity, and Maruyama's solidity with just a few lines, and he uses enough detail to not set the scene without getting too complex. The first two chapters were originally in color. Viz keeps the first one intact, and it looks pretty good, but they converted the second chapter to black and white, making it dark and muddy. After that, though, the original black-and-white art is light and very readable. Cowa! is divided into short chapters, each with a satisfying bit of action and plot development, so it is easy to read a small amount and then put it down for a while--definitely a plus for early readers. And the likable characters and fast-moving story make reading this manga as much fun as watching Saturday morning cartoons.-- Brigid Alverson

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