

= Uzumaki =

Uzumaki (Japanese : ????? , Spiral) is a seinen horror manga series written and illustrated by Junji Ito . Appearing as a serial in the weekly manga magazine Big Comic Spirits from 1998 to 1999 , the chapters were compiled into three bound volumes by Shogakukan and published from August 1998 to September 1999 . In March 2000 , Shogakukan released an omnibus edition , followed by a second omnibus version in August 2010 . In North America , Viz Media serialized an English @-@ language translation of the series in its monthly magazine Pulp from February 2001 to August 2002 . Viz Media then published the volumes from October 2001 to October 2002 , with a re @-@ release from October 2007 to February 2008 , and published a hardcover omnibus edition in October 2013 .

The series tells the story of the citizens of Kurôzu @-@ cho , a fictional city which is plagued by a supernatural curse involving spirals . The story for Uzumaki originated when Ito attempted to write a story about people living in a very long row house , and he was inspired to use a spiral shape to achieve the desired length . Ito believes the horror of Uzumaki is effective due to its subversion of symbols which are normally positively portrayed in Japanese media , and its Lovecraftian theme of protagonists struggling against a mysterious force stronger than themselves .

The manga was adapted into two video games for the WonderSwan and a Japanese live @-@ action film directed by Higuchinsky . The manga has received generally positive reviews from English @-@ language critics . It was nominated for an Eisner Award in 2003 , and placed in the Young Adult Library Services Association 's list of the " Top 10 Graphic Novels for Teens " in 2009 .

= = Plot = =

Uzumaki follows a high @-@ school teenager Kirie Goshima (?????) , her boyfriend Shuichi Saito (?????) , and the citizens of the small , fictional Japanese town of Kurôzu @-@ cho (??? , Black Vortex Town) , which is cursed by supernatural events involving spirals . As the story progresses , Kirie and Shuichi witness how the spiral curse affects the people around them , causing the citizens to become obsessed or paranoid about spirals . Eventually Kirie is affected by the curse as well , when her hair begins to curl into an unnatural spiral pattern , drains her life energy to hypnotize the citizens , and chokes her whenever she attempts to cut it off . Shuichi is able to cut her hair and save her . The curse continues to plague the town , until a storm conjured by the curse destroys most of its structures . The only remaining buildings are ancient abandoned row houses , which the citizens are forced first to move into , and then begin expanding as they grow more and more crowded .

Kirie and Shuichi devise a plan to escape Kurôzu @-@ cho , but when they attempt to escape , their efforts are unsuccessful . After returning to the town , they discover that several years have passed since they left . The other citizens have expanded the row houses until they connect into a single structure forming a spiral pattern . Kirie and Shuichi decide to search for Kirie 's parents , which brings them to the center of the spiral . At the center , they fall down a pit , within which they discover the corpses of Kirie 's parents and an ancient city completely covered with spiral patterns . Shuichi urges Kirie to move forward and find a way to stop the curse , but she replies that she does not have the strength and wishes to stay with him . The two embrace each other , and their bodies twist and wrap together as a result of the curse . As they lie together , Kirie notes that the curse ended at the same time it began , and concludes that the curse is eternal , and all the events will repeat when a new Kurôzu @-@ cho is built where the previous one laid .

= = Development = =

Uzumaki was written and illustrated by Junji Ito . Junji Ito 's initial desire was to create a story about strange changes that would occur to people living in a very long , traditional Japanese row house . This story would have been based on Ito 's personal experience living in such a house as a child . During the process of finding a way to draw such a long building , Ito was inspired by the shape of a mosquito coil and decided he could make the building long by having it spiral . Ito has noted that the

spiral is a " mysterious pattern " and described writing Uzumaki as an attempt to learn the secrets of the spiral . Ito sought inspiration by methods such as staring at spirals , researching spirals , creating spiral patterns by draining water from bath tubs , eating foods with spiral patterns , and raising snails . Looking back on the series in 2006 , Ito stated that while he was still uncertain what the spiral stood for , he thought it might be representative of infinity .

Uzumaki was influenced by the positive representation of spirals in media , which inspired Ito to subvert them to create horror , stating , " Usually spiral patterns mark character ? s cheeks in Japanese comedy cartoons , representing an effect of warmth . However , I thought it could be used in horror if I drew it a different way . " The story in which Kirie 's hair is cursed by the spiral reflects a recurring theme in Ito 's work in which a heroine 's hair has a life of its own . Ito uses this imagery because it lends itself well to horror due to its association with the Japanese feminine ideal (Yamato nadeshiko) , as well as the unnerving flowing motions of long hair , which he describes as snakelike . Ito also noted that horror writer H.P. Lovecraft was one of his inspirations when creating Uzumaki , stating that the gradual development of the spiral curse was patterned on Lovecraft 's storytelling and that " [Lovecraft 's] expressionism with regard to atmosphere greatly inspires my creative impulse . "

= = Publication = =

The manga began as a serial in the weekly manga magazine Big Comic Spirits from 1998 to 1999 . Shogakukan compiled the chapters into three bound volumes and published them from August 1998 to September 1999 . To celebrate the release of the live @-@ action film , the manga series was released in an omnibus volume in March 2000 , with an additional " lost " chapter . Shogakukan released another omnibus edition on August 30 , 2010 , with the same content and additional commentary from Masaru Sato .

In North America , Viz Media serialized an English @-@ language translation of the series in its monthly magazine Pulp from the February 2001 issue to the August 2002 issue . It published volumes of the series from October 2001 to October 2002 . Viz Media re @-@ released the series with new covers from October 2007 to February 2008 , and published the omnibus volume in hardcover with twelve color pages on October 13 , 2013 . The series has also been translated into other languages , such as Spanish , French , Brazilian Portuguese , Polish , Swedish , Mandarin , Korean , and Serbian .

Notes

= = Related media = =

= = = Video games = = =

Two video games were developed and published by Omega Micott for the Bandai WonderSwan . The first , Uzumaki : Denshi Kaiki Hen (????? ? ?????? ? , Spiral -Power Vision Strange Edition-) , was released on February 3 , 2000 and is a visual novel retelling the events of the manga . Kirie Goshima 's actor , Erika Hatsune makes a special appearance . The second game , titled Uzumaki : Noroi Simulation (????? ? ????????????? ? , Spiral -Curse Simulation-) , was released on March 4 , 2000 and is a simulation game . Players are tasked by the Uzumaki Sennin (??????? , Spiral Master) to spread the spiral curse . The objective is to spread the curse across the town and find hidden objects to gain more " Spiral Power " and progress the story . The title also includes a mini @-@ game involving one of the snail @-@ human hybrids .

= = = Live @-@ action film = = =

In 2000 , a live @-@ action adaptation of Uzumaki was released in Japan . Directed by Higunchinsky , it featured Eriko Hatsune as Kirie Goshima , Shin Eun @-@ kyung as Chie

Maruyama , Fhi Fan as Shuichi Saito , Keiko Takahashi as Yukie Saito , Ren Osugi as Toshio Saito , and Hinako Saeki as Kyoko Sekino . The film consists of four parts (" A Premonition " , " Erosion " , " Visitation " , and " Transmigration ") , and as a result of being produced before the manga 's conclusion , uses a different ending than the manga . The film received a 54 percent approval rating on the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes , with the general consensus that " Uzumaki uses its creepy , David Lynch @-@ inspired atmospherics to effectively build a sense of dread , but ultimately fails to do anything with it . "

= = Reception = =

Uzumaki was nominated for an Eisner Award in the category of " Best U.S. Edition of Foreign Material " in 2003 . The Young Adult Library Services Association chose the first volume for its list of the " Top 10 Great Graphic Novels for Teens " in 2009 . The manga was also included on its list of the 53 " Great Graphic Novels for Teens " . Viz Media 's Deluxe edition ranked # 172 in Diamond 's Top 300 Graphic Novels on October 2013 with a total of 784 copies sold . IGN placed Uzumaki at # 2 under their " Top 10 Horror / Thriller Manga " list . About.com 's Deb Aoki placed Uzumaki in her list of recommended horror manga , describing it as a classic of the genre . Uzumaki appeared in 1001 Comics You Must Read Before You Die (2011) , and the reviewer wrote that it reminded him of the works of H.P. Lovecraft . MyM magazine praised the manga , calling it " one of the scariest manga series around . "

In Manga : The Complete Guide (2007) , Jason Thompson gave Uzumaki three and a half stars , and wrote that , taken as a whole , the manga succeeds as " an elegant and sometimes blackly humorous story of dreamlike logic and nihilism . " Thompson featured the manga again in his House of 1000 Manga blog , praising it for its originality , in that it revolved around " a certain nightmarish , fatalistic way of looking at the world " . Comics Alliance author and comic artist , Sara Horrocks , also praised the manga , stating " What makes Uzumaki such a strong work is how precise it is in it 's mechanics . It is meticulous in the way that a curse might be . "

For the first volume , Theron Martin from Anime News Network gave it a ' B ' , praising the art style and character designs , including Viz Media 's new cover design . He stated , however , that " some of the attempts at horror get too preposterous for their own good . " Greg Hackmann of Mania it an A , and praising both its " well @-@ honed " art and Ito 's ability to form an effective overarching plot out of Uzumaki 's loosely connected substories . Barb Lien @-@ Cooper of Sequential Tart gave it a 7 out of 10 , stating " The art is clean and simple . It works to help maintain the paranoia . The tone and pacing of this story are also just right . Altogether , one of the better horror stories I 've read this year . " Ken Haley of PopCultureShock gave it an ' A ' and praised Ito 's effective use of body horror , though he noted that some of the curse 's effects were more humorous than frightening .

For the second volume , Lien @-@ Cooper gave it 8 out of 10 stating , " What astounds me about Junji Ito 's work is its deceptive simplicity and its flawless execution . " Sheena McNeil , also from Sequential Tart , instead gave it a 9 out of 10 , citing the novel effects of the curse Ito invented . Hackmann , however , gave it a ' B ' , explaining that " Unfortunately , this shift in story format is largely a failed experiment : with the overarching escape storyline put on hiatus , a good number of these disconnected episodes degenerate into simple , " lookit , weird stuff happening " horrorfests that lack much of the creative spark exhibited throughout the first Uzumaki collection . "

When reviewing the third and final volume , Haley again gave it an ' A ' , praising Junji Ito for providing answers to questions previously asked but not answered in a heavy or mundane form . Lien @-@ Cooper gave the conclusion a 6 out of 10 , and criticized the initial ending as nonsensical and the expanded background given in " Galaxies " as uninteresting .