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Manga Shakespeare: Othello



Synopsis

Othello and As You Like It are the newest additions to the imaginative world of Manga Shakespeare. In the face of the false evidence produced by the conniving Iago, Othello cannot trust his wife, and his mistrust leads to the play's tragic conclusion. In As You Like It, Rosalind, dressed like a boy, falls in love with Orlando. A mistaken-identity comedy follows, with a happy ending (or the ultimate justice served) for those who deserve it. Both plays have been refreshingly updated in the style of manga while maintaining Shakespeare's beautiful language. F&P level: Z

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 7 Up Osada has populated his version of Othello with a bestiary of part-animal, part-monster characters with third eyes; second sets of arms, wings, and tattoos; and sadomasochistic or infernal overtones. Sometimes the design choices seem to be thematic—Cassio looks quite young, Othello is vaguely angelic—to reinforce an individual aspect of a given character or to provide a small irony. But overall, the effect is mystifying and distracting, and the characters are chimeric aggregations with no sense of purpose or place. The opening of the play focuses on the fact that the marriage between Othello and Desdemona should be stopped because of his Moorish origins—but how can this be an issue when the challenge is being put forth by an anthropomorphic fox? One finds oneself asking why these design

decisions were made, and the lack of evidence of any thoughtful intent makes the adaptation unintentionally comic and bizarre. Coupled with a lackluster use of tone and shade, and a series of monologues that lacks narrative form, this volume would seem unlikely to convert manga readers to Shakespeare, nor to lead literature readers to comics. © Benjamin Russell, Belmont High School, NH Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

By marrying comfortably recognizable manga elements with the potentially intimidating Shakespearean oeuvre, the Manga Shakespeare series offers yet another serviceable introduction for dubious teen readers. The art unfortunately pushes the fantastical, detracting from Othello's essential otherness by casting him as an otherworldly winged being and from Iago's terrifying insidiousness by giving him a painfully childish face. But with Shakespeare's original (though abridged) dialogue and an appended plot summary, there's no denying this book's appeal as a "respectable" graphic-format addition to teen collections. Check out Mustashrik's Julius Caesar (2008) for the pinnacle of this worthwhile subgenre. Grades 7-11. --Jesse Karp

The print is so good The price and weight is good also .Advise to buy all the series Thanks

Everything was Ok, got lucky no taxes \o/ the books are awesome, got them in time

I showed my students the manga versions of Shakespeare's tragedies, and several of them borrowed these editions to read overnight. I plan to keep a deep inventory of these versions in my classroom's bookshelves so that my students might continue to become "hooked on Shakespeare."

Othello, one of Shakespeare's most famous tragedies, is presented in this graphic novel version both as a learning tool for students and as a new vision. It follows the familiar story: evil, backstabbing Iago, angry that Othello promoted Cassio instead of him, plots his revenge. Through trickery and a silver tongue, Iago gets Othello to turn against and eventually murder his own wife, Desdemona. The dialogue used is a mixture of word-for-word what Shakespeare wrote, sometimes edited down for fewer words, and slight rewrites. It's kind of the bare bones, but it still does what it can to keep with the original language, and getting it down to the bare bones works for this. I don't think of the Manga Shakespeare series as any sort of a replacement for the original; instead, I think

these books are more like a graphic novel version of Cliff's Notes. It can be used as an aid in reading the original play. The art is where the new vision happens. Perhaps it's done to make it stand out, but the characters are given mythological and animal-like appearances. Othello, for instance, has wings, while Cassio has dog ears and a tail. The only character design I had trouble with was Cassio's; besides the dog qualities, he was drawn to look very boyish. Throughout the story Iago is convincing Othello that Cassio is sleeping with Desdemona, but Cassio looks way too childish to fit the bill. The art is styled after manga, though it doesn't look like manga exactly. At times the art can seem plain; indeed, it never gets very detailed or ornate. However, it still does a good job at expressing characters' emotions and actions. That's important, because that can help readers understand what's going on even if they don't follow all the dialogue. It's the art in particular -- showing the actions, that is -- that I think makes Manga Shakespeare a good study aid for students. At the end, there's also a page-long description of the play, to make sure readers didn't miss any key parts. Reviewed by Danica Davidson

The manga/graphic novel is a great way to tell a play. Ever try reading a play without any actors? It's boring and, thus, not very effective. At least I don't think it is. What high-schooler is going to pay attention and really get what is going on? But, with this format, there are actors, acting out the scenes. Moreso, no fake blood, bending knives, mispronounced words, etc. It just works, and it held my interest (23 year old, high-school educated, non-neurotypical male) quite well. I'm not going to review the story. It's been printed and reprinted and used and bent in every way for a long time; so there's no point in giving any opinion on it. Art - The art in the book was well done; the characters were interesting and distinct. This interesting-ness was a bit of a problem at times. Sometimes, it was hard to tell exactly what was going on. I could understand the symbolism (why Rodrigo was a dog, etc), but it gets to where it's strange enough to distract from the story more than to tell it at times. I think I could have gotten more out of it if the characters were a bit more normal. Cassio's cuteness was a little over-the-top. Language - It's all original, which is good. It would have just been nice to have notes every once in awhile on more confusing statements; as when Othello yells "Goats and Monkeys!" Shakespeare is difficult, the pictorial format helps, but I don't believe the summary at the end was quite enough--I believe they should have gone into more detail. BUT, this has an advantage. This encourages the reader (especially a student) to ask a teacher what is going on, or Googling it and figuring out exactly what The Bard was trying to say. All in all, it's good. Good for anyone interested in Shakespeare, good for the reluctant student, even good for a good student. I'd like to see a teacher catch him or her reading it in class, snatching it up, giving it back,

apologizing, and asking where it came from. If you're a parent who cares about your kid getting a little of the Arts in their lives, grab this book and give it to them one day, and see what happens.

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