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# Manga Shakespeare: King Lear



## Synopsis

Combining manga and the timeless texts of Shakespeare's plays, this series translates some of the greatest works of literature into a new format. In *King Lear*, the aging king here a Native American must decide how to split his kingdom among his daughters. When he scorns his one dutiful daughter and trusts the two selfish ones, he pays a steep price. F&P level: Z

## Book Information

Series: Manga Shakespeare

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## Customer Reviews

Grade 8 Up These books depict Shakespeare's plays through black-and-white paneled storytelling. Much *Ado* is set in Italy during the late 1800s, using Victorian clothing to set the scene. Vieceli uses different styles of manga art with great effect, from chibi or super-deformed characters to show excessive cuteness or childish banter to the dramatic, overflowing tears that exaggerate a character's grief. This play is an excellent choice for adaptation, given its comedic moments and over-the-top emotions, and Appignanesi adapts it beautifully. *King Lear* is more challenging to convert to the style, made no less so by the choice of setting: the North American frontier, with Lear himself cast as an Algonquin chief. The traitorous Edmund is cast as one of the few African Americans. He is more sympathetic than in other productions, but he remains a villain. Ilya works hard to wrap real historical and cultural details into the panels, attempting authenticity instead of stereotypical images that too often accompany Native Americans in comics. However, there are some questions about the accuracy of the appearance of the fools particularly; they are costumed as clowns, one with a vaguely Southwestern appearance and the other wearing the entire hide of a

wolf. In addition, Ilya places some gratuitous nudity and cleavage into the script, and the depiction of Lear's daughter Regan as sometimes pale and sometimes dark-skinned is confusing. Still, both books are likely to draw manga readers further into Shakespeare's plays, and students of the Bard may get new ideas about how his works can be presented to modern audiences. ~~~~~ Alana Abbott, James Blackstone Memorial Library, Branford, CT END

Comic book writer and artist ILYA has had his work published by Marvel, DC, and Dark Horse. He is the editor of The Mammoth Book of Best New Manga. He lives in the UK.

I have read most of Shakespeare's plays and I decided to purchase the Manga graphic novel versions of the bard's many plays. This particular play (King Lear adapted by Richard Appignanesi and illustrated by ILYA) is probably my least favorite of Shakespeare's work. King Lear is a tragedy in which the King of Britain desires to retire from the many challenges of being king. He decides to split up his kingdom among his three daughters but tells them he will give the largest portion to the daughter who loves him the most. His decision creates many problems as the story moves along in this graphic novel. The various conflicts and twists and turns of this story is sometimes confusing even when presented in a Japanese Manga format; nevertheless, if you are a fan of Shakespeare's King Lear you may want to check out this unique approach to telling the tale of King Lear. Rating: 4 Stars. Joseph J. Truncale (Author: Zen Poetry Moments: Haiku and Senryu for special occasions).

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."

Awesomeness

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