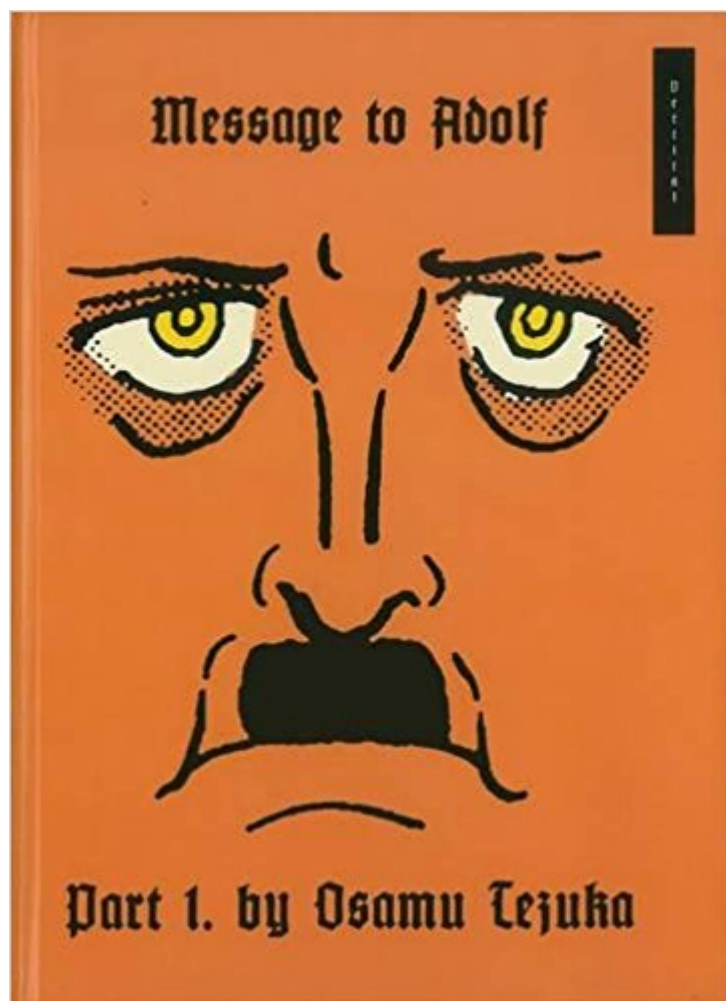


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Message To Adolf, Part 1



Synopsis

It is 1936 in Berlin, Nazi Germany. A Japanese reporter named Sohei Tohge is covering the Berlin Olympic Games for the Japanese press. As he sits in the Japanese press box watching the many track and field events of the day, he receives a call from his younger brother Isao, who has been studying in Germany as an international student. The two make plans to meet as Isao mentions he has something of importance to share with his sibling. While Sohei initially thinks his little brother may have found a young frau, Isao's tone is clearly that of one who is troubled by topics much heavier than romance. When Sohei arrives at Berlin University, he finds his brother's room has been through some sort of violent ordeal. A mysterious message was left on a note pad and a window was left wide open. And tangled in the branches of a tree directly below Isao's window rested his dead body. Isao was murdered. Sohei would immediately launch an investigation to the murder, but almost instantly all traces of information regarding his younger brother's study in Germany has vanished. The police were of no help. Isao's room was also cleared and rented out to another person. Even his building manager feined ignorance. It was as if he had never existed. Investigating the matter, it is later learned that this murder is connected to a document he mailed to Japan with information regarding Adolf Hitler. As events progress, the lives of three Adolfs, each from distinct origins, intertwine and become more and more tangled as Sohei Toge searches for his brother's murderer.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Though published previously in English in eight smaller paperbacks, Tezuka's political thriller, presented here in the first of two handsome hardcovers, deserves another look. Though he's most celebrated for creating the enduring favorite Astro Boy (and is about on a par in Japan with Walt Disney here), Tezuka created a wealth of stories in a career that essentially defined the visual language of modern manga. This work, serialized in the 1980s, weaves an intricate story of three Adolfs. As a Japanese reporter tries to uncover documents that would devastate the ascendancy of Hitler's Reich, two young boys in Japan—a half-German Adolph Kamil and Jewish expatriate Adolph Kaufmann—test the limits of friendship, family, and loyalty. Purists may object to the fact that this book is "flipped" (mirrored to read left to right), but the approachability factor could rope in readers who don't normally go for manga and who will find a master artist and storyteller in full flight. --Ian Chipman

Winner of the 1986 Kodansha Manga Award for Best Manga "Adolf is one of Japan's greatest manga epics... The perfect choice for those who don't normally read manga. There's humor here, but also monstrous acts that defy comprehension. Adolf is an emotional and complex work that proves once again that comic books can be equal to any great literary novel. Whether you love manga, super hero books or personal tales, Adolf is one series you must read." - IGN.com

This is my first review on , and my first review for anything in a long time, so please bear with me. The summary presented by is very accurate. This manga is the story of three (rather different) men named Adolf; a reporter, Sohei Toge, in search of information about his brother's murder in Germany; and a secret about Adolf Hitler that, if exposed, could drastically alter the course of history. This first volume, comprising roughly half of the series, begins at the 1936 Berlin Olympics and brings readers through to the months following the German invasion of Poland in 1939. The background of the story--the escalating anti-Jewish sentiment among Germans and increased emphasis on patriotism in Japan during the Second Sino-Japanese War--provides an excellent setting in which to meet our main characters, and to see their lives intertwine with each others, though they don't all know it. The art is quite good, particularly the backgrounds. Everything from forests to cities to vehicles are drawn with detail. The characters are well drawn, if occasionally on the more cartoonish side, though that aspect can be attributed to Tezuka's style and history of drawing manga for all ages. The only real shortfalls of the story, in my opinion, are the frequency of Toge-centric chapters (despite the character referring to himself as a 'secondary character'), the lack of chapters focusing on Adolf Kamil, and the tendency of every female character to become

instantly attracted to Toge. My other issue stems from the artwork being mirrored to allow publication in the English left-to-right reading format. While the 'flipping' of the book is a good thing, in that it encourages people who may not read manga otherwise to pick up this series, it causes a number of inaccuracies in the art. As a result, cars drive on opposite sides of the road, a German copy of 'Mein Kampf' appears to read right-to-left, and Nazi party members salute with their left hands instead of right. What really took me out of the book occurs when Toge is shot: the text is faithfully translated to refer to his injured left shoulder, however the mirroring of the artwork leads to his right arm being injured. All in all, this book is a very good, thrilling read, despite its few flaws and some occasional clichés of the political/espionage-themed drama genre. Aside from the oddities caused by the mirroring of the book, Vertical's edition is very neat and a nice hardcover, which I am happy to have on my shelf. If I could have given a 4.5 I would have, but there were enough little things that led me to bump it down to a 4, instead of up to a 5. I would still highly recommend this to anyone interested in WWII fiction, Osamu Tezuka, and manga or graphic novels in general, and especially to those like me who missed out on the first English release. It's not perfect, but still great, and an important work in the catalogue of a true master of the medium.

Holy tattooed ta-tas, Tezuka fans! Vertical has done it well again, re-releasing this epic from Tezuka in two hardcover volumes, instead of 8 trade paperbacks. The themes of suffering and redemption that Tezuka is known for are all present, with some of his best paneling and characters (you really hate to see a few die) out of his so-called "star system" (a fictional universe of characters that frequently play lead roles). Lamp, here a vile gestapo hard ass, is of particular note, as is Detective Akabane, played by the tight-cheeked, cross-eyed Ham Egg, in one of his cruelly funny roles. The story is played back for you by reporter Toge, who wields information given to him by a Jewish student that could destroy Hitler's credentials and topple the Aryan empire. We see all 3 Adolfs are dead by story's end--that is, within the first couple of pages, I'm not spoiling anything. So at least Tezuka doesn't lie to you about how cruel he'll be to his "actors" in this one. Can't wait for V.2.!

I was told by a friend that this Vertical translation in two volumes was superior to the (out of print) five volume VIZ Media translation I already had. While I did not make a direct page by page comparison between them, I did note the lack of any chronology of actual historical events in this translation. The VIZ Media translation has at least one page of such chronology in every volume. Offhand, I cannot say that these add much to the story itself, as I did not even bother to read this 1st of 2 volumes that lack it. I thus have not bothered to buy volume two. My rating is only in regards to

that lacking feature, since I already have the complete story in five volumes. The story itself is one of international intrigue, which involves three men, all named 'Adolf,' one being Hitler, another being a Jewish boy living in 1930s Germany along with a third, who initially was his best friend of mixed German-Japanese parentage. It shows how the hatred that the Hitler Youth planted in the one boy had destroyed his friendship with the other boy. While there are many other elements to this saga, it would be too much to detail them here. So, anyway, there is evidence that Adolf Hitler has a Jewish ancestor. Possession of this evidence & the attempt to possess it is strewn throughout this story. Who would have thought that the History Channel would actually uncover real evidence supporting this claim, decades after Tezuka wrote about it?

If you like history and manga, you should read this. The overall tone contrasted this mangaka's goofy/silly art style rather nicely.

Sets one up for much reflection on character development. Very enjoyable.

Readers who are familiar with this author may call out various "flaws" in the writing, characters or art. I had the good fortune to know nothing about this author when I took this book out of the library because the cover caught my eye and I enjoy graphic novels. So this review is for readers like me who are not familiar with Tezuka's work. Quite simply, this work is an extraordinary feat of creativity. I am astounded that one person could have devised such a complex, remarkable story, and also conceived and executed the illustration. While I can't vouch for the accuracy of all the historical detail, the core elements will resonate with anyone familiar with the general narrative arc of WWII. A wonderful work really. I look forward to reading more of Tezuka's work.

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