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Yona Of The Dawn, Vol. 1



Synopsis

Princess Yona lives an ideal life as the only princess of her kingdom. Doted on by her father, the king, and protected by her faithful guard Hak, she cherishes the time spent with the man she loves, Soo-won. But everything changes on her 16th birthday when she witnesses her father's murder! Yona reels from the shock of witnessing a loved one's murder and having to fight for her life. With Hak's help, she flees the palace and struggles to survive while evading her enemy's forces. But where will this displaced princess go when all the paths before her are uncertain?

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Customer Reviews

Spoiler-free review: Set in a fictionalized medieval Korea, Yona of the Dawn follows Yona, a once-pampered princess who grows into a capable leader and revolutionary. On the run from her treacherous cousin, the new King, she gathers a small band of fiercely loyal comrades, and learns that her father's reign may not have been as idyllic as she believed. Equal parts politics and personal melodrama, Yona of the Dawn is a brilliantly-crafted action-adventure with a distinctly feminist flair, featuring a host of colorful characters (male and female, young and old) with complex and believable motivations. There are undercurrents of romance and tragedy, but also a good balance of humor and plenty of action. The early volumes move a bit predictably, although the pacing is good and the stories interesting, if episodic. Once all the key players are assembled, the story blossoms along with Yona - her growth as a leader and warrior mirrors the manga's layering of nuance and

character evolution. There is a lot to chew over, especially for fans of history or historical fiction - from the costumes & weapons, to the geopolitics & geography, a lot of research into real-world Korea went into this story. The romance aspect is handled well too, although maybe it's a bit slow-paced compared to shorter works. There are some specific touches of fantastic/mystical abilities, notably among Yona's companions, but otherwise it is very much grounded in real-world concerns. Definitely recommended for any fans of the historical (fantasy) genre, or anyone looking for something a bit meatier to read that's not too dense or depressing. Especially good for teens/teen girls, but I might not recommend it to younger kids for the intense politics and real-life subjects like drug addiction, slavery/abduction, prostitution, and assassination.

I watched the anime a couple of weeks ago, fell absolutely in love with it, and have rewatched it three or four more times. I got a friend hooked on it as well. IT IS THAT GOOD. So of course I was going to buy the first volume of the manga! I preordered it, it arrived on the release day, and read the whole thing that night. For those who have watched the anime, this volume covers episodes 1-3, and I'm happy to say the anime follows pretty closely. For those who have not seen the anime and do not know much about *Akatsuki no Yona* (or *Yona of the Dawn*), it follows the story of Yona, a pampered 16 year old princess who witnesses the murder of a loved one and is now on the run for her life. Accompanying her is her childhood friend/bodyguard Hak, who has vowed to protect her at all costs. In order to survive, Yona must not only pick up a sword and a bow, but also track down the Four Dragons of the old legends; only then will she discover her true destiny. A warning to those just picking up the manga and who do not know where this story goes: Yona is pretty annoying in the beginning. She's a princess who has never known pain or weariness, and is only concerned with winning the heart of the man she loves (not Hak...that would be far too simple!) and how horrible she thinks her red hair is. In the anime, you discover at the end of the second episode where her character development leads to (by far my favorite scene in the whole series--seriously, just watch it, people), and that gives you an incentive to keep watching because that girl is NOT the same spoiled princess you've spent some time with. Volume 1 of the manga centers around Yona's pampered life and childhood memories, before any character development takes place, and she is definitely your classic helpless princess in distress. Do yourself a favor and don't give up just yet!! Her story gives room for fantastic character development, and it definitely doesn't disappoint. If you don't have the patience to sit around waiting for the English translation of the manga to be released every few months to be hooked, watch the anime and get a feel for Yona's journey. You'll be glad you did. *Yona of the Dawn* has something for everyone. Action, humor, a bit of romance, lovable

characters, a controversial and complex villain that you love to hate, a strong fantasy-like appeal (it's pretty clean stuff--no nudity, witchcraft, hardcore magic and spells, etc. that often comes with the fantasy genre; I personally like fantasy that way, but I know others that see it as a sort of watered down coffee), and an overall engaging story. I HIGHLY recommend it, though don't judge the whole story and Yona's character on this one section.

I'm going to begin my effusive praise of this volume strangely: neither the heroine Yona nor the basic plotline are anything particularly new or innovative. After all, how many dethroned-royal stories can you name, just from mangas? And as for Yona, while she becomes steadily more interesting and heroic as the story progresses, she's never terribly complex or innovative as a character. So what makes this series shine? Why would I give it five stars? Because originality is great, but it is not the end-all measure of quality, as we often forget. We may have seen the deposed-royal storyline a hundred times, but rarely have we seen it done so well. The supporting cast sparkles; Hak, Yoon, Tae-Jun, and the Dragon Warriors are all fascinating and endlessly entertaining, with fully realized character arcs and personalities. And really, can we ever have too many stories extolling the virtues of determination, hard work, and altruism? They may be virtues we hear a lot about, but we can always do with another reminder. This series is smart. It's enormous fun. And it's populated with characters that you will remember for years to come. You'll be doing yourself an enormous disservice if you don't give it a chance.

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