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Berserk, Vol. 1



Synopsis

Created by Kentaro Miura, Berserk is manga mayhem to the extreme - violent, horrifying, and mercilessly funny - and the wellspring for the internationally popular anime series. Not for the squeamish or the easily offended, Berserk asks for no quarter - and offers none! His name is Guts, the Black Swordsman, a feared warrior spoken of only in whispers. Bearer of a gigantic sword, an iron hand, and the scars of countless battles and tortures, his flesh is also indelibly marked with The Brand, an unholy symbol that draws the forces of darkness to him and dooms him as their sacrifice. But Guts won't take his fate lying down; he'll cut a crimson swath of carnage through the ranks of the damned - and anyone else foolish enough to oppose him! Accompanied by Puck the Elf, more an annoyance than a companion, Guts relentlessly follows a dark, bloodstained path that leads only to death...or vengeance.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This ultraviolent fantasy manga is the first in a series about a cursed lone wanderer with a tragic fate and a cast of bio-horror demons. Deserving its name, Berserk offers a montage of merciless violence and thrilling action sequences in a blend of pure fantasy and graphic horror. Set in a netherworld of a science fiction Dark Age, the story's antihero is the appropriately named Guts (he's shameless, relentless and all strength). Guts is on a quest to avenge a flesh-eating demon ruler and lift his demon curse. Guts carries the sign of the curse on his neck - a mysterious brand that attracts evil demons, spirits and the undead. Armed with a massive sword and metal

cannonball-shooting prosthetic arm, he maneuvers through a cast of oddities: a pus and blood fetus monster, a giant cobra and an Aliens-like biomechanical monster. They all plague him in nightmares and waking life. Anyone who interacts with Guts is doomed, too, as either his victim or the incidental sufferer of his demon adversaries, and he winds up leaving a trail of carnage in every direction. Guts's unlikely companion, Puck, is an androgynous, winged elf who possesses magic healing powers, and while Guts scoffs at the sprite, Puck proves to be an invaluable buddy. Published in Japan in 1989, this work has a style characteristic of other 1980s manga, with sparse dialogue, spectacular action sequences and gritty character art. The pencil shading and use of shadows lend an ominous tone, and the frenetic and intense pace make Berserk a strong addition to the fantasy-horror manga genre. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

I've been hearing about Berserk more or less since I really got into manga, but it was only recently that I truly decided to look into it. I had heard that it was violent and bloody, but I never thought much of it, believing it would be something along the lines of Rurouni Kenshin or Yu Yu Hakusho. I could not have been farther from the truth. And I could not be happier about it. Berserk is truly the single most violent and gory manga I have ever come across, but the story is intriguing enough to keep me engaged. The story itself follows a man named Guts. Yes, Guts, like intestines. It's actually quite fitting considering how many times **SPOILER** he slices someone in half. Guts is a main character I feel we don't see enough of in manga: an antihero. He's not the virtuous knight in shining armor. He's rude, he's crude, he's violent, and more often than not he comes off as a psychopathic jerk. But for some reason, I still enjoy his character. Most of the time it seems he's fueled solely by anger and revenge, but that's what makes the few short moments when he seems to truly care all the more special. We don't see any of Guts past explained in this volume, but we get hints that he's been through something horrible. It's enough to keep you coming back for more. Now as for the artwork, I must admit I was a bit taken aback for a moment. Most of my life, I've dealt with much lighter artwork and stories. However, within a few pages, I began to fall in love with the artwork of Berserk. The shading is very heavy on most pages, something that usually doesn't go over so well in manga. Heavy shading can quickly make things blur together and disappear so that you have no idea what's going on the page, but not in this case. Kentaro Miura somehow manages to heavily shade nearly every panel and somehow build in incredible amount of depth with his images, and without making the panels look too busy. Now I'm going to talk about the one thing that seems to turn most people away from Berserk (besides the gore). The pricetag. Many of the volumes went

out of print in the last couple of years, and scalpers are ready to take advantage of the hardcore fans. Check the prices of certain volumes, and you're looking at a price of \$50-\$2000. Yes, you read that right. I've seen a copy of an out of print volume listed in "fair to poor condition" for \$2000. Do NOT pay over \$20 for these books. Dark Horse, the English publisher of Berserk, is aware of the scarcity and the pricejacking. They are currently reprinting the series in order of scarcity. I myself am an impatient little narwhal, but I'm also a frugal one. I overpaid for two of the volumes before doing any major research to see if there would be a reprinting. I don't plan to make that mistake again. My lessons to you today, my darlings, is to just be patient. Dark Horse is working toward fixing the scarcity issues. Only buy the volumes when the price is right. Now, my word of warning to all of you who are new to this series: Nothing can really prepare you for this series. It's violent, and bloody, it's downright disgusting at times. There is sex, and nudity, and even rape. There are demons and monsters so horribly ugly that you've never seen the like, even in your worst nightmares. I've read manga like Attack on Titan. It pales in comparison, in my humble opinion. This series is hellish in all the right ways, and it's got this gal hooked. I love everything about it so far, and I plan to stay with it for the long haul.

This review is strictly for the Manga: 'Berserk'. This review and the text it is laid out in is the opinion of the author. The Berserk manga is one of the best stories I have ever read. I initially watched the old anime and decided to read the book and I must say I am blown away by the depth of the story. The hero will take some getting used to, but he grows on you. The villains will leave you in disgust, and you will not be able to stop turning the pages. This is a great series, and it is definitely a worthwhile read. This is an adult manga, and features extreme violence, nudity, and all the other things that add depth to a story. Don't miss this epic... you won't regret it.

Finally Berserk came to kindle. Maybe Kentaro got tired of me clicking the kindle request button :) The image quality is decent, not much difference from the old hardcopies I have seen. I was hoping that these ones would come with the intro colour pages like the digital copies in Japan come with but beggars can't be choosers. Normally I wouldn't buy 38 volumes for over 300 bucks but this was the exception.... because it's Berserk :) Hopefully the digital copies sell well to convince the other digital holdouts in Japan to change their minds and stop leaving money on the table.

This review is about the Kindle edition itself - Berserk is Berserk - you know it's in the running for the greatest manga of all time and a masterwork of literature. BLUF: If you really want to read the

manga, go to a website or get a manga downloader. However, this is a great way to show support for the artist if you don't want to buy the physical copies whether due to cost or because it takes up too much space. The fidelity of scans is very good and about the same as the best scanlation sites. I haven't seen any errors in terms of scan-in. However, due to Kindle software limitations, I would consider this to be inferior to a manga. The most important reason is the Kindle doesn't allow you to view two-page spreads. Some of Miura's best artwork is when he combines two pages for one image and the Kindle only lets you view a page at a time. Further, you can't zoom in or out like you would for a website. On the plus side, you have the advantage of a lower price, no shipping, and no space required for the physical book.

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