



Phoenix, Vol. 4: Karma

Osamu Tezuka

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This fourth volume of Osamu Tezuka's acclaimed Phoenix saga is set in 8th-century Japan. Fate brings together the hideously deformed mass murderer Gao and the handsome and gifted woodcarver Akanemaru when Gao cripples Akanemaru. They part, but their destinies remain inextricably linked as their spirits are tested in a series of personal and professional trials.

Phoenix, Vol. 4: Karma Details

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Author : Osamu Tezuka

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Lord says

Another great volume. I must say I slightly prefer sci-fi settings of Phoenix to historical ones and also I don't believe that people reincarnate as animals but still this book is far from disappointment. And the art improved from the former parts of this awesome series.

Jerome Cristoffer says

So far this is my favourite volume of Osamu Tezuka's Phoenix series. I love the Buddhist theme, the shocking moments that reflect the Buddhist value/thought of what life is, the character development of Gao, and the amazing art. The art in this volume is really a spectacle that will please the reader's eyes.

Dylan Benedict says

Despite them all being so good each volume blows me away with how powerful they are.

Chris Moon says

This is a graphic novel about art and spirituality; not as separate themes but as a single, central idea. Tezuka wields these themes expertly, addressing how true art (not commercial product) comes ultimately from somewhere else beyond training and technique, and the degree of sacrifice required! If you're willing to read deep enough, as a Western reader you might find parallels to Kandinsky's 'Concerning the Spiritual in Art', but that might be forgetting that there's also a great story here and not just philosophical musings.

Like the rest of the Phoenix series, Tezuka continues to challenge the reader with ideas of good and evil, the meaning of religion, politics, the purpose of civilization, etc. Personally I think this is the best of the lot, though Future and Nostalgia are also fantastic in their own ways.

Aurora says

I get the feeling this would cross the line from really interesting to total genius if I knew anything about Japanese art or history. It's still pretty great, but if you don't get the references it runs a little long. Not my favorite in the series, but a solid installment.

Ian Forsyth says

My favorite Phoenix volume. Inspiring you to follow any artistic relief you deeply feel the need to release, with the tale of the two sculptors who have their fates crossed across each other's lives.

Moonglum says

I read this amazing book in about 2 hours while laughing and crying. It is a Buddhist story set in 8th century Japan following 2 people whose fates are inextricably linked. One is a one armed ex-serial killer and bandit, the other is a buddhist monk/wood carver. I think what makes the story so beautiful is that it shows people honestly. It sees how we are all just part of nature, and how anyone can come to commit the most hurtful or most kind acts.

Richmond says

A moving tale about how a cold blooded murderer can still have more compassion and virtue than most. This is not your average story about the redemption of a lout with a heart of gold, this comic is unflinchingly thoughtful and convincing.

M.M. Strawberry Reviews says

Thus is one of the Phoenix volumes that is set in the past, and is a pretty neat piece of science fiction. Saruta is in this story, and his life is crappy like before (and after) it's hard to not feel sorry for him given his inauspicious (through no fault of his own) start in life, although that certainly doesn't excuse what he did to Akanemaru. The ending is satisfying in its own way.

fonz says

Compleja y ambiciosa historia en su aparente sencillez, ya que este tebeo trata sobre nada menos que el viaje de la vida; la redención, la espiritualidad, la reencarnación, el arte y la religión (la religión organizada entendida como herramienta de control y cohesión social). Inolvidable la escena en la que la muchacha Buchu se caga en la mano de una estatua gigante de Buda, jamás se había expresado visualmente con tanta gracia y precisión el castizo exabrupto, "me cago en tu Dios". Definitivamente, el tebeo japonés está en otro nivel.

Erik Niells says

The Phoenix series is remarkable, but this book is the real masterpiece in the longer series. It can be read without reading any of the others, as Phoenix is a series of related stories set in both the past and future with each story centered around the mythical firebird.

When a misshapen and murderous brute maims a sculptor who has offered him hospitality, their destinies are linked. The book is an intricate study of both men, with nuanced characterizations and both redemption and ruin. The way each of them responds to a brush with the immortal bird is unexpected and fascinating.

The art is also some of Tezuka's best, with intricately rendered scenes of 8th-century Japan (especially of the magnificent Buddhist temple which plays a pivotal role). The art is appealing and with a cartoony touch, but is not in the stereotypical style most American's think of when they hear the word Manga. I'm a big fan of Tezuka's, and he created mountains of work, but thus far, this is my favorite.

Joshua says

keeps getting better, I hope it doesn't peak here, as there is another 8 volumes.

I've just started reading Tezuka, and I am still in constant awe of everything he is able to pull off... maybe I'll try and give a good review once I've gotten through the whole thing...

Emilia P says

A little too much about politics and grudges held. But some great reincarnation stuff (recalls of other parts of the saga) and some really great stuff about the importance/danger of idol-sculpting. Overall, this book looked and flowed as well or better than its predecessors in this saga, so I can't complain.

Phillip says

[Gao, the killer, is missing an arm and an eye due to an accident on the day he was born. The villagers were not kind to him and that explains how he became a crass murderer.

Akamaru, the sculptor, is assaulted by Gao and left with his arm weakened for life. Gao picks up a companion who lives with him on the run.

Akamara is destined to be set upon one spi

dh Lee says

Life is but a journey. We must be aware that it's not what's given to us but what attitude and actions we take towards them that shapes the journey. The name of the journey is Karma.
