

The God of High School: Volume One

Yongje Park

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A teenager who's skilled at fighting is invited to participate in a battle contest in the graphic novel *The God of High School*.

Mori Jin, a seventeen-year-old trained in Taekwondo by his grandfather, has never been defeated in almost 300 fights. He's selected to compete in the "God of High School" competition sponsored by a mysterious organization; it's a one-on-one fighting tournament consisting of several matches in a "win and advance" format. Some of his fellow participants are amiable; others are rude and focused on victory.

The competition includes a variety of actual martial arts styles as well as imaginative new elements, resulting in techniques that are fun and fantastic, yet somewhat grounded in reality. Concepts from video games also feature into the story, whose fighters track their strength and stamina levels, along with other statistics.

The book has a dynamic, sometimes manic energy. Tongue-in-cheek humor pairs with imaginative fight scenes to create an entertainment whirlwind, further enhanced by multiple art styles. Most of the book is drawn in a classic anime style, but there are realistic renderings and occasions when, to maximize a jokey moment, the characters are shown with a simplified cartoon appearance before the book shifts back to normal in the next panel.

Concluding with a mesmerizing battle against a formidable opponent, *The God of High School* is an action-packed martial arts graphic novel.

PETER DABBENE (November / December 2023)

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