



# Unico

*Osamu Tezuka*

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## Unico Osamu Tezuka

Unico is a little unicorn with the power to bring happiness to those who love him. But when the goddess of beauty, Venus, sees the good fortune he brings to mortals, she orders him flung across the world! On his journey, Unico meets new companions - human, animal and otherwise - and learns what a true friend really is. From Osamu Tezuka, internationally beloved creator of Astro Boy, comes an adorable adventure for kids and parents alike!

## Unico Details

Date : Published April 23rd 2013 by Digital Manga Publishing (first published June 10th 1983)

ISBN : 9781569703120

Author : Osamu Tezuka

Format : Paperback 410 pages

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# From Reader Review Unico for online ebook

## Russell Grant says

A children's manga from Tezuka that really works. Unico is a unicorn that is banished from his home, with each chapter being a new story of where he ends up before being swept off again. It's basically an episodic fairy tale, but there's a real sense of sadness in all the stories despite the humour and charm that Tezuka has. Add in the typical gorgeous art and it's worth checking out.

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## Dave Ferraro says

While I am a big champion of all-ages titles, there are those few that are just a bit too cute, to the point where they kind of grate on your teeth. And unfortunately Unico falls under that umbrella. As a unicorn, Unico brings lifelong happiness to anyone who loves him, and when jealous Venus sees how happy the beautiful Psyche is to be with him, she snatches him from her, and whisks him away, with no memory, across time and space. Unfortunately for her, Unico is so kind and lovable that everywhere he finds himself, he manages to find someone to love him and bring happiness to, so he is continually being transplanted to a new life, with no memory of the previous ones. This gets very repetitive after awhile. The scenarios are slightly different each time, with a different era as the backdrop, whether it be the American West or Imperial Russia, but he faces the same problems time and again, and everything tends to be wrapped up with a neat little bow. And every time, Unico begs for a little more time to see his friends to happiness, which he always manages. So, the variety is really lacking in this book, especially by the end of its 400 pages. It would help if Unico was an interesting character, but he is just so passive, wanting only to be loved and be kind. This is, however, a children's book, so I want to give it props for being an enjoyable, light read with Disney-esque characters that kids will like. And the cinematic storytelling keeps you turning those pages quickly. But as a \$35 omnibus aimed at collectors, this is definitely a work that fans can skip. I will say that Tezuka's art is stunning in this volume, and as it's presented here in full-color, we get some breathtaking scenes as a result.

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## Ally says

Wow. The colour in this is gorgeous. Especially the skies and clouds.

The story is slightly insubstantial; the ending is open ended, which bothered me. And there's a delightful kind of absurdity, where references to modern media are made by characters living far in the past.

I'm not sure what else to say?? I really liked reading this. It's super cute and reminds me of being young, and loving stories about unicorns and myths.

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## Pretty Literate Opossum says

Read for The Tezuka Challenge. Details can be found [here](#).  
Unico

It's safe to say that unicorns have massive appeal for children and adults who love fantasy. I prefer the Gothic unicorn over "horse with a horn" that passes for unicorns these days, but this design takes the cake because well look at this baby

He's like a puppy-faced Shetland pony with the hair of a newborn.

And that's a big part of **What Works** in Unico.

- **Unico is stinkin' cute.** I wanna root for him because he's a walking marshmallow of sweetness. He portrays different levels of kindness, from being overall sweet to needing to be firm in order to assure happiness to those who love him. He's a good kid.

- **The Four Loves.** When we think of love in the contemporary perspective, the first one we tend to jump onto is *Eros*, the kind of affection shared between lovers. But when exploring love in *Unico*, we get 'em all-- *storage* (the love of family), *philia* (the love of friends), *eros* (romantic love), *agape* (unconditional, godly love). And I like that we get to see these different loves firsthand (view spoiler).

### **What Doesn't**

-**Tipi.** God dammit, not this again. I mean, the kid romance between him and Mary is cute, (view spoiler), but we got some problems here.

First thing to address, the kid's name is Tipi.

*Tipi.*

That's like naming a kid Cabin or Yurt. It doesn't work.

Secondly, it's pretty clear that this is a general depiction of Native Americans and their conflict with European settlers who intruded upon their land. It's...

It wasn't as simple as them not liking each other. (view spoiler)

It's a similar problem to how indigenous peoples of Africa were portrayed in *Jungle Emperor Leo*, wherein the author was exposed to media imported from the West that presented a singular interpretation of a minority, and he was therefore influenced by this example when creating his own story. Probably *Little Hiawatha*, if Tipi's design is anything to judge by.

Again, it's an example of the author not knowing any better, especially someone from Japan trying to write a story about Native Americans without much knowledge of the people, but it's still not a good example of representation. Keep that in mind when reading this part of *Unico*.

If Tezuka wanted to do a similar concept with a little more dignity to it, what about the Ainu/Ezo people struggling to assimilate into Japanese society and two kids from each group hitting it off? It can be a difficult subject to broach with a story aimed at children, but the same can be said about Native American-European relations.

- **Corn is a whole lot cuter** . This is a problem because Unico's a cute enough boy as it is, and then I see Corn and I immediately fell in love. You can't make a one-shot character infinitely cuter than your main character and not do anything notable with her. I'd read a whole book about her adventures. That's my hot take, you can fight me on this.

-**The binding in this book.** It's a sturdy hardcover book, the pages aren't gonna fall out anytime soon if you handle your books with care. However, the pages have some of the dialog hidden or clipped the closer it is to the spine of the book. It got to a point where I needed to guess what people were saying when reading.

And the Sphinx's mother died in his story, so that's another one for the--

**Mother Kill Count: 2**

### **How Does It Hold Up?**

The Tipi story got to me, y'all. And it's the first one in the book! But the rest of these stories are quite charming, my personal favorites being with the sphinx child and the kingdom far, far away with the princess and the cursed-faced king. *And Corn's entire existence.*

I weep over cute characters not getting enough time in the spotlight.

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### **Melle says**

I loved this book, but I cannot in good conscience recommend it without some pretty strong reservations. Third grade Melissa would have loved this book. Loved. Unquestioningly, uncritically, and uncaringly loved. Thirty-four year-old Melissa would have loved this book, too, except for some very problematic elements such as a stereotypical and romanticized depiction of Plains Indian cultures and a character named Tipi. Being from Japan, Osamu Tezuka probably had not been exposed to the rich realities of Turtle Island's Indigenous nations and cultures, so I cannot fault him as the creator of this work, but I can fault the publishing, distribution, and book-selling industries, and, indeed, my library profession, for continuing to allow the perpetuation of these stereotypes. There are good things in this book -- there are motifs of love and charity and doing good for others, there is some truly gorgeous art, and there are unicorns. I loved those aspects. However, those positive aspects that could have made this one of my favorite reads of 2014 don't make up for the misinformed and unrepresentative depiction of Turtle Island's Indigenous people.

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### **Verasaurus says**

This book is cute in a prescient way, Unico's proportions are eerily similar to the new "my little pony" designs that have grown men wanting to romance horses all over the world. The stories are subversively dark and twisted too, which is to be expected from Tezuka. A lot of fun.

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### **Anna Fisher says**

Banished by Venus, Unico is destined to never stay long in any one place and instantly forgets everything about himself, and the place he was in, the minute the West Wind comes to take him to a new place. Each section takes on a similar theme.

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## **Allanna says**

It's a bit different from the anime I watched (and loved ... and, after my older daughter read this REPEATEDLY, I HAD to buy the DVD) ... there are a lot more stories, and in different order. But it was really cute.

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## **Brandon Telg says**

Osamu Tezuka is one of the few heroes I have. In my quest to read everything from this insanely prolific writer, I sometimes read epic science fiction commentaries on life and the universe, and sometimes I end up reading a children's book about a unicorn looking for friends. I don't think that I would have ever picked up this book had it not been written by Tezuka, even if Unico is an iconic character in Japan (as are most of Tezuka's creations).

The long and short of it is that, like all of Tezuka's other books for children, this isn't dumbed down for kids. There's a real heart to this series with real morals and some heavy lessons. The basic premise is that in each chapter, Unico is taken somewhere different in the world and forgets all of his memories, so the character of Unico is really only a framing device to allow Tezuka to write a whole bunch of different scenarios in diverse landscapes, which is one of his specialties. In fact, I really liked the fact that what I got here was essentially an anthology of Tezuka's creative storytelling.

If you dig Tezuka, you'll really enjoy this. If not, you may not be able to get past the cutesy unicorn protagonist (unless that's your thing). Otherwise, it's a genuinely good book to pick up for your kids (after you buy them Astro Boy, of course!).

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## **Naty says**

My opinion is heavily skewed. I loved the Unico movies as a kid. Wore out the vhs tapes, loved them. Reading the manga now as an adult, all I can see are flaws.

Banished by Venus, Unico is fated to never stay long in any one place and instantly forget everything about himself, and the place he was in, the minute the West Wind comes to take him to a new place. Each chapter follows a similar format. The main character shows Unico one act of kindness and Unico attaches himself to that character, standing by them even when they bully him and take advantage of his magic for their own selfish wants. The character's selfishness lands them in trouble and then Unico saves them before being taken away by the West Wind.

Unico is incredibly co-dependent and nearly everyone he meets is a selfish bully. It's rough enough that Unico has to start over in every new place, but it's really upsetting to see all the characters he interacts with taking advantage of his passive and sweet nature. On the whole it's not a good message about friendship.

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## **Allison says**

This was the second Tezuka manga and I read, and I really really loved it. The art is gorgeous and fun (and full color O.O) and the dialogue is adorable and interesting. It's amazing how attached you can get to characters who are only in one short chapter. It's a testament to how well written they are. The book is a bit repetitive and very heavy on message/themes, but the characters and settings within each chapter are so

creative that you can still enjoy it as an adult. Maybe I'm just partial because Unico is so cute. Excuse me, I'm off to go watch the tv series again!

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## **Dolores says**

Told in vignettes, this book tells of the adventures of a unicorn who has unwittingly earned the wrath of the goddess Venus. This is a hefty book for younger readers, but since each chapter is complete, it can be read in stages. Plenty of action, adventure and humor here, with lots of kid appeal.

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## **Chris Cabrera says**

I've been exploring what I can of Tezuka in English and came across this Kickstarter funded project released recently and decided to pick it up. I've been delving into different realms of the author - Barbara and Apollo's song seem to deviate from the Astro Boy facade plastered on Tezuka by being both realist and adult oriented and Princess Knight, what would become a springboard for the shojo manga genre, was a strange blend of coming-of-age and a disney fairy tale. Then there were the earliest science fiction works (Metropolis, Lost World, Next World) that I read but did not necessarily like...

Unico fits into this scattered portrait of Tezuka that I've come up with myself closest to Princess Knight: it's definitely not as dark as his later works (Barbara, Ayako), it's definitely somewhat aimed at children but there is still enough charm to bring in adult readers and themes that aren't necessarily kid friendly (it was the blood, violence, and love affairs and kissing that made me think Unico was not so kid friendly...for Princess Knight it was definitely the gender issue!). The storytelling, in which Unico is transported to a new place in time each chapter, is definitely Tezuka - it allowed him to work with a number of different scenarios, characters, and places under the same book. Tezuka tackles that challenge with ease; his imagine is so vast. It helps the reader as well in establishing a kind of new story each time, keeping the narrative fresh and preventing it from dragging. He originally used this in his popular Phoenix series and later in Apollo's song as well...I honestly thought that Unico, with its lighthearted approach would be something written his earlier time...it's amazing how he wrote all this manga at different periods.

What else is amazing is, again, like many Tezuka's works, the ability of Tezuka to make his manga timeless. Many of the themes and places in the vignettes, from the future to the distant past, are all still relevant in the 21st century. The themes of love, sacrifice, race, etc. are all still relevant and Tezuka's ability to create characters and backdrops for them that can still be read without an extensive glossary is amazing. In particular was the, perhaps now cliché, story about the machine falling in love with a little girl that critiques both pollution and technology over human beings.

Besides being just adorable, Unico is also a very interesting character for his humility, loyalty, and self-sacrifice. His eyes were also down cast, almost sad and pitiful, and very lonely. I felt that he embodied the traits of a character from one of Kenji Miyazawa's fairy tales, meek, very submissive, and self sacrificing.

The ending was a little troubling - it is open ended but Tezuka does close with a summation of Unico's adventures that makes a lot sense but is not something the reader (or at least, myself) was able to see in retrospect, being so engulfed in the individual struggles.

This book is a bit pricey but I suppose it makes sense that it costs three times a typical manga because it

compiles about three volumes of stories (it is a thick book) and is in brilliant color all the way through to boot. if the cost is a bit off putting.

Great for kids and also for manga geeks - Unico is a visually pleasing all-color experience that has stood the test of time.

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### **Jason Keenan says**

<https://101booksjapan.blogspot.ca/>

I am probably not the best person to review Tezuka. No matter what I love it. Whether it's a dark title like MW or something aimed at a younger audience like Unico, I'm hooked.

I think maybe because Tezuka is always mapping out universal truths - the cruelties we perform on each other, the power of love to redeem us, and just how much good we can do by doing good.

In Unico it's a sweet baby unicorn who is the victim of a jealous and vindictive Greek goddess who offers the lesson in a number of stories in different times and places in history.

This is manga at its most uplifting - and well worth reading no matter how old you are.

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### **Emilia P says**

I am coming out of a weirdly long Goodreads sabbatical to tell you. Guys, this book is great. It's so great. Unico is so cute. The story is totally get-into-able. AND it's in full color, people!! Pretty well done full color! Tezukaaaaa I love you! Unico is cursed by Aphrodite, so he has to keep being carried to random places by the west wind, where he does wonderful good deeds for people (and cats and baby sphinxes!) who show him kindness and love. It's ridiculous, and sweetsy, but I really like the different worlds he went to, storybooks, Midsummer Night's Dream, imperial Russia, and of course, a near-future dystopia where a factory is in love with a little girl. Yes. A factory. Lots of silly animals, fairies, flowers, weirdness, delightfulness. And happy endings, every time. Thank goodness. We could all use a story like this every once in a while.

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