

Gosick

ANIME REVIEW



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7.5/10

Mystery/crime anime always have a common theme: the main cast solve a few cases then get a really big case and it turns out the villain behind the really big case had something or the other to do with the smaller cases they had solved earlier. And then the show ends.

Gosick moves in a completely different direction. It begins in post World War I Europe, where a young Japanese boy named Kazuya Kujo moves to the small country of Saubure as an exchange student. Made to clean his school's library tower as punishment, Kujo finds himself on the building's topmost floor, where he befriends a girl named Victorique. The two then start aiding Victorique's half brother, who is a police officer, in solving a few criminal cases around town. This goes on till around the halfway mark.

The show then expands into something completely different. Strategically-located between European power-houses, Saubure is at the centre of political agitation as World War II starts to shake things up. On one hand are the progressives, trying to make people move in the direction of science, and on the other hand are the Occultists, fiercely holding onto values and ideals of days gone by. The power struggle between the two groups suddenly focuses on Victorique, as she is the descendent of an almost extinct clan that has been blessed with special intellect. At the same time, neither group want their association with the said clan becoming public knowledge since much of Saubure thinks the clan are impure.

The show tells two very different tales. While the first half is basically a detective story with a few minor alterations, the latter half turns it into an action-filled Shonen fantasy. The two nearly isolated genres can seem confusing but the execution is nearly perfect. The art is rich and detailed and parts of the soundtrack are nothing short of amazing.

The characters make a bittersweet impression. Kujo is determined to prove his worth, especially since he grew up in the shadow of two overachieving brothers. Having been 'hidden' for much of her life, Victorique doesn't have the best social skills and has a really difficult time opening up to people. That begins to change with her relationship with Kujo. While the general plot of the anime is nothing short of unconventional, the relationship between our two leads is taken right out of an Anime Cliché 101 book. But I suppose they can be forgiven. But Victorique's lack of expression becomes an issue. Surely a young girl whose life has just been turned upside down would have a more colourful reaction.

Overall, Gosick is a highly engaging show and the little hints it leaves along the way is a rewarding way to unravel the final plot. If you enjoy a twist in the detective genre and don't mind a bit of politics, fantasy and everything else thrown in, take a look.

CREEPY CRYPTIDS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM

MASNOON KHAIR

Cryptozoology is the study of animals whose existence has not been proven by mainstream science. These "cryptids" are at times legendary – such as the Loch Ness Monster and the Bigfoot. But on the other hand, creatures once dismissed as hoaxes – such as the Komodo dragon and even the giant squid, have been formally recognised. The earth is home to millions of creatures, most yet undiscovered – with that in mind we present some cryptids who may well someday prove to be real.

What: The Mongolian Death Worm

Where: The Gobi Desert, Mongolia

Why should I be afraid? : This creature is a freakishly large, fat, red worm that measures up to 3 to 5 feet long. Mongolian locals claim to have seen these around the desert, attacking unsuspecting victims by spewing acid from its mouth. An acid so strong that anything it touches is "burnt dead." If that isn't scary enough, these horrors are also known to kill at a distance with an electric discharge. Shocking...

Oh God! Is it real?: Most Mongolian locals living around the desert believe that the death worm is real. At the same time, several eyewitness records exist and there even have been many expeditions to search for this death worm – although without ever finding one. Some scientists offer the explanation that these might be a sort of venom-spitting snake, worm lizards or the effects of strong local liquor.

What: Ahool

Where: The rainforests of Java, Indonesia

Why should I be afraid?: These are enormous carnivorous bats with large eyes, monkey-like heads, large claws and bodies covered in gray fur. To add to this nightmare -- they are believed to have a wingspan as long as 12 feet, twice the size of the largest known bat (*not* Batman). Locals report that they fatally sink their teeth into the victim's neck and snatch them away. Did we mention that the victims are mostly humans?

Oh God! Is it real?: The deep rainforests of Java harbor lots of long-wing-spanned creatures, including owls and eagles. Ahools are generally considered to be mistaken glimpses of large birds of prey in the remote forests, since they have a tendency to dive bomb people with their claws deep into the night.

What: Dobhar-chú

Where: Lakes and rivers of Ireland

Why should I be afraid?: This creature is a legendary otter-like animal that supposedly lives in the isolated rivers and lakes of Ireland. They are known to attack humans and dogs, often dragging their victims into the water while making a haunting screech. To ruin your dreams of running away from it, a few stories claim that they are not only fast in water, but also able to keep up with a horse on land.

Oh God! Is it real?: The Dobhar-chú have been documented by eyewitnesses, even recently, and is said to have attacked people throughout the years. In Ireland, there are at least two well-known gravesites -- dating back to 1772 -- which suggest that victims were killed by this creature, even providing a drawing of what the beast looked like. A good swim in the Irish waters might uncover what exactly is making seafood out of people.

