



Cells at Work! 1

Akane Shimizu

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A BLOOD-PUMPING JOB

Strep throat! Hay fever! Influenza! The world is a dangerous place for a red blood cell just trying to get her deliveries finished. Fortunately, she's not alone... she's got a whole human body's worth of cells ready to help out! The mysterious white blood cell, the buff and brash killer T cell, the nerdy neuron, even the cute little platelets -- everyone's got to come together if they want to keep you healthy!

Collects chapters #1-4

Cells at Work! 1 Details

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From Reader Review Cells at Work! 1 for online ebook

Stewart Tame says

Even by manga standards, this is an odd premise. Depicted on the front cover are Red Blood Cell and White Blood Cell, and through their adventures, we get an anime style tour of the circulatory system populated by anthropomorphic cells of various sorts--macrophages, killer T cells, platelets, etc. Red is plucky, cheerful, and determined. White is mysterious, and deadly in a fight. There seems to be no major story arc. Each chapter introduces a new facet of the world these two inhabit, teaching us about the biology of the human body. It's quite fun, and I have a feeling that some of these visuals are going to spring to mind unbidden the next time I have a cold. I'm kind of curious how long this series can possibly last. The premise, while unique and clever, would seem to be inherently limiting. Eventually the body will have been thoroughly explored, but I'm skeptical that my interest will be held even that long. For the moment, though, I'm loving it. Recommended!

Jasmine says

Absolutely delightful. I learned things! I felt affectionate towards my immune system! I wanted someone to be supervising those platelets!

Hannah Heath says

This is the best. Seriously. So clever and fun and educational in the best possible way. The depictions of each cell/organism in human form is spot on....Particularly the platelets. They're adorable.

Full review coming to Constant Collectible soon.

Soli says

4???

Funny, clever and with all the magic of manga!

También tiene anime y esta en emision :)

Bogi Takács says

If you are Hungarian and about my age, you have probably grown up watching the French cartoon "Il était une fois... la vie", which teaches you about various health conditions by showing the adventures of anthropomorphized cells inside the body.

This is exactly like that, except gleefully throwing a bunch of manga tropes at the premise.

Now googling this, it turns out it was a French-Japanese-Swiss-Italian co-production, so maybe the author was familiar with it? In either case, this comic is significantly more violent and bloody. White blood cells are just brutal!

I was afraid the women characters would end up being oversexualized, but there were no panty shots and the like. People were busy fighting giant bloody battles. The characters were quite stereotyped, but I definitely got the impression this was done on purpose and with great abandon.

This volume was quite short (the book is a bit padded with advertisements with other series) but a fun ride regardless, I already reserved the next two volumes at the library.

Source of the book: Lawrence Public Library

Majo says

¡Aprender es divertido! Lástima que ya no tengo clases de biología, sino esto me hubiera sido muy útil.

Un manga muy gracioso y bizarro que tiene como protagonistas a nuestras propias células.

Chihoe Ho says

"Cells at Work!" is literally the story of cells at work. But these body cells of ours take humanoid form and are in this fantastical world that is our body, which is constantly invaded by foreign agents. A pollen allergy causes hysteria, an influenza virus turns cells to zombies, a scrape wound reveals overlooked heroes - these set off a chain reaction that introduces us to a range of cellular characters. Our protagonist Red Blood Cell is spunky and White Blood Cell is a brooding potential love interest.

Not sure what their jobs are? No worries, "Cells at Work!" explains it to you in the most digestible way. This is by far the most educational manga I have ever read, and also simplistically imaginative and adorable. I wonder what else they can do in terms of forming an overarching narrative since they seem like pretty isolated story arcs. I am highly entertained by this series off the bat so I'll be checking out the next few volumes. Even if it's just for the Platelets - they are just too cute!

Miriam says

Gripping narrative! Likeable characters! So cute! Educational!

Seriously, if we had read this in middle school I might have actually remember the biology we were

supposed to learn.

White Blood Cells are truly heroic.

My favorite chapter was the legend of the Cedar Pollen apocalypse.

Erica says

I've always been quite partial to my platelets but now I love them more than ever because they're cute!

Online Eccentric Librarian says

More reviews (and no fluff) on the blog <http://surrealtalvi.wordpress.com/>

Cells at Work is an imaginative way to learn about how the body's blood system works. Although educational, it is also fun - plenty of adventures and even a potential love interest between our hard working red blood cell protagonist and the mysterious but powerful white blood cell agent who protects her. As can be seen from the cover, all the cells look like people but the bad guys (infections, bacteria, germs, viruses) all look like monsters.

The story here is that our red blood cell works in a 'vein' factory, moving packages (oxygen). Her work is something she loves but the factory sometimes gets invaded by monsters. White blood cell armed security guards arrive and dispatch the invaders in a very bloody (ironic) and messy way. There are asides that describe the actual/real parts of the circulatory system/invaders and how they work. Those asides give just enough information to be informative but not so much that it is burdensome to read them.

A good example of the stories in this book (which admittedly in this first volume feel very 'monster of the week') is the first chapter: a pneumococcus bacteria invades and wreaks destruction on our poor red blood cells and heroine. White blood cells arrive and promptly take out the monster but not completely - he is able to hide part of himself to wait for another opportunity to invade. Along the way we learn about neutrophil, red blood cell and its job, venous valve, macrophage, lymph duct, cell capsule, pneumococcus bacteria, receptor, dendrite cell, platelet, blood clot, T helper cell, killer T cell, lymphocyte, lungs, capillary, alveolus, wandering cell, encapsulated bacteria, sneezing. And that's just the first chapter! Most chapters are fairly long in length to create a whole story arc.

How creative is this? The mangaka/author has created an extraordinary way to present biology. E.g., when the bad bacteria attacks our red blood cell, a white blood cell breaks through the ceiling and attacks him, exclaiming that white blood cells can pass between veins. The pneumococcus can use its own cell wall to protect itself - so in this case, the monster creates a shield matrix that our white blood cell has to penetrate in order to attack. There is even an encapsulation machine in the factory to capture the bad bacteria, put it in a rocket, and then eject it from the body with a sneeze!

This type of story could have been really boring or childish but owing to this being a manga, it's surprisingly

mature and never talks down to the reader. It is quite violent by American standards, yes - but when you think about it, what the human body does to protect itself is quite violent to those invaders (and the invaders are violent to the body's cells and organs). The story is quite fun with an intriguing mixture of both shounen (boys) and shoujo (girls) manga sensibilities.

As entertainment, the fights between all the different germs/bacteria/viruses and the body's systems keep readers interested. But the real value here is the creativity in explaining the human body and how it works. And well, the platelets are just so darn cute! This is genius work here anthropomorphosizing the human body's circulatory system and won several awards in Japan. Highly recommended as the perfect manga for adults to give kids. Reviewed from an advance reader copy provided by the publisher.

Nicholas Driscoll says

Fantastically imaginative representation of the human body in which the different kinds of cells are the cast, and monsters invading are bacteria and germs. The series is really educational in that it explains the cells and how they work, but also has a great sense of humor with lots of funny gags and detailed art. Ongoing story is a bit thin, though there is a slight bit of romance, and sometimes the art can get messy, but this is so fun, especially for an educational work.

Maria Ella says

AWESOMESAUCE

Lois Bujold says

I've been laughing like a loon...

Granted, to get the jokes one needs a tolerable familiarity with both manga and anime, and some grip on biology, but hey, no problem here. Or anywhere, since the work teaches you the biology as it goes, accurately as far as I can tell. Who would have thought that the tropes of action manga and anime and a tour of the function of the anthropomorphized immune system would mesh *so well*? Akane Shimizu, apparently.

Neutrophil 1146 is my new hero, heh. Although the gnomish ninja Basophil may have character development ahead, too. Dear lord, we've even had the angsty backstory about the young cells growing up in the bone marrow. The cosplay opportunities for science geeks must be ravishing.

I recently binge-watched the first seven episodes of the anime, all Crunchyroll has up so far, then backtracked to my library to discover that yes, they had an e-version of the manga for lending. It inspired me to blunder through and figure out how to get non-Kindle manga to appear on my tablet, my preferred reading mode for manga (and everything else) these days, so yay.

Gonzo inventiveness. I'm not giving it five stars only because I suspect depth of characterization is not what lies ahead, but it is highly recommended.

Ta, L. Still giggling.

Kathy says

As a librarian, I've tried to learn to embrace and appreciate graphic novels, with little success. And though I grew up loving superhero comic books, especially DC, graphic novels don't seem to be as enjoyable. (Yes, my aging may have affected that...)

But when Lois McMaster Bujold did a short review about *Cells at Work* she made it sound like it might be fun (plus, she's closer to my age than teens are!)

I **did** enjoy reading this graphic novel. It does have action, a budding "romance," etc., but along the way readers actually learn more about our bodies' cells and what the various kinds do. There's humor in the way the author relates standard storytelling to bodily functions and disease. I was chuckling frequently.

This one I did enjoy more than the other graphic novels I have read. It's a fun amalgam of styles. And a quick read. (I will mention that it is published in traditional manga-fashion, so the book is read from back to front, with the panels reading what many would consider "backwards". This takes some adaption, but this book is pretty forgiving to those who get confused. The story is still easy to understand.)

David Schaafsma says

A completely unique manga from the perspective of science/health. Red blood cells, white blood cells, killer T cells, infectious diseases. . . .neurons, platelets, as CHARACTERS in the series! Because bodies fight off disease invaders, we get manga-like battles between all these different germs/bacteria. It's essentially an entertaining educational manga series about the human body. Some of the cells are personified or anthropomorphisized (the good cells), and some of them are just monsters (the bad cells). Will Red Bllos Cell and White Cell get together?! A good way to learn science. And pretty silly, which is a good thing in learning something.

Thanks, Stewart, for recommending. Completely unique.
