



The Stratford Zoo Midnight Revue Presents Macbeth

By Ian Lendler

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The Stratford Zoo looks like a normal zoo... until the gates shut at night. That's when the animals come out of their cages to stage elaborate performances of Shakespeare's greatest works. They might not be the most accomplished thespians, but they've got what counts: heart. Also fangs, feathers, scales, and tails, in *The Stratford Zoo Midnight Revue Presents Macbeth*.

Ian Lendler's hilarious tale of after-hours animal stagecraft is perfectly paired with the adorable, accessible artwork of Zack Giallongo (*Broxo*, *Ewoks*). And with *Romeo and Juliet* coming in book two, this is a promising new series of graphic novels for young readers.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 2–5—With its gruesome murders, *Macbeth* might not seem the most obvious of Shakespeare's plays to be adapted into a children's graphic novel, but by placing the play as a story within a story, Lender and Giallongo make it work. The animals of Stratford Zoo are putting on a show—specifically *Macbeth*—starring the lion as the play's titular hero and featuring a hyena and a cast of other animals to fill out the ranks. A sanitized version of the drama is told while the animal audience makes quips, provides commentary, and hides from the zookeeper. Naturally, a child-friendly, zoo animal-filled version of the tragic play wanders a great deal from the original. The additions and changes (such as *Macbeth* eating the king with copious amounts of ketchup) serve to make the tale and the entire graphic novel a comic affair that will appeal to younger readers. All of the violence is offstage and only hinted at, not depicted, in keeping with the younger audience envisioned for this book. The artwork is bright and cartoonish, with an appealing mix of panel sizes to keep the story moving, emphasize key points, and allow for amusing little details for readers to find. Perhaps the greatest missed opportunity is that only a few times do the animal thespians use lines from the original Shakespeare and these times are not marked as such. Other than that flaw, here is a delightful introduction to the Bard's work that won't overwhelm young readers.—Elizabeth Nicolai, Anchorage Public Library, AK

Review

“. . . a wonderfully accessible, engaging, and kid-friendly adaptation of the Shakespeare classic.” *?Booklist*

“. . . a comic affair that will appeal to younger readers.” *?School Library Journal*

“*As the zookeeper locks the gates to the Stratford Zoo, the animals are just beginning to set up for their evening performance of *Macbeth* . . . Those too young to appreciate the original play will certainly grasp this cleverly anthropomorphized, lushly envisioned graphic romp.” *?Kirkus Reviews, STARRED REVIEW*

About the Author

When **Ian Lender** was younger, he really enjoyed acting in the theater. He was, however, extremely terrible at it. So he became a writer of children's books (*An Undone Fairy Tale* and *Saturday*) and non-fiction. But in order to support his family, he took a day job de-worming animals at the Stratford-on-Avon Zoo. He immediately recognized the talents of the troupe and began working with them on diction, dialect, and not eating the audience. When not working with his talented cast and crew, Ian sells lemonade on the sidewalk and plays the ukulele in San Rafael, CA.

Zack Giallongo is a professional cartoonist, cheese enthusiast, and amateur banjo-ist. Raised in the Northeast, he has a deep and instinctual love of apples, Fall, ancient gravestones, and old, crooked buildings. Although he loves all creatures great and small, his stint as an Illustration major at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth sent him down the path of comic craftsmanship rather than being a ranger or a zookeeper. His first solo graphic novel, *Broxo* is about teenage barbarians and was published in 2012. It hit #4 on the *NYT* Bestsellers list.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mary Alexander:

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