

Forum:[Hack Forums](#)

Thread: [\[Review\] Revolutionary Girl Utena \(Shoujo Kakumei Utena\)](#)

Gladly - March 30, 2016, 8:14 pm

Review - Shoujo Kakumei Utena

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Intro

Shoujo Kakumei Utena (Revolutionary Girl Utena) is a psychological shoujo that completely stands out among its genre. The show is a thought-provoking coming of age story full of tragedy, symbolism, sexuality, a variety of dark themes (won't mention due to spoilers), and idealism. In all honesty, it reminds me of Evangelion a lot with its use of symbolism and tropes. Admittedly it's a bit long at 39 episodes, but it's worth the grind.

MAL actually puts it pretty well (despite how pretentious it sounds):

"Shoujo Kakumei Utena blends surrealist imagery and ideas with complex allegories and metaphors to create a unique coming-of-age story with themes including idealism, illusions, adulthood, and identity."

Synopsis [MAL]

Spoiler ([Click to View](#))

After meeting a traveling prince who consoled her after the deaths of her parents, Utena Tenjou vowed to become a prince herself. The prince left Utena only with a ring bearing a strange rose crest and a promise that she would meet him again some day.

A few years later, Utena attends Ootori Academy, where she is drawn into a dangerous game. Duelists with rings matching Utena's own compete for a unique prize: the Rose Bride, Anthy Himemiya, and her mysterious powers. When Utena wins Anthy in a duel, she realizes that if she is to free Anthy and discover the secrets behind Ootori Academy, she has only one option: to revolutionize the world.

Story

Shoujo Kakumei Utena follows our male uniform-wearing protagonist Utena as she fights "duelists" as she searches for her prince and vows to become one herself. Trying to write out the story in words doesn't really do it justice.

The story starts off at a slightly slowish pace, and picks up a lot towards the end. Most episodes follow a similar formula, ending in a fight with another duelist, someone who wants to "revolutionize the world". The show has comedy thrown into it that is genuinely laughable and doesn't destroy the pace of the show. It also really fleshes out its cast, to the point where you really understand everyone's motives, personalities, and backstories. The only legit problem I have against the story is the three recap episodes it has.

*this show understands me

Art

Although it was animated in 1997, the art is top notch. The character design is really good (especially Utena's design), with no characters really feeling unoriginal or badly designed, outside of

background characters. The backgrounds are good too, but the visual symbolism is what shines.

Soundtrack

Shoujo Kakumei Utena's soundtrack is mostly classical and jazz, with the fights having pretty fantastic music. The show's score goes very well together with the show.

Overall

The show is a work of art. The story, art, soundtrack, and themes are all truly enjoyable all the way to the end. The opening is fantastic and I found myself unable to skip it. If you're the kind of person who thinks deeply into their shows, you'll definitely enjoy it. If you're not into that but you enjoy shoujo, I'd still recommend you watch it and give it a few episodes. Oh - and don't watch the dub, it's awful.

Rating: 9.5/10

Where can I watch it?:

Streaming:

-[Hulu](#)

-[Amazon](#)

Other:

-Buy the DVD / impossible to find Blu-Ray

- *cough* AB