

Using his newly borrowed skills, Ichigo must save his friends and family from the horrible Hollows.



## Bleach Series One, Part One

**MADE THE JUMP** Life and death blur into supercharged battles when Ichigo borrows a shinigami's powers

**Studio** Manga Entertainment **Certificate** 15 **Price** £25 **Release** 5 November

**B**leach is the latest title from popular Japanese mag **Shonen Jump** to finally make it to the UK in animated form. Like many Japanese teens (at least in anime), Ichigo's a gifted psychic and a little sick of being stalked by the spirits of the dead.

Unfortunately this ability also makes him a good snack for giant warped creatures called Hollows, who will go through his younger sisters to sniff Ichigo out. This attracts the gods of death (shinigami) known as Soul Reavers, who hunt them down and help the lost to pass over to Soul Society.

Such a Soul Reaver is Rukia, a savvy soul collector dressed in sandals and a kimono armed with a magical sword. Determined to slice and dice a Hollow that's been trailing Ichigo, she is injured in the process when he tries to be a hero, forcing her to transplant some of

her abilities in Ichigo while she recovers - however, he gets all of them.

Bleach is a striking anime in many ways, nowhere more so than Ichigo's striking crop of orange hair and the weird and wonderful Hollow character designs. The three disc set also has

more than enough episodes to get you hooked and begins to explore the complex mythology of this long-running series. It's not completely serious though, with plenty of comic relief provided by Ichigo's father and sisters as well as lion plush toy come mascot Kon. Despite being a series aimed at boys, both in its manga and anime formats, Bleach is really engaging and

entertaining, packed full of battles and scintillating sword play. If you like your anime with that supernatural tint, this is definitely one to watch.

**RATING**



## Also look at...

Alien identities with super powers and teen suicides at a prestigious school



### Kurau Phantom Memory: Volume One

**Studio** ADV Films

**Certificate** PG

**Price** £20

**Release date** Out now

**RATING**

Kurau is an elite mercenary but her powers and abilities come at a price; the loss of childhood and personality. As a 12 year old, she was involved in an accident that saw aliens called the Rynax - who exist in pairs - bind themselves to her body. Now the remaining Rynax has awakened in the form of Kurau's younger self, quickly named Christmas, and both must make massive adjustments as they learn to live together.

Kurau Phantom Memory has a lot going for it: a strong sci-fi story, a dash of science, gorgeous music, ethereal aliens but it's missing something as well. The character designs - particularly Kurau's - can sometimes look a little misplaced but the locations, which include the future Moon and Earth itself are top notch. The series might take a little getting into but is still well worth getting into.



### Red Garden Volume One

**Studio** Gonzo

**Certificate** 12

**Price** £20

**Release date** Out now

**RATING**

Released just in time for Halloween and capitalising on the recent popularity of horror titles, Red Garden is another offering from Gonzo. It's an interesting, dark series with an odd plot and strangely distinctive and delicate character designs, although the hairstyles do look as if they were coloured with Photoshop.

Kate, Rachel, Rose, and Claire's lives change forever when they are informed by mystery woman Lula that they died the previous day: so begins their journey to discover what happened and reclaim their bodies.

The hows and whys of their predicament remain the crux of the story and the spooky element is not obvious, however its subtlety makes Red Garden that extra bit entertaining. The problems had by the Japanese actors pronouncing the American names correctly aside, the mystery concerning the characters and unfamiliar locale will be enough to get you into the story and keep you wanting more. ●