

Reviewer Username: Anonymous

School: Valencia High School Grade: Junior

Book Title: *At the Edge of the Woods* Book Author: Masatsugu Ono

Rate: 3

Only around 150 pages in length, *At the Edge of the Woods* contains an eerie storyline alluding to present day experiences, such as alienation and parenthood. Following the temporary return of his pregnant wife to her parents' home in preparation for her second birth, the narrator remains at their original house near an expanse of woods, alongside his first son. With no specific plot, this book illustrates various strange occurrences the family faces after the mother's departure. Whether it be spontaneous visits from a half-naked woman and dwarves or the neighborhood's attribution of lost items to the work of mythical creatures, the speaker's mental wellbeing becomes more and more questionable. Furthermore, his child displays a deep longing for his mother and an increasingly more detached personality all the while. Meanwhile, the narrator's wife also comes across a strange woman during her train ride alone in addition to witnessing other unexplainable events outside her window.

After reading this novel, I understand that the author must have written each page with thought and intent in order to convey his message about modern life as an adult. Each peculiar event was written in a way to emphasize such a process as one transitions from adolescence, and the combination of each one combines to form some sort of fever dream. Despite Ono's careful diction and imaginative ideas apparent in his book, I myself found it a little difficult to comprehend and stay focused on the reading.

I would recommend this book for a mature audience—not because there are a lot of inappropriate scenes, but because it may be harder to comprehend without a certain degree of background information and understanding. It is a relatively light read, so I believe it would be a good use of one's free time every now and then.