



Lone Wolf and Cub, Vol. 9: Echo of the Assassin

Kazuo Koike , Goseki Kojima

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Water, death, and angry ninja take the foreground in this exciting volume of the legendary *Lone Wolf and Cub* series! A pitiful ferryboat girl discovers the tragic ways of "A Wife of the Heart," as the Lone Wolf, Ogami Itto, stands against the man she loves. In "Wayward Swords," a rogue swordsman-for-hire learns a valuable lesson about Bushido, the Way of the Warrior, from the Lone Wolf. Afterwards, Ogami once again must face the treachery of the Kurokuwa ninja clan, then becomes a river porter to foil the secret plans of his enemy, the Yagyu clan, and in doing so declares war against them all! The Lone Wolf's actions lead to a nationwide manhunt and an epic, bloody battle unlike any in comics. Don't dare miss a volume of the series that belongs on every bookshelf: *Lone Wolf and Cub*.

This volume contains the following stories:

Wife of the Heart

Wandering Samurai

Echo of the Assassin

Naked Worms

The Yagyu Letter: Prologue

Lone Wolf and Cub, Vol. 9: Echo of the Assassin Details

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Michael says

If hostilities weren't already high enough, Itto kicks them into another plane. Here he steals a secret from Yagyu that could prove dangerous to the clan. Although this is nine volumes in, it feels as though LW&C could go on for a while.

Craig says

The early chapters are relatively weak one-off stories, but better to end strong.

Helmut says

Unerwartet

Irgendwann musste es ja mal zu Ende gehen, dieses sich seit dem ersten Band immer weiter qualitätsmäßig steigern. Leider fällt der vorliegende Band im Vergleich zu den Vorgängern meines Erachtens doch deutlich ab. Die Geschichten in diesem Band, bis auf "Naked Worms" und der geschickt platzierte Prolog am Ende, enthalten nichts, was wir in sehr ähnlicher Form in der Reihe bereits gesehen hätten - sowohl zeichnerisch als auch inhaltlich. Man beachte - selbst dieser schwächere Band ist den allermeisten Comics und Mangas immer noch weit überlegen.

Herauszuheben ist deshalb insbesondere "Naked Worms", die wieder einmal einen äußerst interessanten und spannenden Blick auf einen ungewöhnlichen Aspekt des Tokugawa-Japans wirft. Voller Atmosphäre und "echten Menschen", und einem unerwarteten Ende.

Ich bin mir sicher, dass Band 10 wieder Überraschungen beinhaltet - und ich freue mich sehr darauf, ein weiteres Kapitel auf Ogami Ittos Weg in der Hölle genießen zu dürfen.

Angel ??? says

Another solid volume in the series, here we continue with the main story line, now that the wolf and his cub are back together. The short stories are good too, the best one centered on a puppeteer. By this time, the series has become like one of those TV series that may not be particularly original, but is enjoyable, and offers a product that the reader knows they like and enjoy. It is easy to read, it is nicely drawn, it has a good pace. It is not groundbreaking, but you won't be bored.

7.5/10

(Spanish translation by Geni Bigas and Yayoi Kagoshima)

Kevin Jimenez says

Consistent storytelling makes this another compelling addition in the series.

Cheese says

Things start getting interesting now that Ogami has stolen the Yahgü letter.

Another consistently fantastic volume.

Pedro says

another great volume. Sad to see how much women abuse is portrayed in the stories, how true this must be, you know?

Sometimes I think of Ogami as an oriental Sherlock. His keen perception is almost hard to be believable. The doctor story stretched a little bit of the strands of logic.

But I'm definitely eager to see what will happen to the tenth volume ' - '

Víctor Segovia says

Las palabras me quedan cortas para tratar de hacer una reseña de esta entrega. Pensé que iba a ser una de esas entregas que tendría buenas historias, pero alejadas de la historia principal. Me tomaron por sorpresa al llegar a las dos últimas, que finalmente, cambia drásticamente la situación; padre e hijo ya no son los perseguidos, ahora van a buscar ser los cazadores

Vicenç Sanz says

El lobo solitario y su cachorro están a puntito de llegar al ecuador de su andadura en la estantería de casa, concretamente llegan al noveno tomo en un gran estado de forma. Veamos qué nos traen.

Éste volumen me ha dado la sensación de tener historias un tanto más largas que las de los tomos anteriores. No sé si es una percepción personal por llevar un tiempo sin acercarme a la obra, pero el caso es que me ha parecido que incluía menos historias (pese a ser el mismo tomo).

Las historias incluidas siguen las pautas habituales: encargos recibidos por el padre que le van acercando poco a poco a su objetivo como capítulos auto conclusivos que nos muestran más cosas de un Japón feudal retratado de forma exquisita. Son historias que no sólo nos cuentan alguna parte de la vida durante esa época, sino que pueden detenerse en cosas como el comportamiento del niño o la resolución del padre. Entre ellas

me ha gustado especialmente una en la que el niño se queda en una casa de mercaderes y convive con un chico algo mayor.

Y luego están las historias de trama, aquellas en las que la lucha contra el enemigo es lo que ocupa el centro de atención. Éstos acostumbran a traernos capítulos más épicos y luchas contra varios rivales, pero es que no sólo pasa eso aquí. El autor consigue presentarnos a un par de personajes recurrentes nuevos dentro de la familia enemiga, dos personajes bien retratados y que prometen darnos grandes momentos en el futuro.

Por lo demás tenemos lo de siempre: un exquisito gusto para la narración, de esos reservados para los grandes genios y que transmiten con página tras páginas sin letras. Un gustazo total y absoluto.

Me queda mucho aún para terminar la obra, pero ahora mismo me tiene atrapado (pese a su sencillez).

Jedi JC Daquis says

Another fantastic volume from the Koike-Kojima tandem, one Echo of the Assassin's theme is morality and its inherent subjectivity. The volume presents characters who are either in doubt of whether they have done the right thing or the wrong one, or they themselves are the ones living broken in it.

It is also sad that women were treated bad during those times (or perhaps it is the author's idea of the past?). That is one main gripe of The Lone Wolf in general, that there is so much rape and women abuse happening. There are many instances though, that women are portrayed to be strong and the ones who drive men towards things they would not normally achieve.

There's also a cliffhanger at the end which changes the battlefield of The Lone Wolf and Cub.

Dan Gorman says

The main plot pitting Ogami Itto, seemingly the last noble samurai, against Yagyu Retsudo, who is slowly taking control of feudal Japan's government with the aide of the Yagyu clan and the Kurokuwa Ninja army, is getting increasingly fascinating. The flashbacks filling in the mad ambition of the Yagyus and Ogami's slow descent into a mad form of bushido are most interesting, and dramatically compelling. Many of the female characters in these books are strong and well-written, too. Unfortunately, the last two volumes of the series have lacked such strong female characters. Sexual harassment has also popped up in these volumes much more than I'd like. The authors always make sure that sex assaulters get punished by Ogami Itto in the end, but nonetheless I take issue with the authors' need to keep returning to the issue of sexual assault. It makes me wonder what elements of Japanese literature do not translate well to America, because in Volumes 7 to 9 there seem to have been moments of clear misogyny in the text. Overall, the Lone Wolf & Cub saga is a masterwork of comic writing, but in an 8,000 page story, it's not surprising that any flaws will be blown up to a greater degree. The suffering of some of Koike's female characters is definitely a magnified flaw.

Still, most of these books have been very good and not misogynistic, so I have hope that later volumes will be better. Again, the overall sweep of the story is most impressive, but if I were producing an adaptation of this for HBO, there would be some changes....

Terry says

It's volume 9 and things are starting to ramp up! Before we finish this volume we will find that Ogami Itto has not simply been wandering the countryside as an assassin aimlessly, he has had a plan to bring down the Yagyu and we will see him starting to undertake it in earnest. We also see more commentary on many of the ills of Tokugawa bushido society from the abuse of women, and free license of any man with the status and ability to take up a sword, to the ways in which many of the lower classes make use of the system to get back their own on their supposed masters.

'Wife of the Heart' tells the tale of a young woman running a ferry on the Omono river. We see that in this society she has not only to sell her service as a ferrywoman to her customers, but her body as well should they wish to take it. Her fellow ferrymen urge her to give up her ways and instead take a position they have found her...people are starting to talk and many will no longer have anything to do with her. She perseveres, however, in order to support a former samurai who had saved her from punishment and lost his position and health as a result. He has dreams of helping his Han by designing a bridge that could span the river and bring economic prosperity to his home, but will his former master, a harsh and ruthless man, listen? And what has brought the assassin Lone Wolf and Cub to the area?

'Wandering Samurai' shows how even those on the lowest rung of the samurai ladder are able to take advantage of their position to extort whatever they wish at the edge of their sword and escape the consequences. A group of watari-katchi, or wandering samurai who hire themselves out to local daimyo at certain times of year, attempt to rape a group of women and kill their sole male retainer. One of the group is still a man of honour (in the terms of bushido at least) and forces them to make amends according to the warrior code (which has dire consequences for their victims as well). Into the midst of this comes Itto who, upon being recognized by the watari-katchi, is asked to participate in a duel. In the end the wandering samurai asks for judgement from Itto, a warrior he can respect, upon the action that led him to become a watari-hatchi in the first place.

'Echo of the Assassin' brings to the fore the questions and issues many readers probably have regarding the fact that Itto has brought his three-year-old son into the midst of the life of a wandering assassin. Lone Wolf and Cub come across another traveller who helps them when they are attacked by Kurokuwa ninjas and, upon learning their identity, he cannot help but confront Itto on the life he has forced upon his son. Itto defends his choice, and confirms his belief that Daigoro equally chose this path, and we see that there is no end to the treacherous ways of Itto's enemies in their quest to destroy the last of the Ogami clan.

'Naked Worms': In this tale we again see the importance of river crossings in feudal Japan. Due to the changeable nature of the Oi river ferries are not possible and instead there are men called Hadaka-Mushi (or Naked Worms) who carry travellers on their backs or bear palanquins across the waters. These men have sole ownership of this right of passage and use it to extort money or sexual gratification from their passengers. Itto comes into their midst and to their great surprise, for he is obviously a man of high rank, he petitions them to join their group and become a Hadaka-Mushi as well. What could be behind this decision that any other samurai would view as the basest subjugation of his honour?

'The Yagyu Letter: Prologue' answers the question posed by the previous story and we see how Itto's path has led him to this precise spot. He learned a valuable secret from a former friend who had been investigating the Yagyu and died at their hands when Itto became Kogi Kaishakunin and Itto is now ready to leverage this information in the hopes of destroying the Yagyu forever.

Ahmad Sharabiani says

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Amir Mishali says

Best bunch of stories in this series so far.
