



Spy Seal, Vol. 1: The Corten-Steel Phoenix

Rich Tommaso

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Journey into the thrilling world of international espionage as one of Britain's most covert MI-6 divisions, the Nest, recruits a brand-new secret agent to their team: Spy Seal! Follow the newbie spy and his furry colleagues on exciting train rides, high-speed car chases, high-flying air adventures, and down secret underground tunnels, all in an effort to hunt down a dangerous British-turned-Soviet double agent—a slippery spy who poses as an upscale art dealer while covertly killing off important figures of Parliament. What is the reasoning behind this double agent's terrorist actions? Why are three masked bunny rabbits vandalizing paintings at every London gallery? And just what is this elusive Corten-Steel Phoenix anyway? Check out this deluxe format edition to decipher the answers to these and other puzzling questions in RICH TOMMASO's (SHE WOLF) latest series, visually reminiscent of such classic comics as The Adventures of Tintin and Usagi Yojimbo.

Collects SPY SEAL #1-4

Spy Seal, Vol. 1: The Corten-Steel Phoenix Details

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Author : Rich Tommaso

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From Reader Review Spy Seal, Vol. 1: The Corten-Steel Phoenix for online ebook

Donovan says

Mildly interesting, but the blasé cliché spy character brings nothing fresh to the genre. This feels like “spy satire” but isn’t.

Dakota Morgan says

I think Spy Seal suffers from high expectations on my part. As an avid Tintin fan, I saw the format (extra large, extra slim book full of clean linework and flat colors) and was immediately on board for whatever. Unfortunately, "whatever" wasn't all that great.

Spy Seal is about a seal who gets caught up in some sort of criminal conspiracy revolving around...well, at least in part around the phoenix of the title, although that phoenix barely comes up. I can't say for certain what the criminals are doing or why. Spy Seal suffers from an extreme lack of explanation. Often, scenes end abruptly, as if pages or panels are missing. And the humor is weird, to say the least. It's like if Wes Anderson was hornier.

All that said, the Herge-esque art certainly is pleasant to admire. Just don't bother trying to follow along with the story.

Alex Sarll says

Yes, it does exactly what it says on the tin; a seal who's a spy, albeit not a very good one as yet (for reasons unrelated to being a seal). Tommaso here resurrected a character he's been doodling for many years, to general acclaim; I have my usual disconnect from comics set in a world recognisable as ours, realistic enough to have not just revolutionaries but tankies, yet inhabited by anthropomorphic animals. Still, the Tintin-styled art (and plot, for that matter) do make for some lovely landscapes.

(Edelweiss ARC)

Theediscerning says

Three and a half stars. This is a fairly enjoyable romp, with a naive spy dumped into the deep end of solving international espionage cases. The story seemed to jump about wildly near the end, which is too sudden and clearly set up for sequels - although as the hawk is as drop-dead sexy as the seal hero says, that may be no bad thing. (And if that sentence never sounded like making sense to you, this may not be a book to your taste.)

Sean Kottke says

This is a pure delight. It carves out a lovely aesthetic space between Tintin, Blacksad, James Bond, Wes Anderson films, and Sally Cruikshank cartoons. There are a couple of places where it feels like a page or a few panels are missing to initiate changes in scene and resolve cliffhangers. I look forward to following more Spy Seal adventures. As a comic written and illustrated by the same person, this fulfills one more plank of the Read Harder 2018 challenge.

Katie Cat Books says

Political. Adult. Disconnects.

Story: Our story begins with Malcolm the seal and Sylvia the bird discussing world politics and visiting an art gallery, which leads to Malcolm becoming a British spy and going on a spy adventure.

Language: Based on themes and sexual references, this is aimed at adults, despite the Tintin looking cover. Overly filled with stereotypes of all sorts and attempts at dry humour, it ends up just falling flat. The pacing is also really strange as action sequences are condensed into just a few frames, sometimes making it unclear as to what is even going on.

Characters: Each of the characters is an animal and for the most part irrelevant as to what animal. There's a huge disconnect as characters from the beginning just disappear while dozens of new ones show up for just a page or two. Also all the women look like drag queens.

I picked this up as its categorized in many places as a middle grade graphic novel, but instead it's just a poorly done adult graphic novel.

Rumi Vd says

nice short spy story in the style of the Herge Tintin comics, with some very nice humor like a Wes Anderson movie, also its pretty damn cool that Rich Tommasso did everything on this book, the colors the lettering, the story. everything. really dig that.

Blaine McGaffigan says

Rich Tomasso's "Spy Seal" is an homage to Tintin comics that is pretty to look at but doesn't quite work on a character level.

The main character is learning to become a spy and works with a ton of new animals throughout the book. His relationships with the multitude of characters introduced is confusing. He has adventures, but there is no double-cross, no reveal, or any other plot point that makes this a great spy story.

The art is fantastic. I could look at the smooth linework and rich color palette all day long.

I'm eager to see where this book goes from here.

Ben says

An anthropomorphic seal becomes a spy in an unmistakably Tintin-esque adventure. I would probably give another volume in this series a chance, but it didn't blow me away. The art is great and very "Hergé", and the concept itself is interesting. The execution was just OK, the plot was average, and the overall effect, for me, was a wistful pining for an actual Tintin escapade that I've probably read 30 times over.

Nicola Mansfield says

Just one look at the cover tells you how Hergé-esque the art is in this book. A spy story set during the cold war with all the characters being animals. Malcolm is a seal and the newest MI-6 recruit; this is his first mission. Entertaining juvenalia which while not exciting held my attention.

Ricky Vigil says

The art is fantastic! The linework is very clean, the color palette is perfectly selected, and I love the general style Tommaso's anthropomorphized characters.

As other reviews have stated, the narrative is somewhat choppy in parts--there are a few moments in the book that I thought would be explained in later pages, but they never are--and the characters have very little depth. Still, I'm invested enough to give this series one more shot.

Aditya Dabral says

This comic is sure to attract many Hergé lovers, and Tommaso pays homage to him quite a bit, from the ligne claire art style to the general adventurous spirit of of the main character who's reminiscent of Tintin. That said, the latter stages of this volume felt like they were ripped straight out of The Black Island which soured my opinion of the work a little.

More broadly, I thought this was a pretty pleasant read, although the dialogue seemed a little laboured at times. Instead it's the overarching plot where were Spy Seal's main strength lies, with the story staying compelling and fast paced throughout. Although I wasn't hugely impressed, I'm probably going to keep an eye out for any future installations because I suspect there's still the potential that this comic can forge a unique and interesting take take on the whole spy genre, although in this case it was pretty generic.

Andy Grabia says

Story took some odd leaps that made me feel like pages were missing from the book. Too bad, as it was otherwise quite enjoyable.

Paul Allard says

Old-fashioned Cold War spy tale – quite good

This comic collection deals with anthromorphised spies (all different animals) involved in Cold War espionage occurrences. It's a bit wordy – lots of explanations and long dialogues which aren't easy to read in the digital edition. There's plenty of action and it's very reminiscent of (and obviously a tribute to) Hergé's work in Tintin and other stories. There are many references to this throughout. It's quite fun and worth a look.

Zack! Empire says

I really enjoyed this! The artwork and the color is so great. The story is a bit silly, but it's a great way to spend a half hour.

I'm really happy that Image Comics decided to publish this in the European Album sized format. It goes great with the story and art style.

I would definitely pick up a second volume.
