



Spice & Wolf, Vol. 09: The Town of Strife II

Isuna Hasekura , Juu Ayakura (Illustrator) , Paul Starr (Translator)

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The capture of a narwhal and the ensuing power struggle between the northern and southern districts of Kerube has Lawrence caught in the middle! Backed into a corner by his own trade guild, can the merchant find a way to extricate himself from this delicate situation? And what of the wolf bone from Holo's pack? Can the Wisewolf of Yoitsu manage to keep her rage and frustration in check?

Spice & Wolf, Vol. 09: The Town of Strife II Details

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From Reader Review Spice & Wolf, Vol. 09: The Town of Strife II for online ebook

Allison says

In the midst of a pile of academic reading, I've started burning through a stack of books on my bedside table, with this being the first to go. I like the *Spice and Wolf* novel series, but wasn't too impressed with the first half of *Town of Strife*. Even more than the romantic comedy banter, this series excels at showing how plans that have been boiling for the past two hundred pages are going to magically come together. Without that, the first half of *Town of Strife* tended to drag. Here, however, in the second half, there's almost nothing but payoff. I know that I should be frustrated by that, but it was really kind of fun. There were more sinister bad guys than usual, Eve is back in the picture to mix things up, and, as he has been for the last couple of books, Col makes for an adorable travelling companion. I know that this is a bizarre mixture of fluff and economic intrigue, but I really enjoy this series, and, even if *Town of Strife II* isn't too game changing, aside from Lawrence getting to be a bit cooler than normal, it's still fun. I'm quite excited about reading volume ten.

myinon says

This volume concludes the two-part story started in Volume 8. This volume sees Lawrence acting and thinking on his own since the start of the series. He gets a small push in the back from Holo at the start, but afterwards Holo isn't seen much at all in the novel. I enjoyed watching Lawrence grow a bit as a character and hope that he continues to shine; however, as mentioned in my review of the 8th volume, I would really like to see Lawrence earn some more money as he adventures because he is a merchant after all.

Karla Schneider says

I think this is where I started reading the fan-translations, but they were just as good as the official.

Rafaela (bibliophilebanshee) says

Real rating: 3.5 stars

James Caldwell says

This is the conclusion to the setup from volume 8. There was a lot of tension with this one. I liked Eve as soon as she was introduced in the anime (I haven't read the first five books of *Spice and Wolf*,) and in this volume my sympathy for her went way up. I almost want her to be a love interest, but that would require Holo being shunted to the side, and that's unacceptable. I can only imagine how much trouble Lawrence got into there at the end!

Reyhan says

Cool

Devin (Mostly Manga) says

What a great conclusion! I'm only halfway through the series now, the trouble Lawrence and Holo find themselves in seem to get more dangerous. And as dangerous as it gets, I'm really glad it doesn't always result to Holo using her wolf form. It'd be boring if all of their problems were solved like that. What makes these books so fun is that I can never expect what kind of trouble a traveling merchant can get themselves in, nor can I figure out a way they'll get themselves out of it. Who knew traveling merchants were just as interesting as your typical fantasy hero?

Ricardo Matos says

The biggest story so far. Although it's volume 2 of the Town Strife story, the arc actually started 3 volumes ago, when Lawrence met Eve and got involved in the fur trade deal.

It's quite a nice addition to the overall story, and Holo wasn't as annoying as she had been in the previous volumes. Really enjoyed it and will definitely pick up volume 10. Nice banter, shady deals, lots of merchant backstabbing. It just works :)

Chad says

This was a good resolution to the story started in volume 8. The ending was a little more rushed than I would have liked so that, ironically, I liked the finish of the Town of Strife storyline less than the end of the previous volume halfway through the storyline, but it was still a very good, engrossing tale, and I enjoyed it quite a bit.

It's good to see the occasional reminders that Lawrence and Holo have reached a point of understanding such that they no longer angst over the status of their relationship in the same ways they had early on. I just wish Holo would ease up a little, and subject Lawrence to slightly less emotional abuse.

Aidan says

Having Eve bless these last two books was wonderful. I fucking love her.

was secretly hoping for Lawrence to take her side all along. though even thinking so i'm sure would earn me the ire of a wisewolf.

Greg says

A direct continuation from the previous volume, which is something that hasn't happened before in the series. It was kind of nice to have some sort of contiguous story between two volumes; moving from one volume to the next felt a little episodic before this.

The story itself was pretty par for the course, in that it was the typical light novel with its (I assume) awkward translation and oversimplifications. But I don't go into these novels expecting to be blown away or anything. They are just little fun reads to spend an afternoon or two on.

Anniken Haga says

I think this book may have been a little ruined for me because it is part two of a story already started in the previous book. The previous book was really intense, but I had to wait for a month before I got this book - not my fault, I ordered it weeks before I started reading the first part, but there were some stuff with the shop - so this kind of calmed the intensity a lot.

This also lead to the fact that the story was rather slow, somehow.

Part of this may be my own mood, which is kind of tired and there was mostly focus on the trading-part of this story in this book. Holo was hardly even in it, which is kind of a downer with the evolution in the relationship a few books ago. It seems they have just forgotten what happened, which is such a downer.

I hope the next book will be a bit more fun, to be honest, for this one was a disappointed.

I can't give it a 2/5 stars, though, for it was still a good book.

Kenchiin says

The power struggle started on Town of Strife I reaches its conclusion in a very effective way. One of my favorites so far.

Ratna Deepika says

And so another volume is over. I sigh happily when I turn the last page to read the little note Isuna Hasekura always writes at the end of each book. I look forward to those amusing notes as much the next volume. There is more character and plot development in this one. After Side Colors that focussed mostly on Holo's past, volumes 8 and 9 shift the focus to Lawrence. This would be my second favourite of the series so far after Volume 4.

S.Q. Eries says

In Summary

Hasekura-sensei brings the Kerube's power struggle to its dramatic conclusion. The search for the ancient wolf bones fades to the background as Lawrence finds himself caught between the schemes of Eve and Kieman. Unfortunately, these masterminds are so crafty that their plans are difficult to follow. Spice and Wolf Volume 9 is a dense read for a light novel, but if you make it to the end, you'll be gratified by a conclusion that sheds light on the events of three earlier volumes.

The Review

Volume 9 is billed as the second part of a two-part story, but it is actually the culmination of events laid out in Volumes 5, 6, and 8. So if you aren't familiar with those previous three installments, you'll get lost in Volume 9 fast. Even if you have read them, the content of this volume is rather daunting. Volume 8 laid the groundwork for a massive conflict over a rare narwhal, and in Volume 9, that battle plays out with schemers wheeling and dealing in the shadows, plotting double-, triple-, and quadruple-crossings.

While the conflict is interesting, it is so complex that it bogs the pace of the story. Hasekura-sensei sets Lawrence up as a small fry trying to maneuver among the sharks of Eve and his guild leader Kieman. The plot requires an understanding of the power struggle over the narwhal, then the backroom deal Eve and Kieman are trying to broker, then the different ways everyone's trying to swindle one another, and finally, the great ploy that upsets everything. Because the story unfolds through Lawrence's eyes, the information we get is limited and mixed up with Lawrence's conjecture and confusion. There were several passages I had to reread to understand what was going on. Hasekura-sensei's underuse of dialogue tags in group scenes didn't help. (Interestingly, one of the color illustrations attributes a quote to Col that actually belongs to Lawrence.)

However, if you're willing to stick through the story's sometimes tedious twists and turns, you'll be rewarded by a brilliant and very clearly explained conclusion that also solves the mystery of the coin puzzle introduced in Volume 6. On top of that, poor Lawrence, who's tossed around like a pawn throughout the majority of this arc, gets his hero moment.

Though Eve, Kieman, and the narwhal dominate in the battle within Kerube, we do get a couple character building moments with Holo and Col. As it turns out, Holo's not unfamiliar with the narwhal, and her connection to the creature reputed to bring immortality sheds light on how she regards her traveling companions. And a conversation away from Holo shows how a child raised in the pagan mountains views a journey with a wisewolf.

This light novel includes the title page, three two-page spreads, and the table of contents printed in color as well as eight black-and-white illustrations, a summary of Town of Strife I, and a world map.

For more manga and light novel reviews, go to my blog.
