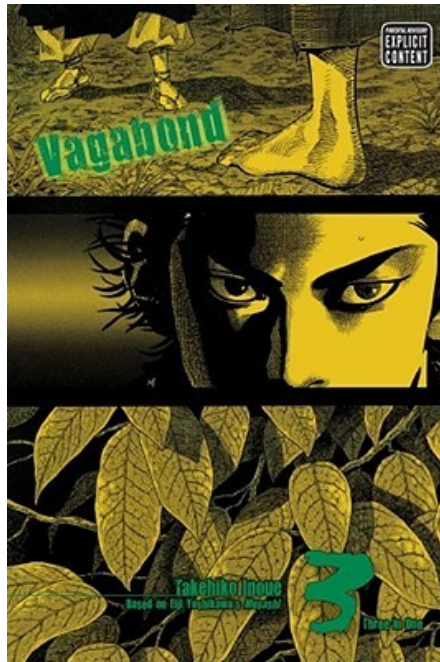




Vagabond, Vol. 3

Takehiko Inoue

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One With Heaven and Earth

Musashi suffers a humiliating defeat against Inshun, the second-generation master of H?z?in Temple. To prepare for a rematch, Musashi undertakes an intense spiritual and physical training regimen with a most unlikely teacher--Inshun's predecessor, the founder of the H?z?in Spear Technique. To attain the focus necessary to take on the most technically proficient and deadliest fighter he has ever faced, Musashi will first have to confront his own deep-seated personal demons.

Vagabond, Vol. 3 Details

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From Reader Review Vagabond, Vol. 3 for online ebook

Bradley Farless says

Ended on a cliffhanger. Looking forward to getting the next volume.

Nathalie Andrews says

This was brilliant! This man knows how to write fight scenes. Instead of simply showing the action, in an extended sequence, we spend most of our time inside the characters' heads, seeing flashbacks to relevant incidents in their past and watching various outcomes play out in their mind, until the whole thing becomes dream-like. Very powerful.

Savina Tsataros says

Volume 7 - 4 stars

This volume was so raw and real, it really got me thinking and turning my thoughts around and then going over them to make sure I comprehend them. Inoue himself said that his manga isn't the type you learn anything from, they're purely entertainment, but I believe that was just him and his sword talking as one with heaven and earth. I truly believe that he's teaching us just as Kami'izumi Ise no Kami hidetsuna did his disciples. Vagabond is true art, full of Inoues soul. I appreciate this volume so much !

Volume 8 - 4 stars

Another truly admirable volume, Inoue knows how to create an indulging beautiful story. I loved the sequence of Shinnosuke, his past was saddening but I enjoyed seeing the outcome unfold. I love Musashi so much, he's such a great character and although his growth has exceeded his past, there's is still so long to go and I'm strapped in for the ride ! I love Mususahi's story.

I also love how Inoue has created a character or family in this case, that I absolutely despise - the Hon'iden family, it's a shame to even say their name. I cannot believe the audacity this family has, I'm anticipating their downfall, hate to say it, but it's true - or hopefully they bow down to Musashi's sword whilst Otsu's by his side :) I loved this volume, I cannot wait to continue !

Volume 9 - 4 stars

Not too much happened in this volume, however everything that did occur was done brilliantly. I love how this story is progressing, Musashi is growing at a rapid pace, I love the concept of the peony in this volume and I'm intrigued to find out what it means to Musashi and Yagy? Sekish?sai. I'm very excited to see the progression of Hy?gono-suke as a character either as Musashi's friend or Ots?'s lover. Also I love J?tar?'s development into a swordsman, this is intriguing stuff, I'm so excited to continue on, I love Vagabond ! Inoue's a genius !

Jesus Flores says

So the first part is the fight with the monk, with some flashbacks to the monk training, and the older monk training too. It is more a battle of wills than a battle of skills in the end, and both learn valuable lessons.

Second part Musashi travels without knowing to the town where Otsu lives, he goes there to try to challenge the chief swordsman there.

By mere chance he gets entry into the dojo. This seems to be the start to the next challenge-arc

Then we see about his childhood friend and how he has been passing as Swordsman instructor and is caught by his mother, this side story ends up feeling out of place.

As always great artwork.

Lord says

The only problem I have with this manga is that I wish the pacing was quicker. But it's only a tiny wish, otherwise this is as perfect as samurai manga can be with awesome art.

Eric says

Of the 134 chapters of *Vagabond* that I've read so far, chapter 63, "Spider's Thread", contains my favorite scene that Takehiko Inoue and his underappreciated assistants have composed yet.

After his shameful, one-sided defeat at Inshun's hands and weeks of humbling, arduous training and instruction in the surrounding wilderness right under Inshun's own master, In'nei, tonight is the night that Miyamoto Musashi has his rematch against the second-generation master of the Hozoin Temple. Unlike their first duel they have chosen to fight in the woods surrounding the temple, at night, with no witnesses save for In'nei and Inshun's only friend among his fellow monks, Agon.

Before he officially declares for the duel to begin In'nei asks Musashi a question.

An important question. One that's never occurred to him, in spite of all the danger and death he's found himself involved in since he originally left Miyamoto village alongside Matahachi years ago.

In'nei's question threatens to bring all the debilitating fear of death and Inshun that Musashi's been wrestling with since his loss to the surface at the most inopportune time.

But then a spider suddenly enters his line of sight, distracting him from Inshun, the upcoming duel, and his fear for a crucial moment.

Musashi's eyes idly wander up the thread of web the spider is dangling from... and he sees this.

And so he has his answer for In'nei.

Volume 7 is filled with such small quiet moments of movement, introspection, and musings, each of which leaves an impact as Inoue ratchets up the suspense and anticipation to the clash of weapons and will between Musashi and Inshun, making it akin to a Mexican standoff in a Spaghetti Western. He's not interested in choreographing the rematch into a fight similar to their long, furious first duel. He's so uninterested in rehashing elements from the previous fight that (view spoiler)

Besides, it makes sense that their second duel would be a different kind of beast. Both men are fighting to the death; neither of them can risk making a single mistake. A fact that Inshun - who has never killed anyone before, and who's prodigious talent in combat means he has never learned the importance fear has as a motivation and a teacher - can't quite grasp as well as the battle-hardened Musashi. Suffice it to say that Musashi is victorious, but the aftermath of their second duel has an intensity of its own that arguably surpasses that of the anticipation to the violence and the violence itself.

The last volume collected here (Volume 9) is the beginning of a new arc, and these first chapters provide some much needed levity and intrigue from the emotional wringer that the Nara arc ends on. The Nara arc had such an incredible climax though that it can't help but pale in comparison.

4 3/4 stars

Terry says

This series just keeps getting better and we have crossed the five star barrier at this point (for me at least)! There's really nothing new for me to say in regards to the art: it's beautiful, 'nuf said. As far as the story goes one might think that having yet another climactic battle between Musashi and his opponent is starting to get old, but Takehiko Inoue manages to keep things fresh. This time Musashi fights what is almost purely a battle of wills with Inshun the gifted monk of the Hozoin. As each fighter faces off against his opponent across a wooded glade they appear to their audience to be simply staring at each other, while in reality an intense combat is playing out in the minds and wills of each of them. Musashi shows that he is no less a prodigy than his opponent as he has already learned from past mistakes and is beginning to open himself up to the requirements of his training and can see the tiny flaws that exist in the accomplished monk. As we race to a quick yet decisive physical conclusion to the battle we also learn about the tragic past of Inshun and see what it is that has driven him to become the greatest fighter in his monastery to the exclusion of all else, even human relationships.

Meanwhile we find Otsu in her new position as servant to, and favourite of, the infamous and aging swordsman Yagyu Sekishusai. Musashi's former opponent Yoshioka Denshichiro has already approached the legendary master in hopes of a bout and been rebuffed as we see that Sekishusai has little interest in bolstering the fame of the many ronin travelling Japan in the hopes of making a name for themselves. Otsu seems very happy in her new position, but still seems troubled by her memories of Musashi and the rumours she is hearing of his increasing fame (or notoriety). Ultimately Musashi makes his way to the Yagyu after

closing off his affairs with the Hozoin monks in the hopes of also being able to challenge the master. He unknowingly comes across the grandson and heir of Sekishusai who is also heading home to the Yagyu compound and both fighters are impressed by the martial chi they each sense in the other...foreshadowing? Musashi attempts a stratagem to enter the compound and overcome Sekishusai's disinterest in accepting challenges, but his young protégé Jotaro throws a bit of a monkey wrench into things (and shows himself to be nearly as impulsive and headstrong as his master).

The final thread of the stories in this volume follows up on Musashi's old friend Matahachi who is living high off the reputation of Kojiro Sasaki. Normally the formidable reputation of the samurai he is impersonating is enough to keep Matahachi safe, though we see that when the uncommon occurrence of a real challenge arises Matahachi's response is not an unexpected one. It is during just one such occurrence that Matahachi has an unexpected (and largely unwanted) reunion with his mother, the dour and petulant Osugi, and his uncle Gon who have both been searching the countryside for Musashi in the hopes of killing him. They advise the prodigal son of the Hon'iden of the 'betrayal' he has suffered at the hands of Otsu and Musashi and we can begin to see that many of the threads of Musashi's epic story may be coming together, for a time at least.

Great story, great art. Fans of manga, and especially samurai tales, will love this one.
