



Blame! 1

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In a future version of Earth, there is a city grown so chaotically massive that its inhabitants no longer recall what "land" is. Within this megastructure the silent, stoic Kyrii is on a mission to find the Net Terminal Gene—a genetic mutation that once allowed humans to access the cybernetic NetSphere. Armed with a powerful Graviton Beam Emitter, Kyrii fends off waves of attacks from fellow humans, cyborgs and silicon-based lifeforms. Along the way, he encounters a highly-skilled scientist whose body has deteriorated from a lengthy imprisonment who promises to help Kyrii find the Net Terminal Gene, once she settles a score for herself...

Blame! 1 Details

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From Reader Review Blame! 1 for online ebook

José Vázquez says

Blame! tiene un aura casi mítica en el manga. Una de esas obras a las que tanto pega el adjetivo "seminal", con una trama críptica y un dibujo que parece haber influenciado no solo a otros autores (Gantz parece una especie de hijo directo), sino casi a la percepción que tenemos del manga, con esas armas más grandes que aquellos que las disparan, explosiones sangrientas, acción a raudales y una imaginería imposible.

Lo más destacable para mí, que siempre he sido un fan de las historias, es el dibujo. Nihei crea unos escenarios y unos personajes que son puro sentido de la maravilla, y los disparos y las explosiones componen un collage visual que te deja anonadado. Pero lo más espectacular es sin duda la Ciudad por la que se mueve Killy, una estructura extraña y majestuosa llena de seres mecánicos de aspecto demasiado orgánico que no paran de surgir de la nada.

Aunque solo al final se esboce un mínimo de continuidad, la historia se limita a un tipo llamado Killy que busca algo llamado "Genes de conexión de red" para poder parar a la "Agencia Gubernamental" cuyo objetivo parece ser matar a todos los humanos. Por el camino, se encuentra con gente y le pasan cosas. De alguna manera me resulta muy conanesca en ese sentido: un personaje que llega a un sitio, destroza a todo y sigue su búsqueda eterna parece más un arquetipo de espada y brujería que de cyberpunk.

Una delicia visual en cualquier caso, y entiendo por qué es considerada uno de los must del seinen.

Javier Muñoz says

Nihei nos lleva a un futuro distópico extraño, una enorme ciudad subterránea que parece abarcarlo todo, miles de niveles y como cielo una pequeña rendija que deja ver la luz del sol. En esta ambientación Killy busca humanos cuyos genes no hayan sido modificados, tendrá que enfrentarse a inteligencias artificiales, ciborgs asesinos, extraños seres producto de la evolución humana...

Este es un manga en que los diálogos no tienen gran importancia, la mayor parte de la historia se nos va contando mediante secuencias de imágenes... los puntos fuertes son las escenas de acción y sobretodo los ambientes extraños a los que nos lleva Nihei, hay muchos detalles que descubrir, así que es necesario detenerse en las páginas para disfrutar del arte e intentar ir entresacando alguna pista que nos haga entender mejor la historia.

Esta edición concreta es muy buena, mucho mayor tamaño que los manga normales, de momento me ha dejado muy buena impresión... estoy deseando que salga ya el segundo tomo

Derek Royal says

I'm not the biggest fan of visual narrative -- comics as well as television -- that is heavily based on fight scenes, but this first volume of Blame! is intriguing. It sets a visual context in ways that the setting, The City, becomes the main character.

Jacob says

A heinous and unabashed mistranslation of the proper title Blam! (the sound of a gun firing and a gun being the most talkative amongst all the books characters.)

All that said, this is very clearly a first work. When a book is largely non verbal the effective use of showing through panels is essential and there are a lot of moments where one is lost amongst action. Like going to a rave and having the strobe lights flashing just in time to see the awkward in between moments of every action. I had to reread the first chapter three times just to try and piece together what in the otherworldly hell had happened. Part of this was the panels failures in perspective another was again that precious moment showcasing moment between panels. It just didn't work in the beginning, but slowly it got better.

The art often varies in that not even remotely subtle way of an artist with either a deadline or an impatience to finish his story, which as a man whose first (and often only) drafts include who sentences cut off half way through because 'Yay! This next thing is going to be so cool!'.

First comics, like first novels, are tricky and just as easy to tear apart. One is forced to look though the iffy/rushed art of the first pages and just let the book fall into its niche.

And what a violent, bloody niche. It's main character exists solely to drive you from one world building moment to the next. A largely episodic travel log through the towering monoliths of a tech-gothic nightmare or wet dream depending on your preferences. It is as strange as it is lonely (and it is very very strange) and the lack of dialogue hammers this to a scalpel's edge.

I had always meant to pick this up when Tokyopop existed back in my teens. It looked cool, violent, and darker than the coffee I pretended to drink in debate class. I am glad I didn't. I wouldn't have appreciated it in the same way. It would have just been an ten minute read as I nodded in whatever ordinary joy I got from reading manga. This book is bigger, thicker, demanding you take it all in, perfect and imperfect alike.

I'm not sure I'll be reviewing the rest of these as the come out. It depends solely on whether an overarching plot surfaces. If so I may, I mean I'm going to read them, and writing about books is one of the few things I can still do with any sort of ease. We shall see.

The new animated film will be released on Netflix on May 20. I'm looking forward to seeing how color changes the endless melancholy of the world, and I'm sure the limited run time will remove all those quietly horrifying moments that bookend so much of the story's violence.

Nenia ? Queen of Literary Trash, Protector of Out-of-Print Gems, Khaleesi of Bodice Rippers, Mother of Smut, the Unrepentant, Breaker of Convention ? Campbell says

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I just read the new Cardcaptor Sakura book and this manga could not have been a harder contrast to that if it tried. Cardcaptor is a shoujo manga intended for young girls and Blame! is a seinen manga intended for older

guys. It contains not a single dash of cuteness or romance or magic; instead it is a grim post-apocalyptic, like J.G. Ballard's *HIGH RISE*, as populated by genetically mutated cyborgs that are something like *The Matrix* as done by the creators of *Silent Hill*, with a hero's journey straight out of *Birdy the Mighty*.

This is one of the longer graphic novels I've read, clocking in at just over 400 pages (which I guess is what makes it the "Master Edition") but it goes by really quickly because there isn't a lot of text. Most of the pages are just illustrations of the terrifying megalith where all of these characters live, in all of its monstrous, cyberpunk glory. The details of the architecture truly are incredible and is probably *BLAME!*'s biggest strength.

Kyrri is a human who is searching for something called "The Net Terminal Gene" which is what causes some humans to see retinal displays and interact with the "The Administration"; the dystopian overlord robots of this world. Along the way, he encounters a number of beings, spanning the whole continuum of robot and human, although the scientist mentioned in the Goodreads summary who seems like she'd be an integral part of the story doesn't make an appearance until the very end.

I thought this book was more interesting than good. The world building is confusing. All of the characters are in the dark about their origins, so you get a sort of *CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ* thing going on, but that, paired with the lack of dialogue, kind of gives this story a dull, claustrophobic feel. By the end of the book, I didn't really feel like I knew Kyrri any better than I did in the beginning of the story. I know the summary says that he's stoic, but there's stoic and then there's a block of wood, and Kyrri resembles the latter way more than the former.

I guess I've read too many similar stories to this one that took a concept like this and did it one better. If the sequel goes up on Netgalley, I may apply for that to see if this story is worth pursuing, but the cyberpunk constructs and blood splatter seem to be this story's two main claims to fame, and I'm not particularly into either one of those things, so it might just be a case of it's-me-not-you.

Thanks to Netgalley/the publisher for the review copy!

2.5 stars

Álvaro Arbonés says

Tsutomu Nihei lleva toda la vida con nosotros. Como adalid del manga *cyberpunk*, el espacio arquitectónico

infinito y las búsquedas no menos infinitas entre masacres justificadas por decisiones de raza, inteligencia o territorio, sus historias siempre acaban orbitando sobre la idea de una humanidad condenada buscando el modo de volver a sus días de gloria. O cuanto menos, intentando no ser absolutamente aniquilados por entidades sintéticas.

Blame! Master Edition es la excusa perfecta para volver al peculiar universo de Nihei. Y no sólo por el rediseño, con portadas hechas para la ocasión —donde se ve el descomunal salto en calidad del acabado del dibujo de Nihei—, o por el mayor tamaño.

Incluso si *Blame!* se disfruta más cuanto más grande son las páginas.

Esto es así porque una de las cosas donde más destaca *Blame!* es en la inmensidad. Inmensidad de escenarios llenos de detalle en perspectivas imposibles; inmensidad de un mundo donde residen tantas especies, razas y criaturas sintéticas que es posible perder la cuenta ya en el primer tomo; inmensidad en sus ecos *western* que nos hacen sentir como si estuviéramos leyendo una historia épica e incommensurable de uno de aquellos míticos **Man With No Name** cuyo nombre, esta vez, es **Killy**.

Porque contra lo que dice la sabiduría popular, ocurren muchas cosas en el primer tomo de *Blame!*. Se nos presenta a Killy, descubrimos que va en busca de algún ser humano vivo con un gen capaz de conectarse a la red, que vive en un lugar conocido como La Ciudad —también que es una mega-estructura imposible con miles, si es que no millones, de pisos—, que sus enemigos acérrimos son las criaturas de silicio y que hay una especie de gobierno en las sombras dispuesto a exterminar a la humanidad. También descubrimos que el arma de Killy es un emisor de rayos gravitacionales, una tecnología perdida atrás en el tiempo, y que hay una ingeniera capaz de sintetizar los genes para conectarse a la red llamada **Cibo**. Si además sumamos que hacen aparición unas criaturas llamadas **Constructores**, que construyen y reconstruyen la ciudad sin orden ni concierto, decir que no ocurre nada o su equivalente en imbecilés, que no se explica nada, sería mentir descaradamente al respecto del manga.

Todo está en su sitio. Todo ocurre como debe ocurrir. Y es difícil no sentirse interpelado por la búsqueda de Killy y el constante vaivén violento que ello conlleva.

Su único defecto tiene que ver con la propia inexperiencia de Nihei. Aunque de diseño espectacular y trazo expresivo, algunos de los diseños de personaje han quedado demasiado anticuados. Algo que se hace notar en comparación con la portada de la *Master Edition*, con diseño de personajes renovados, donde Killy pasa de tener un trazo agresivo de adolescente gótico angustiado a un más sólido aspecto de llanero solitario *cyberpunk*. Del mismo modo, la composición de páginas no siempre es del todo clara, haciendo que, de vez en cuando, tengamos dos o tres páginas donde tenemos que inferir lo que está ocurriendo, porque la disposición de viñetas hacen confuso seguir el orden de los acontecimientos.

Todo ello minucias a pagar a cambio de arquitecturas imposibles perfectamente representadas, acción *non-stop* y una narrativa indirecta perfectamente hilvanada que no se permite ni un segundo calma. Algo que irá a más con el paso de los tomos. Pero incluso si nos quedáramos aquí, en este primer tomo, *Blame!* seguiría siendo una de esas encantadoramente desmadejadas obras maestras de la narrativa.

Adam Spanos says

'Blame! Vol. 1' by Tsutomu Nihei is a massive 408 page story of a man trapped in a huge city, and this is

only volume 1!

In a book that has more visual than narrative, we meet a man named Kyrii that is travelling through a strange environment. We eventually learn that he is living in a huge city that seems to have grown out of machines. No one knows what land is. Kyrii has a gun called a Graviton Beam Emitter that can take out the threats to him. He is looking for the Net Terminal Gene, though I never felt like I knew why.

It's a vast sprawling city, but after 400 pages, I felt a bit weary of it all. Sure the main character is interesting, and the environment and cybercreatures are horrific and strange, but I felt like there was just a lot of the same. I did like the art quite a bit. I'd also like to find out what happens to Kyrii.

Roy says

An interesting story which is really told via art more so than dialogue. A sci fi world with some cool action scenes and villains. I sometimes find stories that are predominantly art suffer from the overall world building. This does a little and at times you kinda want more about why he's searching for the terminal net gene. Interesting imagination as some of the creatures have some messed up designs. Definitely a more mature style manga.

Kristine says

Normally I don't really do reviews on Goodreads. But, oh boy. This manga is phenomenal!

Wow... Just, unbelievable. One may argue that there isn't really a lot of dialog between the characters and a lack of a more complex plot (if you are into that), but the basic concept of exploration and a main goal (the Net Terminal Genes) in this horrid, desolate and macabre - but oddly beautiful - tech-world play out brilliantly. Actually, the reason why I personally fell for this manga is how it masters the concept of "show it, don't tell it" in a peculiarly simple manner. You don't need a complex plot. You don't necessarily need a great amount of dialog. This manga is a proof of that. How it conquers this very basic but somehow difficult concept is - hands down - due to its art style and mind-blowing scenery.

The author, Tsutomu Nihei, actually studied architecture before becoming a mangaka. This fact is evident in the manga. The reader is constantly bombarded with panel after panel of dark and gritty but aesthetically pleasing structural landscapes illustrated with powerful hatching and black/white contrast. The narrative technique with carefully placed and sparse use of emanata and quoted speech are also a part of the factors which build a somewhat disconsolate but moreover venturous atmosphere filled with abandonment, danger and silence.

It works well with how the main character, Kyrii, randomly encounters strangers on his way through the various strata in search for a Net Terminal Gene so he can gain access to the NetSphere. However, it is not so easy as it sounds. Even though he has a powerful weapon (the Graviton Beam Emitter) he must constantly be aware of threatening lifeforms: the fellow, surviving humans scattered across the many strata and these

creepy, eerie, cybernetic/silicon-based creatures. Again, this complements the somber ambiance and shows how cleverly crafted this manga is.

If that isn't enough reasons why it's worth your time, then I don't know what is. Now go and read it.

Chihoe Ho says

Japanese manga does cyberpunk so well. "Akira" and "Ghost in the Shell" are classics, and "Blame!" is worthy to rank among them. This master edition collects the story in an oversized format. It follows the mysterious Kyrii, who armed with a powerful handgun searches for an elusive mutant gene in a futuristic world unlike any other.

I love how simplistic the story is told. Dialogue is minimal which really gives a sense of how isolating a journey that Kyrii is on. The plot unfolds slowly but you pick up nuggets of clues along the way. There is a foreboding evil lurking in the darkness of the black and white panels, only to be followed by rapid successions of attacks by the twisted silicon life in this robotic megastructure. Together with the casualty of mangled body parts, this is what nightmares are made of.

So much more of this world is still to be uncovered and I cannot wait to dive in further. If the "Ghost in the Shell" live-action movie does well, I can see Hollywood looking for more sci-fi manga adaptations. Well, they can only blame themselves if they overlook this series. At the very least, we can count on Netflix with their anime movie adaptation coming in 2017.

Alex says

Wow. This was pretty awesome. I haven't read much manga in years, but I wanted to see how the Oasis handled it. Answer: pretty well!

I'll be continuing with this series. It's like Akira stacked vertical. Good shit.

GrilledCheeseSamurai says

I was 10 years old the first time I read a comic book that had no words in it. It was a G.I. Joe comic, issue 21, called, 'Silent Interlude.' I remember being blown away that I could follow along on this Snake Eyes story even though it had no words in it. The artwork literally told the story and it singlehandedly changed the way in which I looked at comic books.

Now, 30 years later, enters Blame! While Blame! does have text and dialogue within its story, it is very light and pages can go by without a single word being spoken (or thought). The artwork is absolutely fantastic and the world itself becomes the main character of the story. I thought it would be faster to get through than other Manga because there were so few words to read, however, it took just as long (if not longer) because I was

taking so much time in absorbing the art and how brilliantly it told a story that so very easily pulled me within.

Blame! is cyberpunk weirdness that begs to be explored and discovered and every single page was an absolute pleasure to behold. I've already bought the 2nd volume and I can't wait to dig in!

Crystal Starr Light says

Bullet Review:

Not a huge consumer of manga, but my coworker found this one, so I gave it a go. Although I found a lot of the action hugely confusing, overall it had a great sense of place and surrounding - desolate, endless, huge vast caverns and canyons of conduits and metal. Silence. Decay. Mystery.

So while the action failed for me, I found that the emotions this drudged up in me were more than enough to bump up the star rating.

Sean O'Hara says

Like everything Nihei writes, this is bizarre, and dense, and incomprehensible, and utterly freaking cool.

Ije the Devourer of Books says

I have no idea what I just read but the artwork is excellent. Kyrii is a young man on a quest. He is looking for the Net Terminal Gene. I have no idea why he is looking for this gene or what he will do with this once he finds it but his search leads him through a world made of various levels (strata) encountering alien creatures, robotic monsters and other weird beings. Despite all the encounters and battles he is quite dogged in his determination to find this Gene.

The artwork is brilliant and it conveys the strangeness of this futuristic world. We are not given much detail about who Kyrii is or why he is searching. There is little prose here and Kyrii's adventures are told through the graphics, I guess the story will unfold in other volumes but for now this is an excellent start. Definitely a must for fans of sci - fi manga.

Copy provided by publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an unbiased review.
