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Hellboy's favorite gun-blazing vigilante takes justice to the skies aboard a Nazi-filled zeppelin and to the gritty alleyways of Chinatown against an army of monkeys. Collects The Prayer of Neferu, Caput Mortuum, Satan Smells a Rat, A Scent of Lotus #1–#2, and "Tony Masso's Finest Hour" from Dark Horse Presents #9.

Lobster Johnson, Vol. 3: Satan Smells a Rat Details

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Mike Mignola , John Arcudi , Kevin Nowlan (Illustrator) , Sebastian Fiumara (Illustrator) ,
Author : Wilfredo Torres (Illustrator) , Tonci Zonjic (Illustrator) , Joe Querio (Illustrator) , Dave Stewart (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Lobster Johnson, Vol. 3: Satan Smells a Rat for online ebook

James says

I thought volume 3 of "Lobster Johnson" was a bit of a step back compared to previous installments. The previous trade, "The Burning Hand," offered a great gangland tale blending mystic forces and gritty, street-level revenge. It offered the pulp hero and his crew mysteries to solve, setbacks to overcome and a sense of loss blended into the finale.

"Satan Smells a Rat" tells several anthology-style stories, and most of them are limited to Lobster discovering a threat and going in guns blazing. He takes out Nazi terrorists, mad scientists, elder gods and mummies in a series of single-issue tales. The action and the plots are all pretty straightforward, though, and it's hard to get excited about the Lobster's triumphs when there aren't really any obstacles in his way.

One exception is the book's longer story, "A Scent of Lotus," which has Lobster facing down a mystical Japanese spy who's come to the United States to stop the flow of funds to freedom fighters in occupied Japan. The extra space lets the story stretch out some, providing an actual mystery. Our heroes have to figure things out, deal with some hassle from the cops and solve the problem in a way that doesn't just involve shooting it. This story feels like a throwback to the strengths of the previous volume, and it offers a connection to a later B.P.R.D. story, which is nice.

"Satan Smells a Rat" calls on a roster of artists to illustrate Mike Mignola and John Arcudi's stories. They all do nice work, capturing the shadows and pulp-era setting that Lobster calls home.

Nazar Yablinchuk says

Really amazing !

Craig says

These stories combine the best of noir pulp adventure and '30s superheroes and horror comics and all such cool things as that. If those aren't your things, then the book isn't for you. The title is a perfect fit; Satan Smells a Rat reflects the tone of the book absolutely. The five stories each have a different artist, and I liked them all, particularly Tonci Zonjic and Sebastian Fiumara. They all seemed to stay true to the Mignola vision while offering enhancements of their own. A couple of the stories were too brief, but the overall work is just terrific.

Brandon St Mark says

Actual rating: 4.75 stars.

A pretty good trade considering it's a collection of one-shots (which I'm not the biggest fan of). I liked the main one-shot, Satan Smells a Rat, and the one with the Japanese spy the most, but all of them were pretty interesting.

Orrin Grey says

So far I haven't liked either of the other Lobster Johnson books as much as I did the first one. They're both good, but they never quite captured the exact blend of pulp and Mignolaverse that *Iron Prometheus* nailed so well.

I like this one, because it's a collection of short stories, some of them more in the pulp detective vein, some of them more in the supernatural monster vein, some of them hitting that sweet spot in the middle. The artists assembled here are all pretty great. Tonci Zonjic has sort of become *the* Lobster Johnson artist, while Sebastian Fiumara and Joe Querio also acquit themselves nicely. Querio does my favorite story in the book, the one that feels the most Mignola-y to me. As usual, there's some sketchbook material in the back, with a great rejected trade cover by Mignola that I actually like better than the real one.

Dean Simons says

Some good stories and some forgettable stories. Some absolutely incredible art and some rather middling art. It's an anthology collection.

Zachary King says

A rousing good time to be had with this anthology from collected Lobster stories. Nazi blimps, machine-gun monkeys, a mad scientist, and a mummy - this volume has got it all! A collection of fantastically moody artists is headlined by Kevin Nowlan, but even if you don't know their names, you will tremble as they present The Lobster! These stories may not be particularly deep or character-driven, but they proceed with rousing gusto and are delightful diversions.

George says

Much quicker, lighter read than the previous two. Jolly good pulpy fun. God, I love the Lobster.

David Wilson says

Pulp comics can't get any better. Feast on justice! Feel the Claw!

Sam Quixote says

I've got a lot of respect for Mike Mignola. He's an extremely talented artist and writer who created an original character called Hellboy back in the early '90s that now, some 22 years later, he's been able to successfully build an empire off the back of. Besides the main Hellboy title and its many iterations, the extensive Hellboy universe takes in BPRD, Abe Sapien, Witchfinder, Baltimore - and they're mostly pretty good. That said, I think Lobster Johnson is one title too many, or at least it's a good one-off concept that doesn't work as a series.

Lobster is Hellboy's favourite comic book character. A pulp vigilante hero from the early 20th century, he dresses a bit like the Rocketeer, has a gun, and uses a brand in his palm to burn an image of a lobster claw onto the foreheads of his enemies. Three volumes in, have we learned anything more about the character? Nope.

And that's the major failing about Lobster Johnson which is how static the character is. With Hellboy, his rich history was already developed by the third volume and has only gotten better since. Lobster? He's still just the one-note hero he always was. He barely speaks, he has almost no backstory and he's just a guy on the page - there's no presence, no actual character to engage with.

Satan Smells a Rat is a collection of short stories where Lobster takes on: Nazis who're trying to unleash a flesh-eating virus over New York via a zeppelin; mad scientists conducting unholy experiments in their basements; a Lovecraftian monster; and a supernatural Japanese assassin and his monkeys.

Like the protagonist, there just isn't much to these stories either. Lobster punches/shoots the bad guys, wins, moves onto the next. They leave almost no impression because they're so generic and play out so predictably. I know these are stories based on the pulps of yesteryear so aren't aiming to be sophisticated, but isn't the saving grace of the pulps that while they're badly written, they're dumb fun? These comics are the opposite of that!

We've seen Lobster do these same kinds of things for three books now - is he ever going to change? Is any of this building up to anything and will we see a purpose for the character emerge? No, because that's not the nature of the series - and that's why it was never that good to start with and has only become more stale since.

The art varies from story to story but overall it's very strong. I liked Sebastian Fiumara and Tonci Zonjic's work the best from A Scent of Lotus and Caput Mortuum, and Dave Stewart and Kevin Nowlan's colours are exemplary, but I didn't dislike any of the artists' pages.

It's amazing to me that Mignola has gotten three volumes out of this barely-even background character (and I think there's even a Volume 4 and maybe 5 as well) but it really isn't a series that's worth following, especially not when you've got the calibre of books like Hellboy to be reading instead. Satan Smells a Rat? I smell a rotten turkey!

Barrett says

Just more of the same fun stuff.

Paul E. Morph says

The stories in this collection are OK. They're pretty standard proto-superheroic noir (*I do love that I live in a world where 'proto-superheroic noir is a thing*) and tick all the standard boxes.

The artwork though! Oh, man, there is some absolutely *beautiful* artwork on display here! You have an issue of Wilfredo Torres (*which is the weakest artwork in the book and, considering how good Torres' work is here, that should give you some idea of how good the rest of it is*) an issue of Ton?i Zonji? (*who has to be the best thing ever to come out of Croatia... but I still don't know how to pronounce his name*), two fantastic issues of Sebastian Fiumara (*whose stuff blows me away every time I see it*) and an issue of Kevin Nowlan (*is he a semi-recluse these days or is he just drawing books I'm not reading?*), so all-in-all this is a visual treat of the highest order.

Based on the stories alone, I'd give this a three. Based on the artwork alone, I'd give this a five. I'm averaging it out and giving it a four overall, because I'm, like, totally a mathematical genius and stuff.

Recommended to those of us who are more interested in da pretty pick-a-tures than da woids.

Jeff Lanter says

Since this volume is a collection of shorter stories, I'll go over my thoughts for each one and then the volume as a whole.

Satan Smells A Rat - Excellent title but a standard pulp, crime story with a nice twist. The art has nice linework and style but coloring was brighter than I expected. Overall, a fun read.

The Prayer of Neferu - An Egyptian themed story with a pretty standard plot. While entertaining enough, the art is the highlight with a remarkably clean and retro style.

Capuut Mortuum - A better and more complicated plot with some nice tension and clever ideas. The talented Tonci Zonjic does the art which makes this the strongest story yet.

Scent of Lotus - My favorite story of the bunch. Having the story be two issues long added some complexity to the plot and made this the highlight. Using a mixture of crime, history, and cool Japanese designs made this really stand out. It also made me wish every story was at least two issues long. That probably would have helped this volume overall.

I would give this volume 3.5 stars overall and it is definitely the weakest Lobster Johnson volume yet. The problem is that the stories are so short that it is hard to do something fresh. Only Capuut Mortuum and Scent of Lotus were able to be original and really engaging. The true highlight is the art which varies from great to fantastic. I hope the next volume is able to capture the pulpy goodness we expect from this title.

Koen Claeys says

Some short stories with our pulp hero, set in the 1930's. The artwork is really great, the stories themselves vary quality-wise but never really disappoint.

Canavan says

☆☆½
