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Pluto: Urasawa X Tezuka, Vol. 2



Synopsis

R to L (Japanese Style) In a distant future where sentient humanoid robots pass for human, someone or some thing is out to destroy the seven great robots of the world. Europol's top detective Gesicht is assigned to investigate these mysterious robot serial murders – the only catch is that he himself is one of the seven targets. Atom, a boy robot whose sophisticated AI programming seamlessly blurs the distinction between man and machine, starts his own investigation into the serial murders of the great robots of the world. When he discovers that the killer's motives may be connected with the geopolitical events of the recent past, he realizes that the case is far larger than anyone could have ever imagined.

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Customer Reviews

URASAWA Preeminent manga artist Naoki Urasawa, collaborating with editor, producer and manga writer Takashi Nagasaki, creates a daring revisionist take on Osamu Tezuka's timeless classic Astro Boy. Conceived under the auspices of Tezuka's son Macoto Tezuka, a visual artist in his own right, Pluto: Urasawa's Tezuka is more than just an homage piece – Urasawa takes Tezuka's masterwork and transforms it into a new groundbreaking series of his own. Pluto: Urasawa's Tezuka will surely delight loyal Tezuka fans, but it will also capture the imagination of anyone who loves a compelling work of great science fiction. TEZUKA The legendary Osamu Tezuka is arguably the most influential person to shape the landscape of the narrative art form known as manga. In 1964, Tezuka created a revolutionary story arc in his Astro

Boy series called "The Greatest Robot on Earth." Tezuka's engaging tale struck a chord with the children of that time to become the most popular story line of the series. It would also prove to profoundly influence and inspire a generation of manga artists to come.

Volume 2 of Pluto continues detective Gesicht's search for the murderer of two famed robots as well as human victims of an unknown assailant. What propels this second volume is the appearance of Atom, a young boy robot better known to Americans as Astroboy. Atom is given by Naoki Urasawa the appearance of a real boy who gets excited seeing the latest new, cool toy and likes ice cream like any other, but doesn't know why and shrugs it off like any other, too. Yet Urasawa has also given his revamped Atom an underlying maturity and understanding that are well beyond any young kid, as well as a powerful scene of Atom shedding tears in a restroom after learning a dark secret about Gesicht. This volume shows how this series keeps getting better and has the emotional punch to make you want more right now! Definitely a five star achievement!

This is an amazing graphic series. The artwork is matched only by the fantastic writing.

In the first volume of "PLUTO", we learned about a world where robots and humans work together alongside with each other. In this world, robots are treated (by most) like sentient beings comes a world where the planet has robotic heroes and even police squadrons of human and robot partners. Of course, it's not an all perfect world as there are humans who rather not co-exist with the robots. And someone makes their agenda known when someone has decided to disrupt that peaceful coexistence by destroying the great robots and possibly murdering those who protect the rights for robots. This is the basis of the story "PLUTO", a reimagining of "Astro Boy - The Greatest Robot on Earth" written by manga great Naoki Urasawa ("Yawara", "Monster", "20th Century Boys" and many more titles) and co-authored by Takashi Nagasaki. The Astro Boy or Tetsuwan Atom stories are based on the popular works of Osamu Tezuka and with cooperation from Tezuka Productions, this manga project is managed by Makoto Tezuka. The first volume showed us how the great Mont Blanc and the North No. 2, two of the seven powerful robots in the world were destroyed by an unknown force. We also learned that several scientists were murdered. All of them were found dead with antlers next or stuck to their heads. In the second volume of "PLUTO", one of the top 7 robots, Inspector Gesicht is responsible for handling the investigation but his goal is to warn the remaining five robots of the threat coming to them. But most of all, it's quite interesting to see how the robots have nearly a sense of emotion and a level of advancement that peaks the curiosity of other robots

who are unable to function similarly. The latest volume features more character development and where the last volume focused on Gesicht, this time around, we get to learn a little more about Atom. Here is a brief summary of each chapter in vol. 2:

ACT 8 - ATOM - Professor Junichiro Tasaki, a professor of law who came up with the idea of the International Robot Laws has been found murdered. Strung up on a tree with antlers on his head. While investigators are working on that case, Gesicht has met with one of the seven powerful robots. This time it's the very advanced robot known as Atom. A boy on the exterior, he is able to show characteristics of a human showing pleasure in things that young children would like. Such as an interest in toys, sweets, bugs, etc. This surprises Gesicht but the meeting is more about a warning and he needs the help of Atom. By letting Atom download his memory chip, perhaps Atom can assist with the investigation.

ACT 9 - PROFESSOR OCHANOMIZU - With Atom now having Gesicht's memories, he now does his own investigation and learns that the murdered Professor Tasaki was trying to contact Professor Ochanomizu and perhaps the murderer is now after him and the members of the Bora Survey Group.

ACT 10 - HERCULES - The fighter known as Hercules is introduced. Gesicht tries to warn him about the unknown murderer. Atom has a conversation with Professor Ochanomizu and they start to talk about Brau 1589, the first robot to commit murder. Ochanomizu tells Atom that there were no problems with Brau 1589 and he is perfect but what could have caused it to commit crimes in the past.

ACT 11 - PATCHING IN - A flashback of a time not long time ago. The time takes place during a major war against the robots, Hercules, Brando and Mont Blanc fought for the side of humankind while destroying other robots. Meanwhile, Brando leaves to the Blue Mosque Coliseum to take his robot suit out for training but in reality, the fighting champion wants to take on the murderer head on.

ACT 12 - FAMILY PORTRAIT - Brando and the unknown mystery robot begin their fight. Both Gesicht and Hercules try to get to Brando's coordinates to help but will they make it in time.

ACT 13 - FALSE MEMORY - Gesicht continues to have these nightmares where an old man keeps telling him "500 Zeus a Body". What it means? He doesn't know. A major funeral happens for one of the greatest robots on Earth. As for Gesicht, he and his wife realized something is wrong with the photos they have during their many vacations. But what makes them concerned is that there are too many photos of vacations, vacations that would be impossible for Gesicht to go on due to his work. Is something wrong with his memory chip, has his memories been altered?

ACT 14 - DR. ROOSEVELT - We are introduced to Dr. Roosevelt, who exists in a form of an actual teddy bear. With three of the seven great robots eliminated, there are four more left. Meanwhile, Gesicht starts to look into his memory and if it may have been altered. Gesicht decides to visit Brau 1589 and switch memory chips temporarily and see if Brau 1589 can help him find out who the murder may be.

ACT

15 - ENEMY PARTS - Hercules is still mourning a friend but when the search party for his friend continues, a search team discover an unusual setting with Brando's arms in the sign of a horn. Hercules also finds Brando's memory chip. Also, we are introduced to the seventh great robot. The final chapter is a postscript by Makoto Tezuka who gives us insight of how Urasawa came to officially write about the reimagining of the Atom Boy (Tetsuwan Atom) storyline and what words of advice he gave to Urasawa and that was to create a new storyline and to challenge his father's story head on. "PLUTO: Urasawa x Tezuka" vol. 02 continues to be a satisfying series. Much has been included in terms of story and character development and the whole entire premise of humans and robots interacting with each other and then all of a sudden, someone going after and destroying a few of the seven great robots is just surprising. The strength of volume 2 leans more towards the mystery and suspense side as both Gesicht and Atom conduct their investigation. But we get to see how different the main surviving robots are from each other, especially with Atom who happens to have childlike abilities and emotions and this ability to becoming like a human, almost in a Pinocchio style of fashion which a robot like Gesicht is just amazed at. What I enjoy about this second volume is pretty much what I enjoyed from the first, the gradual build up of the storyline in each chapter, its overall pacing makes "PLUTO" quite entertaining. You just enjoy how well-written the series is thus far. I've found the storyline to be quite addictive thus far and as each chapter progresses, there is some sort of major reveal. All in all, I really enjoyed where this second volume is heading as it dealt with us knowing more about Atom and of course, being introduced to a new super robot who is a fighter named Hercules, how everything culminates to a battle between Brando and the unknown and of course, the aftermath. "PLUTO" is an enjoyable and addictive manga and when it comes to Urasawa-driven storylines, you know that you are getting a quality series with cool art and just overall, a well-balanced and intriguing manga series. Overall, I enjoyed the two volumes thus far and I'm definitely look forward to the release of the third volume.

In volume 2 of Urasawa's Pluto, the plot barrels forward and the stakes of the conflict are raised. Urasawa utilizes both Gesicht and Tetsuwan Atom (Astro Boy) as point of view characters. Urasawa confines himself to the overarching narrative in this volume, rather than focusing on a North #2 style digression that would be so familiar to Urasawa's plot construction in Monster. The art is of the consistently high quality fans would have come to expect throughout the volume. Additionally, Urasawa reveals some much needed back story about both Gesicht and the political climate of the world these vivid characters inhabit.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT? *Pluto: Urasawa x Tezuka, Volume 002* by Naoki Urasawa and Takashi Nagasaki is the second book in an eight-book science fiction manga series Pluto. The whole series is based on "The Greatest Robot on Earth," the most popular story arc in Astro Boy series by a legendary manga master Osamu Tezuka. After realizing that the mysterious killer is after the seven great robots of the world, detective Gesicht sets on a mission to warn each of the targets personally. When Gesicht meets Atom, a.k.a. Astro Boy, Atom reads through Gesicht's memory chip in order to help move the case forward. Meanwhile, another one of the seven great robots of the world, Brando, decides to face the villain on his own.

THUMBS UP: 1) It's getting interesting as the puzzle pieces slowly start coming together. 2) Background information. In my review of *Pluto: Urasawa x Tezuka, Volume 001* (you can find it here: http://www.comicbookresources.com/review/R39D2RIEIPZRO/ref=cm_cr_rdp_perm), I complained that the protagonist, detective Gesicht, is rather boring. Although in the second volume he is still quite passive, it looks like there is more to his story than it seems at the beginning. In *Pluto, Volume 002* the authors also reveal some background details about the political climate in Pluto world, making the story more plausible and much more engaging. 3) More realistic. While reading the first volume, I had a hard time wrapping my head around the premise of humanlike robots. Well, I might have gotten used to the idea, but I also think that in the second book it is presented more realistically, and the authors even offer some explanation (robots mimic people in hopes of becoming more humanlike, and in most successful cases the line between man and robot starts to blur).

COULD BE BETTER: 1) Static and colorless illustrations. No matter how gorgeous Urasawa's artwork is, I still find it too static for a comic book (see my previous review for a more detailed comment). Plus, the ten first pages with colored illustrations look SO MUCH better than the rest of book, which is in black and white.

VERDICT: 3.5 out of 5 *Pluto: Urasawa x Tezuka, Volume 002* by Naoki Urasawa and Takashi Nagasaki is more realistic and even more engaging than the first volume, though I really wish the illustrations were colorful and more dynamic. Anyways, on to the next volume, woot woot!

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