



## Lastman, Tome 2

*Bastien Vivès , Balak , Michaël Sanlaville*

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Lancé au cours du tome 1 de Lastman, le grand tournoi annuel parrainé par le roi Virgil et la reine Efira se poursuit. Contre toute attente, le duo improbable formé par Adrian Velba, 12 ans, et Richard Aldana, grand costaud surgi de nulle part, déjoue tous les pronostics. Après avoir défait son vieux rival Gregorio en combat singulier, Adrian a le plaisir de voir Richard éjecter successivement du ring le couple Halpes et Alyssa – cette dernière se révélant être, derrière le masque de la combattante, la jeune femme avec qui Richard avait passé la nuit peu de temps auparavant. Cette victoire inattendue vaut aux deux comparses de se voir qualifier pour la grande finale, qui les opposera au tandem unissant Lord Ignacio Cudna et le terrible Cristo Canyon, invaincu depuis des années...

## Lastman, Tome 2 Details

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Author : Bastien Vivès , Balak , Michaël Sanlaville

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# From Reader Review Lastman, Tome 2 for online ebook

## OpenBookSociety.com says

<http://openbooksociety.com/article/th...>

Brought to you by OBS Reviewer Scott

The Royal Cup, Vol. 2 of The Last Man series is not a self-contained story. Without knowledge of the events that transpired in Vol. 1, The Stranger, the reader would probably feel like they were thrown into the drink without a life preserver and wearing cement shoes. Given, however, that most manga fans will have picked up Vol. 1, already, and not have missed a thing, this graphic serial, takes the reader in media res, immediately after the events of The Stranger. Not a beat was skipped. You could crazy glue the two books together and have a seamless story. Adrian, his mother and the Stranger, haven't moved an inch.

The writing is a little more fluid than in the first volume; meandering little, carrying itself well given the subject setting. The battle for the Royal Cup takes up most of this installment and it's a fantastic improvement over the first volume. Combined with the hyper exaggerated art, the focus on strategy comes to the forefront, the trust between Adrian and the Stranger, build as they coach each other in deficiencies, and the story flows a lot smoother because of it. Little snippets, though, are left out in open and the twist "ending" actually had me intrigued to see what happens next.

As serial stories progress, I (for one) have the expectation that characters will evolve and progress. This happens in the slower pacing of the Japanese style, in order to focus on the rather elongated fight that encompasses the majority of the vignette that makes up The Royal Cup. Offside, as has been mentioned, trust and love rear their heads and move the characters in closing and opening relationships; emotions runs high in this installment, and the characters, especially the underdeveloped ones from the first volume, hold their own in this one.

The artwork, once again was opulence given form. This is a graphic novel in which the graphic shines through. Skillfully weaving detailed backgrounds, and more punch to the fight scenes, with the elegance of simplicity in the characters shows the art team in becoming more comfortable with the world and its inhabitants. The exploits of Adrian, our young hero, display simple form set against lavishly drawn royal scenes, much like a child's view of an overwhelming world. It is so vivid I felt what Adrian must have felt, often seeing the world through a "worm's eye view" (in which the camera is placed at a low angle looking up). Our stalwart young hero's adventures seem to just be beginning by the end of the book.

Fans of Dragonball or Dragonball Z, manga, fight comics and those who want to display the art form, The Royal Cup is the graphic novel you must pick up.

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## Accio Jurassic Books says

Un deuxième tome que j'ai beaucoup plus apprécié que le premier, l'intrigue se place enfin et devient plus intéressante

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## Carlos Beltrán says

Si se va poniendo más bueno.

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## Jessica S says

Disclaimer: I received a copy for review from the publisher. This did not affect my review in any way, nor am I being compensated for it.

I enjoyed *The Royal Cup* much more than *The Last Stranger* (review), but I also found parts of it problematic in my mind. Starting with the positive, this installment was much more action packed. It was so exciting to see Adrian fight and to see him on his own. You never lose the sense that Adrian is just a young boy, but I think it's refreshing to see him on the backdrop of the more experienced, older, and physically bigger opponents. It keeps the story grounded and interesting in dynamic, setting it apart from similar graphic novels.

A lot more was going on in this book, but it never felt like too much or too rushed. We learn a little bit more about Richard but barely. There's still the competition going on. There's still the reaction to Richard and to the duo being in the running for the Cup. The illustrations continue to complement the story well, drawing readers in and including just enough detail without showing too much.

What stuck out to me in particular about this installment, however, was the female characters. I still can't decide if I like what they've done with Marianne's character, but I loved that twist at the end. I can't wait to learn more about her and about her past. She's so badass! But at the same time, I didn't like how she sort of gave in to Aldana. I mean, maybe she really does have feelings for him, but gahhh. I didn't get the sense that she felt anything more than gratitude towards him for everything he's done for Adrian.

Then there's Adrian's friend Elorna, who is one of my favorite characters in this series. I am so happy that she stood up against her partner and did what she felt was right. She didn't care about the criticism. She didn't care about what others thought. She knew what she wanted to do, and she did it. She cared more about supporting a friend and being loyal than about winning, unlike Gregorio. She stands up to him and defends both Adrian and herself. And then even once she's done, she pulls a Hermione and punches him, showing him that she's in charge of her own actions and that she won't stand being insulted and being treated the way he was treating her. Yes, girl!

Then there's Alyssa, one of the other contenders for the cup. I was disgusted by this quick story line. I couldn't stand how women were being portrayed--which was only heightened when Marianne got together with Richard. I don't know...maybe there was a reason behind it, but I couldn't find it. It felt completely unnecessary and so undignified for women. It sexualized women without needing to, making us seem like rabid, sex-driven animals. Like no. I refuse to believe that such a tough contender would ever fall to that, even with the mysterious Richard Aldana.

Lastly, there's the mysterious Miss Sakova and the Queen (?), Elfira. I can't figure out which side she's on because at one point, I thought she was working against Richard, but then she was working with him. We don't know almost anything about her, but I'm hoping we'll learn a bit about her in later installments. And I liked how Elfira probably went against the rules to give some help. I don't know how I feel about it being yet

another woman helping Richard, but I kind of like that she probably broke the rules to do so.

So mostly, my issue was with the mixed portrayal of female characters. The plot was interesting and engaging, even more so than in the first book. This was a really solid sequel, and I look forward to The Chase.

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### **Laura says**

This series is fantastic. Art is expressively fluid, story is gripping and engrossing. I can't wait to read more!

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### **M-AY says**

Bien dans l'ensemble. Dommage que la force des personnages féminins montrée dans le premier volume soit complètement balayée par leur extrême émotivité (que de stéréotypes)

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### **Dorcas says**

This volume just opened up another twist.

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### **Nicola Mansfield says**

Loving this series! A French author writing a quasi-manga series. It has all the action and plot of a shounen manga but much more character depth and that certain "quelque chose" I love about French comics. This volume brings us to the battle competition and its completion. Intrigue abounds though, especially with the identity of our mystery man. We are given a few hints, though nothing to hang our hat on and by the end of the book we find a cliffhanger ending that shows another character he either knows about or may be from the same origins. I adore these characters and can't wait for the next volume. Kudos to First Second for picking up this popular French comic and bringing it to us in English!

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### **Amanda says**

\*A ginormous MEH\*

Same issues as with the first one but only compounded by the lack of originality and the sex. Blech. Puny runt sees his MOM for pete's sake fornicating with Mysterious Stranger who has teamed up with him for mysterious reasons. Yep.

The storyline did not get better as a result. SHOCKER.

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## David Schaafsma says

The Last Man volume two subtitle is The Royal Cup, and that's what happens, the Big Championship. So it looks like an adventure comic, highly influenced by the cinematic approach of some manga. And it's a romance, too. The comic is done by a French animator, a comics guy, and a filmmaker. So what can you expect? Seth T's amazing review will tell all you want to know, but plans are in the making for as many as twelve volumes of the comic itself, and films, and in the way of other great stories, the adventure and romance is just scratching at the surface. This is what you see at the end of the second volume, that there is more here than just a generic adventure-romance.

Richard Aldana, the mysterious stranger, continues to win all his matches, though he doesn't use any magic, relying solely on martial arts. He fights as a team with young Adrian, supported by Adrian's (hot, single) mom. Now, from the first volume you knew Aldana had secrets. In this volume someone finds out these secrets, and at the moment of the Big Reveal, everything changes. There are secondary characters as well of interest, that may emerge as important, probably will. What you realize at the end of this one is that the series will not be about what you thought it was, which is really surprising and cool. It's about bigger ideas than just action and adventure, though that would have been enough, as those aspects have been great.

What is maybe the best aspect of this series is the artwork. The action sequences especially are breathtakingly drawn, lovely. Just gorgeous. I guess I would say I don't like the hyper-masculinized Aldana, but these are the times we're living in, sigh. From superheroes and now to manga, these huge muscled Hulk and Thor guys, these "fantasy" machos as if we were all living in Miller's Sin City. But on the whole, this is just a wonderful series, better than I thought it was going to be. Highly recommended!!

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## Sarah Metts says

I picked the first volume up on a whim (and a desperate attempt to reach my 101 goal). I was surprised to find an enchanting fluidity in the illustration that matched perfectly with a story in which movements both big and minute have an impact on outcome. Superb line work and a mysterious world have me hooked.

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## Vittorio Rainone says

Carino anche il secondo numero di questo "manga all'europea", con la fine del torneo per il piccolo Adrian Velba e per l'energumeno Richard Aldana, che non trascura la madre del ragazzo, finendo a letto con lei, ma dopo la vittoria scappa con la coppa, finendo con l'essere rincorso dai due. Carina e semplice la struttura, piena di scontri con difficoltà crescenti, ma non limitata agli stessi. Bella costruzione dei personaggi, molto a la Vives.

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## Seth T. says

There are a lot of things I love about manga, but one of the best things about a lot of manga is the absence of a status quo.

A little over twelve years ago, I began a love affair with manga. That's as broad and general as saying that a little over thirty years ago, I began a love affair with women. It's just general and non-committal enough to be nearly entirely meaningless. Really, it probably began the moment I picked up my first issue of *Power Pack* as a fourth-grader and realized that comics stories could present evolving storylines. Maybe it began earlier, when I read *The Chronicles of Narnia* as a second-grader and realized that stories could be long, could skip around chronologically, and didn't even have to follow a single character throughout. Maybe my love affair with manga began the moment I first tied a string of letters together to form a word—just like my love affair with women began that moment in kindergarten when I saw one of the second grade girls in a choir performance and her hair was just, just perfect and my heart caught. Neither were what they would be: the girl was not a woman and the word was not manga. But the seeds were there. The origin has a story.

I began a broaching familiarity with manga early on. I read *Area 88* occasionally in the early early '90s. I read *Akira* as Marvel released them across the late '80s and early '90s. I picked up a handful of *Robotech* comics, which I now realize probably don't actually count at all. But it wasn't until the early-to-mid 2000s that I began actively purchasing manga along with all my other comics and graphic novels. My tastes had yet to refine[1] 1]In ten years I'm sure to read this and scoff at the idea that I would consider my tastes to have refined by age 40.]], and I was simply picking up series just to, you know, just to see.

*Love Hina. Naruto. Death Note.* Plenty of single volumes from those piles of abortive manga detritus that Tokyo Pop was shooting out like a t-shirt cannon with unlimited ammunition. (*Gothic Sports!*)

Among all the things I love most about manga[2]2]Now may be as grand as any place to remark that I don't typically refer to manga as *manga*. I just call them *comics*. I don't typically say graphic novels either. I don't find the differentiation usually very helpful. I will, however, occasionally condescend simply because others will find the shorthand useful. While I don't want to underscore in any sense that Japanese comics are fundamentally different from American, Canadian, Hungarian, Korean, or French comics, there is some small social sense in which "our" perception of Japanese comics differs. So to that end, I'll begrudgingly speak of *manga*.

Otherwise, it's merely a marketing category and I don't actually think those do anybody any good.]] is that these books often allow for (and sometimes actively pursue) deeply evolving story worlds. Status quo may be decimated at any time.

Marvel and DC superhero books don't actually feature Character in any honest sense of the term. Instead, they feature storytelling engines. Or maybe better, storytelling prompts. A reader of *Spider-Man* in 1970 can more or less jump into *Spider-Man* in 2010 and pretty much know exactly what's going on. Only the trivialities (like who is punching Spider-Man now) have changed. Same with Superman, Batman, Captain America. (Maybe not the X-Men? But then again...) Now take something like *20th Century Boys*. If you read through volume 4 and then skipped to volume 8, you would both have no idea what was going on and

have no way of figuring it out. The world shifted. Same with *Akira*. Otomo reinvents his entire storyline at least four times throughout the book. Chapter 6 looks entirely different from chapter 14 which looks entirely different from chapter 19. It's exciting, and the books often aren't afraid to change everything along the path to their finale.

While *Spider-Man* is merely a series of tacitly connected short stories set in the same world and using the same set of characters[3]3]It often feels like these stories are the product of a creative writing prompt that generates a pile of stories and then those stories are just published one after another. Then the writers in the study group get another writing prompt that is almost identical to the first and are asked to do that same thing again. It occasionally generates some good stories, but there's not really any reason to keep following the series. You can really just wait until you hear about a particularly good story or anthology and pick up that one.]], you can sink your teeth into the stories featured in many of these manga. And if you're going to read them, you've got to keep up. *Biomega* and *Knights of Sidonia* writhe and shift and go all over the place. Same with *Monster* and *20th Century Boys*. And *Negima* and *Children of the Sea* and *Flowers of Evil* and even *Death Note*.

Which brings us to Balak, Sanlaville, and Vivès' *Last Man* series.

With volume 1, *Last Man* revealed itself to be a superbly designed and deftly paced Fight comic, betraying a certain connection to one of the modes by which shounen manga likes to assert itself. In a way, that first volume felt like it could be a wonderful extrapolation of *Negima's* Mahora Martial Arts Tournament. It was beautifully scripted and fluidly rendered. Still, not being a particular fan of fight comics, I wondered how the creators could develop the story of a tournament over a full twelve volumes (the length of the series). Volume 2 answers that in the best way, following in one of my favourite manga traditions by decimating what I had imagined was status quo. By the end of the volume, we realize that the last two volumes are mere prologue for what should prove to be a much larger, more satisfying story. And I am blisteringly excited to watch it unfold.

Given the opportunity to ask a few questions of the creators, I broach the question of manga:

**Question:** I've read in other interviews that the storytelling for *Last Man* is at least somewhat influenced by manga. What aspects of manga in particular are you drawn to and which have you woven into *Last Man*? (Will we see a manga-style time-skip!)

**Answer:** HA! Busted with the time skip. Well, what we like about manga is how they handle the storytelling. It's very cinematic. You have the time to create a universe and at the same time, you are very close to the characters' emotions. The pacing of the story, how the panel are laid out, that's a huge inspiration to us. And, of course, the boobs. Japanese artists draw the best boobs.

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With volume 1 of the series, we note a heavy emphasis on Hope as a thematic direction. By volume 2 we're seeing the fruit of that and then an evolving exploration of Loyalty. Aldana has at least a temporary loyalty to his young partner Adrian and an abiding loyalty to his own sex drive. Elorna's ties to Gregorio are tested. The queen gives up rooting for the Hometeam to cheer for the Visitors. A pair of lovers are one of the combat teams and have their dedication to each other measured. Marianne has her own interests that bind her



to certain paths of action. And Adrian is, of course, guileless and forthright in his passions. These loyalties propel the action in volume 2 and will hold consequences for the remainder of the series.

One of the things I hoped to convey in my review of the first volume but pretty much entirely didn't touch on at all is just how entirely exciting this book is. There is so much going on. One page leads into the next with so much pregnant purpose that it virtually becomes a magnificent feat to put the book down before arriving at its final page. When I finished volume 1, I thought *Wow, omigosh. I cannot wait to read volume 2.* At the end of volume 2, I thought *Wow, omigosh. I cannot wait to read volume 3.* And it's not just because these end on cliffhangers. Because they don't. Not really. It's just that you don't want the story to end. You want to devour it all. You want to inhabit their world and see how everything shakes out. Is Adrian going to have to fight Elorna? Will Aldana punch out a woman? What if Adrian has to fight the likes of Cristo Canyon? Will the honey badger have a speaking role? Why is Adrian's mom on a motorcycle on the cover to volume 3??

Obviously, there may be some readers who won't be excited by the book. Hypothetically they must exist. Even if only in our imaginations. But in the small segment of my friends to whom I've lent the book, nobody does not devour it. My wife, who is even less invested in fight comics than me, loves it. My co-worker, who probably has an unhealthy interest in comics featuring terrible fights (he adores *Jojo's Bizarre Adventure* and pushes it on me regularly), loves it. I love it. You probably will as well. *Last Man* is the ongoing series that most excites me at the moment.

**Question:** Do you see *Last Man* as wholly an adventure? Or as an exploration of ideas in addition to being a kick-ass compulsively readable adventure? Or something else?

**Answer:** The initial idea was to create a huge adventure. Wait. No. Basically, the initial idea was to make our personal *Star Wars*. Wait, actually, no. To be honest, we wanted to make a porn comic book. Then we chose to go for a big non-porn adventure (we don't really remember how and why that transition was made). But in the end, we saw this as an opportunity to create THE comic book we always wanted to make. The kind of book that we loved as teenagers. So there are a lot of nods to what we liked, from *Die Hard* to *Fist of the North Star*.

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Even a cursory read offers ample evidence that *Last Man* would have actually made a hot hentei comic had the creators wished to move in that direction. Vivès and Sanlaville draw ridiculously good-looking people who exhibit a sensuous kind of physicality. For all its PG-rated coyness,[4] *Last Man* is a pretty sexy book. Aldana is all muscles and masculinity and has a bathing scene that pretty obviously smokes. I don't know whether it's intended to appeal to the female gaze or the gay male gaze (though the two seem to increasingly blend and blur), but I doubt there are many from either side of the coin who will be sad.

All that aside though, I'm glad they decided against making a porn comic because then I wouldn't be talking about the book here. And this is such a lovely, exciting book that I *need* to talk about it. The artists portray so much elegance of motion that even heavy, stomping, oxen men move with a kind of liquid energy. Certainly more like a crashing wave than something more gentle, but still. More lithe figures like Adrian exhibit the same sense of weightlessness as the dancers in Vivès' earlier work, *Polina*. The backgrounds, too, are skillfully devised with all manner of unexpected detail. A dragon here, a crowd reaction there. Altogether

lovely.

**Question:** Last Man seems a seamless effort of a single artist, but to know all three of you worked together in some sense blows my mind. How similar are your art styles naturally? Have you had to abandon common traits of your art to achieve such a unified aesthetic?

**Answer:** Bastien and Michael have a similar style, even if they actually don't have the same drawing technique at all. They went to the same animation school (Gobelins) and have already made a comic book together in France (Hollywood Jan, about a kid who's got Stallone, Schwarzenegger and Russell Crowe as imaginary friends). Balak draws the storyboard, so you don't see his art on the page. It's quite different from Bastien's and Mic's, (it looks more like your average Evangelion hentai fanart, TBH.)

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And without segue...

**Question:** From what I've read, the story of Last Man is going to play out across twelve comics volumes, a videogame, and an animated film. How necessary will these non-comics additions be to enjoying the story and do you believe we will have them available in the US?

**Answer:** It will be an animated TV show, twenty-six episodes of twelve minutes, actually. Each media can be enjoyed for its own sake, but you will get a whole picture if you see/read everything. The animated series will shed light on some very big mysteries of the comic book. Hopefully, it will be available in the US, we would like it to be that way. The video game (LASTFIGHT) should be available everywhere by the end of the year.

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One of the things I loved about *Negima* was the unveiling of a large and full cast of characters. That book had plenty of volumes to move about and explore the numerous personalities that comprise the core of its narrative thrust. By the time of the Mahora Martial Arts Tournament (a big magical combat tourney occurring about 1/3 through the series), we've had ten volumes by which to grow attached to all the competitors—essential for creating reader interest in the battles.

Balak, Sanlaville, and Vivès accomplish this in a volume or two. Readers are easily invested in Adrian's and Aldana's stories—and in Elorna's as well. We know enough about Gregorio to know exactly how we want to see his fights end. Alyssa's fight is a surprise and plays well off a moment from volume 1. And of course there's the mystery behind the champions, Cudna and Cristo Canyon. All of this works so flawlessly because these are characters we know; we've been insinuated into intimate moments of their lives and persons through subtle expressions and body language. It's all so very well done.

**Question:** Do you have a favourite character from the series or one who particularly resonates with you? Is it a character we've seen or one to be revealed after volume 2? (Elorna is a favourite of mine so far and I hope we'll see more from her somehow.)

**Answer:** Ha, so you will be happy to know that Elorna will be a very important character in later volumes! Mic's favorite character is Cristo Canyon, because he looks very calm and yet he's very powerful. He's a very complex and important character too. Bastien's favorite is

definitely Adrian Velba. The mother/son relationship means a lot to him. And Balak's favorite is Richard Aldana, because he's a "perdant magnifique" ("beautiful loser"), as we say in French.

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It's hard for me not to gush over *Last Man*. For whatever reason, I am tempted to pretend that I'm above passionately boosting for a series. All the same though, I've long argued for the essential subjectivity of the critic's role—and even more than a critic, I count myself an evangelist for good comics. And *Last Man* is good comics. Actually, it's very good comics. So maybe now I'll have another book to recommend constantly and incessantly and breathlessly forever—right alongside *Cross Game*, the book I'm currently most known for hyping rabidly.

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[Review courtesy of Good Ok Bad.]

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### Footnotes

1) In ten years I'm sure to read this and scoff at the idea that I would consider my tastes to have refined by age 40.

2) Now may be as grand as any place to remark that I don't typically refer to manga as *manga*. I just call them *comics*. I don't typically say graphic novels either. I don't find the differentiation usually very helpful. I will, however, occasionally condescend simply because others will find the shorthand useful. While I don't want to underscore in any sense that Japanese comics are fundamentally different from American, Canadian, Hungarian, Korean, or French comics, there is some small social sense in which "our" perception of Japanese comics differs. So to that end, I'll begrudgingly speak of *manga*.

Otherwise, it's merely a marketing category and I don't actually think those do anybody any good.

3) It often feels like these stories are the product of a creative writing prompt that generates a pile of stories and then those stories are just published one after another. Then the writers in the study group get another writing prompt that is almost identical to the first and are asked to do that same thing again. It occasionally generates some good stories, but there's not really any reason to keep following the series. You can really just wait until you hear about a particularly good story or anthology and pick up that one.

4) Or maybe PG-13, I guess?

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### Schnekk says

SO GOOD

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### Misty says

This series is growing on me more and more. I'm actually pretty curious to see where it's going. Video review of volumes 1 & 2 here.

