



## Snowpiercer, Vol. 2: The Explorers

*Benjamin Legrand, Jean-Marc Rochette (Illustrations), Virginie Selavy (Translator)*

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*Snowpiercer Vol.2* is the second volume of the enthralling and thought-provoking post-apocalyptic graphic novel series that inspired the critically acclaimed movie starring Chris Evans (*Captain America/Fantastic Four*). Originally published in French, this marks the first time that *Snowpiercer* will be available in English.

In a harsh, uncompromisingly cold future where Earth has succumbed to treacherously low temperatures, the last remaining members of humanity travel on a train known as *Snowpiercer* while the outside world remains encased in ice.

The occupants aboard the *Snowpiercer* believed themselves to be the last humans alive, yet they soon learn that they are not alone. There is another train that could potentially spell destruction for the passengers of the *Snowpiercer* as it carves a trail through the endlessly freezing terrain.

This second train houses a small band of people that are willing to brave the relentless cold in search of the truth and discover what is left of the world by any means necessary.

## **Snowpiercer, Vol. 2: The Explorers Details**

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## From Reader Review Snowpiercer, Vol. 2: The Explorers for online ebook

### Michael Scott says

After seeing the movie, I decided to read Jacques Lob's Transperceneige (Snowpiercer). It took me a while to get hold of the graphic novel, but I was excited to read about this dystopian setting: following a climate disaster, after which all of the earth froze, we are following the adventures of the few survivors riding an eternally moving train. Humans being humans, onboard the train emerges a strongly stratified society. The adventure follows the fight for equality of the most oppressed group, the people at the tail of the train. Or so I thought, from the movie. In fact, the movie seems to be either a prequel or a sequel of the tamer scenario in this book. Overall, this second and third installments of the graphic novel were very disappointing, from storyline to characters, from background story to graphics.

We are now past the first installment of the series, so the background story already includes many examples of "this happened... because Zanzibar". These cannot be fixed easily, as any builder of a rich universe has figured in the past, but at least the authors should try to not err again. Instead, we learn that the train government is under-reporting the sustainability related achievements; in particular, the ability of the train to produce its own food. We don't learn why, and since when. Similarly, the government is letting even its own people get bored to death, by denying the creatives in the broadcasting business the power to create new movies and scenes; but... why?!

The main story line has some more interesting parts, especially when the engine slows down - drop the tail and kill the people there, or slow down so all would freeze to death? -, when the train picks up a radio signal - are there other survivors? -, and in a few other reasonable plot twists. Unfortunately, again the plot progresses in jerks, with little thought the characters (or the authors) seem to put into solving their own problems, and much given to incredible new tech or simply to randomness.

The characters remain simpletons, but are better contoured than in the first installment of the series. The hero starts having doubts about his role, to be a rich bastard or to remain in touch with the people, but that's about it.

The graphics remain modern comics style, thick contours, little detail, somewhat realistic faces and environment features. Nothing spectacular, albeit better than the first volume.

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### Katie says

I was hoping that some time and space would give the Snowpiercer franchise some room to grow into itself, but if anything, things just got worse from volume one. It's essentially the same story - alpha male from the lower class charges into relevancy with a rich, underdeveloped love interest in tow - but more convoluted and implausible. Characters never have motivations, actions happen at random and their ramifications are never explored. If there were any sense of fun in any of this, it could have turned into a pleasant-enough campy adventure. But instead Snowpiercer remains relentlessly serious and dour without having anything remotely interesting to say in the process.

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## Matthew Baker says

I am constantly amazed with the impressive concepts authors and filmmakers are coming up with in regard to potential post-apocalyptic societies and how they might play out. From futuristic, peaceful groups to feudal tribes to desolate wasteland scavengers, thousands of different scenarios have been played out in various media. But I can honestly say I never considered the remnants of humanity traveling on a perpetual train. Thus is the premise for SNOWPIERCER, a French graphic novel that has recently been released in English. And while the idea might sound simple, it's not; there is a lot going on in the storyline, which makes this series an epic must-have for comics fans!

I was hesitant to even read this series at first; the idea of the world's survivors traveling around the globe on an enormous train almost sounds too far-fetched to even consider. But I was also intrigued. If a film star like Chris Evans liked the material enough to be in a movie version, then there must be something there. I'm glad I gave the series a chance, because it's excellent!

SNOWPIERCER is written very well and flows at a nice pace. There's a lot of drama involved in the first volume, but the second picks up the pace even more so. I am very impressed with how the writing moves you so quickly through the story. I finished the books before I even realized it!

The artwork looks great as well. My sole complaint is that I wish it had been done in color. I understand the black-and-white aspect can create more drama, but I would really have liked to have seen the detail. This is certainly nothing that should dissuade you from reading it...just a simple, personal opinion.

SNOWPIERCER is a unique vision of what the future could potentially hold for mankind. It is a solidly original entry into the post-apocalyptic genre, and a welcome one at that. I highly recommend giving it a look. Volume 1 is available now, while Volume 2 will hit store shelves next week.

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## Tobin Elliott says

Ugh. This is the last time I do something like that.

I bought into the hype on the covers of these books and bought both the first AND the second at the same time. Then, I really didn't like the first, which meant, had I been more intelligent in my decision making, would never have bought the second one. Alas.

So, I sat down and slogged through yet another unenjoyable session with the people of the Snowpiercer.

There's so much wrong with these stories I can't even be bothered to list them all. But at the top of the list are, forgettable, undeveloped characters, confusing jumps from plot to subplot, horrible dialogue, and plot holes you could drive a...well, a snowpiercer through.

Honestly, this one made less sense than the first volume. And that was *before* they invalidated the entire concept by allowing the train off the tracks.

The only good thing I'll say here is, women aren't portrayed *quite* as badly. Still bad, but not *as* bad. Faint praise, that.

So, what lessons did we learn today, boys and girls? *Do not* buy into the hype, and *do not* buy more than one volume before you know you're going to like it.

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### **Beck Frost says**

So much turmoil inside me right now about this book and book 1 in the grouping. I am hoping that anyone that reads this review will understand it when I say that I both get the books and I don't get the books at the same time. I think the parts that I just don't understand might be the cultural effect of the French. I mean, I understand the mentality of when all is lost, let's keep each warm with sex being rather French. But the back stabbing and manipulations might cross over that threshold as well for some of those seemed really outlandish.

There is so much to love with the art work as it actually got better from book 1 to this one. The visuals in this book are more vivid and drew me into the story so much more than the art of the first book. However, the story arc for the first book was so much better than the ones (plural) for this book. Right when I thought I was starting to maybe understand the human nature that triggered an action, another trigger and off onto another direction. I guess this one goes on story tangents! I would recommend it to anyone that is curious. Now to see what was done with the movie adaption.

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### **Elizabeth says**

As a fan of heartwarming post-apocalyptic dystopian stories, I recently saw the film *Snowpiercer*, which left me asking lots of questions about the train and the people on-board. Naturally, then, I came to the source material for answers, operating on the idea that the book is (almost) always better than the movie. Not in this case!

Volume 1 (*The Escape*) was, incredibly, even more sparse on story and character development than the film. Concepts the graphic novel and the film have in common: a perpetual-motion train, a class system, and lots of snow outside. *The Escape* is a heavy-handed social criticism given a visual metaphor, and not much else.

Volume 2 includes issues two and three, *The Explorers* and *The Crossing*. Honestly, I opened the cover only because I'd gone to the trouble of requesting the *Snowpiercer* books from the library, and so had it in hand. I wasn't expecting much, but am happy to have had my expectation dashed.

In *The Explorers*, we learn there is a second train, *Icebreaker*, housing the remnants of humanity, and of which *Snowpiercer* is ignorant. Aboard *Icebreaker*, however, the passengers are all too aware of *Snowpiercer*, and live in fear of a head-on collision with the other train, an event that seems to become more of a cosmic certainty with every passing year.

In this atmosphere of paranoia and eternal boredom, we meet Puig. The several panels devoted to his backstory help make him a much more richly developed protagonist than Proloff from *The Escape*. Puig is an Explorer, someone who ventures outside the train to evaluate conditions and hunt for artifacts from

humanity's past. One mission leads him to a startling discovery about those who lead Icebreaker's society, and the fate of Snowpiercer.

The Explorers delivers a tight, fast-paced story that maintains the original installment's gritty class struggle, while dialing back the existentialism in favor of telling a cohesive tale.

Part 3, The Crossing, goes a little off the rails, both figuratively and literally. While no solid time frame is given, The Crossing seems to take place several years after the events of The Explorers. In this issue, the philosophical and sociological issues raised in The Escape return to the forefront. What would (or should) we sacrifice in the name of not being alone in the universe? When Puig and the other leaders of Icebreaker discover a signal that might indicate the existence of other survivors of Earth's cataclysm, they decide to track down the source of the signal. This choice creates a schism in Icebreaker's society, between those who wish to continue their safe, predictable existence, and those who yearn for a brighter future.

It should be noted that there are two different authors in the Snowpiercer series. The Escape was written by Jacques Lob. He passed away in 1990, and Benjamin Legrand is the author behind The Explorers and The Crossing. While Lob must be credited for devising Snowpiercer's world, Legrand is the author who, in my opinion, realized the true potential of the concept.

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### **Andy says**

[, and standing over its characters' icy tomb, impassively listening to the music and watching them die a slow, numb, frostbitten death (hide spoiler)]

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### **Sean Kottke says**

The two stories in this volume swap the first storyline's existential allegory for more character-driven political parable, with strong relevance to the threat of a return to a "demon-haunted world" that Carl Sagan warned about in his final years. The expansion of the world of the first volume is exactly what a good sequel ought to provide, and what portions of the story lack in cogent storytelling flow is made up for by an indelibly haunting mood. The darker, smudgier art of this volume gave a visceral sense of what it would be like to live in this world, and like *THX 1138*, it feels more like a text that might be produced in the world it depicts than one that cleanly explicates that world for outsiders.

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### **Stephen says**

HATED. I saw the Snowpiercer movie and totally enjoyed it. These books are nothing like the movie, featuring an entirely different storyline, characters, etc. Only the apocalyptic frozen world and the titular train were the same. The first book was fine - a little straightforward and a little boring but ultimately perfectly acceptable. BUT THIS ONE. I've never been so simultaneously bored and confused. Toward the end I started skimming, pushing through every ridiculous plot twist and hilariously poorly and gratuitously illustrated headshot just to see how it would end. SPOILER ALERT: NOT SATISFACTORILY. I don't need everything wrapped up in a neat bow but the ending made me wish I hadn't even bothered. (I'm told that it's "very French" but, as somewhat of a Francophile myself, I'm not buying it.) Maybe I totally missed the point

somewhere along the line but, honestly, just stick to the movie.

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### **Jenny Lee Ryan says**

If you're convinced that french literature could not possibly be more dark and dismal, this book will prove you wrong.

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### **Edward Rathke says**

These books are insanely disappointing. It's odd to think Bong Joon-ho could make such a great film out of such dumb books.

I think like a lot of people who were disappointed by the first book but ended up reading the second, I was hoping to find some glimmers of where the film grew out of. But basically the only similarity is the concept.

But, yeah, better to just pretend these graphic novels don't exist and watch the film again. It's ridiculous how much better it is.

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### **Emma Sea says**

Well. How very, very French.

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### **Matt says**

well that was just awful! So according to this hack of a writer, there was another train with the exact same technology on the exact same tracks, and apparently smashed into the other train. It looks like they fit the old engine into the new train and the mummified remains operate the old engine, while a former explorer keeps the mummified remains company..YEA I'm not making this up...Oh but it gets better! They can apparently put chains on the wheels so it can hop off the tracks and cruise around on the frozen ocean, no explanation of how they actually got the train off the tracks or how they can actually steer a train (most trains run on rails so there is no need for a steering wheel only an acceleration and brake lever). Oh wait it gets even better! So while they are cruising on the ocean, they encounter a ship that just so happens to fire two missiles, no more explanation given and the book ends with the signal they received as just an old systematic recording. Even the artist didn't put much into (same artist as the first book) this book. The most tragic of all this is that I bought the 2nd and 3rd volumes hoping they were as good as the first (I doubt I'll ever read the 3rd volume)..I truly hope Jacques Lob is haunting the sh!t out of Benjamin LeGrand on an hourly basis, for that hack has truly ruined such an amazing story!

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## **BB says**

Actual rating: 2.5 stars

Definitely lacking in comparison to the first volume, but has some interesting ideas. Recommended in order to get to the third volume.

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## **Callie Rose Tyler says**

Have you ever seen a hastily made cash-grab sequel? They are often straight to dvd, have an entirely new cast, and although they seem like a carbon copy of the original characters and plot, they are devoid of the heart and creativity that made the original special. Snowpiercer 2 is that straight to dvd sequel. The story does not pick up where the first one ends, I guess those fictional characters were busy on other projects or where outside the production budget. Instead, the two main characters Proloff and his bald chick are simply referenced with the added bonus of a sound bite that was probably edited together from the first book.

The story was confusing, unnecessary, and completely unbelievable. In true Hollywood fashion, there was less substance and more explosions. we don't need logic we have BOOM!

The characters followed the same formula, with our bad ass male protagonist and his privileged love interest who is pretty much a non-entity. There are the obligatory baddies who deceive the poor just for the fun of it, (view spoiler) and rich people who chomp down on caviar while chilling in first class.

What really didn't make sense to me was that this story followed a completely different train also known as the Snowpiercer. Snowpiercer 1 didn't know about 2 but they were on the same track for like over a decade? What!? This isn't making any sense!?

Half of this didn't make sense the other half was too boring to care about it making sense. There might have been something lost in translation but mostly this was just stupid.

Overall, this had no redeeming qualities I wish I didn't waste my time.

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