



Tokyo Ghost, Vol. 1: Atomic Garden

Rick Remender (Writer), Sean Gordon Murphy (Artist), Matt Hollingsworth (Colourist), Russ Wooton (Letterer)

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The Isles of Los Angeles 2089: humanity is addicted to technology. Getting a virtual buzz is the only thing left to live for, and gangsters run it all. Who do these gangsters turn to when they need their rule enforced? Constables Led Dent and Debbie Decay are about to be given a job that will force them out of the familiar squalor of LA and into the last tech-less country on Earth: The Garden Nation of Tokyo.

Collecting: *Tokyo Ghost* 1-5

Tokyo Ghost, Vol. 1: Atomic Garden Details

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Author : Rick Remender (Writer) , Sean Gordon Murphy (Artist) , Matt Hollingsworth (Colourist) , Russ Wooton (Letterer)

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From Reader Review Tokyo Ghost, Vol. 1: Atomic Garden for online ebook

Scarlet Cameo says

This one of this graphic novels in which you need to take your time because the firsts pages you don't have any freaking idea about what's happening, the images and the dialoges start give you some clues but there's so much to procced...the Jesus of Killer, the technological society, the girl who kick ass but you don't know why is here, the robot-human-big guy or something like that...but as the pages carry on everything start to have sense and even more the plot start be really interesting. And i don't even had to change the issue, in the first one this turn of events happen.

But honestly the really interesting part start when our characters made their dreams come true...how manny problems you can get when this happen is the real deal of this story and is show made great.

If you like manga maybe this wold like you better than me, because i feel this have that style.

A digital copy of this book was provided by NetGalley

Venus Maneater says

I opened the file, started reading.... and during the first few pages I wasn't sure if I even wanted to finish this comic. There's just...so much going on, it's overwhelming. Its Masamune Shirow's Ghost in the Shell mixed with a little Judge Dredd and a sprinkle of Sin City, all dipped in harsh 80's neon coloring and tripping on a whole lot of A grade acid. There is sex and drugs and ultra-violence.

You can practically hear the soundtrack of Escape from New York or Blade Runner blaring off the pages while you're trying to make sense of what is happening and who it's happening to.

And when I finished chapter one, I fucking loved it and read the whole thing with Kavinsky playing in the background, and it was glorious!

There's Debbie Decay, who narrates Tokyo Ghost and introduces herself as the only non-augmented human in the goddamn mess that's 2089 LA. She's working with her main man, the boy she once fell in love with, her partner in crime; Led Dent AKA Teddy. A chip the size of a house on his shoulder, he's permanently plugged in, addicted to everything the digital world has to offer, working on constant sensory overload. Fed with canned emotions, instant adrenaline within reach – he's Debbie's personal Berserker. He rides a bike like Kaneda and has the bulk of Bane, but with him permanently jacked in, there's not much left of the boy she once promised to stay forever non-tech with.

“*My shows*” is all he says when she takes off his helmet and pants, kisses him and straddles him gently. She leaves him drooling on the floor, pants around his knees, her Teddy long gone and she's asking herself what makes her stay; hope or abandonment issues?

When we meet them, they're going after Davey Trauma, a scooter-wielding man who's able to hack into the

brain of anyone who's connected to the internet (I told you – Ghost in the Shell) and uses that skill to go on murder sprees for plain ol' fun. There's no reason, only mindless killing. Debbie and Led need to catch him. Not because of public safety per se, but their boss wants the precious intel that's stuffed in that upgraded noggin of his.

Their boss, the only real villain in this Technicolor tale, his name is Flak and you'll hate his guts. He's a better looking Trump on steroids, with servants literally tripping over each other to drink his bathwater once he's done peeing in it. And he's promising Debbie the one thing she's been wishing for – freedom. Her boyfriend no longer addicted, both tech-free and able to go and do as they please. Live life where there are real trees.

All it takes is that one last job.

It's painfully obvious that Flak has been promising her that for a while, but this time it feels real and she bites hard. Tokyo it is. I won't spoil it, but it won't be what you expected! You've read Akira, Vol. 1, watched enough anime to know that the future of Tokyo is supposed to be a Cyberpunk Hell, a dystopian wasteland! At least, that's what I expected. Instead we get salvation, temptation and a whole lotta demons.

Tokyo Ghost is a wonderful and sad ride, I loved it. The story gets thin at times, but the art by Sean Murphy more than makes up for it. If you love cyberpunk, you'll also love this.

I received this from Netgalley and Image Comics in exchange for an honest review.

Paul E. Morph says

This was a birthday gift from Joe and Alisha; thanks, guys! :-)

Let me start by saying the artwork in this book is amazing. Sean Murphy's influences are pretty detectable; there's some Bill Sienkiewicz in there, some Ashley Wood and even some Frank Miller. This adds up to one heck of a sum. Murphy's work is highly kinetic, highly detailed (in places) and shows that this guy knows how to steer a line. Equally impressive is the colour art by Matt Hollingsworth, which is absolutely breathtaking at times. It is safe to say this book would be worth reading for the artwork alone.

What about the story, though? Well, I'll begin by saying I'm a fan of Rick Remender's work, particularly on *Black Science*, which is currently one of my favourite monthlies. This one, though, feels a little heavy-handed message-wise. It's pretty much a standard 'technology is bad, let's all go back to nature' schtick and I'm really not a huge fan of those.

One of the problems I have with anti-technology stories is that they tend to be pretty arbitrary with the dividing line between what counts as 'good' technology and what counts as 'bad' technology. In this book, pretty much anything that a thirty-something comicbook writer can be nostalgic about (record players, for example) is permissible, but anything post-1980 is eeeeeeeevil and corrupting. What a load of old bollocks. It's not technology that's bad, it's some of the uses it can be put to that are bad, and that's true of every technology from the stick onwards. Nobody's seriously suggestion we should go back to being a pre-tool using species, surely?

Another thing that irked me was a scene mocking superheroes. I have no problem with people mocking superheroes (they are pretty ridiculous, to be fair) unless the writer in question is being a big ol' hypocrite, as

in this case. The protagonists of this book are essentially superheroes in everything but name. Let's take the standard superheros-are-bad test, shall we?

1. Superheroes dress in ridiculous costumes. Tokyo Ghost protagonists dress in ridiculous costumes.
2. Superheroes represent an unrealistic ideal of physical perfection. Tokyo Ghost protagonists represent an unrealistic ideal of physical perfection.
3. Superheroes operate under an overly simplistic moral code. Tokyo Ghost protagonists operate under an overly simplistic moral code.
4. Superheroes represent an adolescent male power fantasy. Tokyo Ghost protagonists represent an adolescent male power fantasy.
5. Superheroes have abilities far beyond those of normal humans. Tokyo Ghost protagonists have abilities far beyond those of normal humans.

I could go on, but I'm boring myself. Let's just refer back to the old people in glass houses shouldn't throw stones thing and leave it at that.

Don't get me wrong; the story wasn't terrible; it just annoyed me in places.

Overall, I'd give this 3 stars for the story and 5 stars for the artwork.

Javier Muñoz says

Lead Mella y Debbie Declive forman una pareja de alguaciles de la Corporación Flak que se dedican a proteger a sus clientes de los abusos de los hackers, tras resolver su último caso el Sr Flak les encarga una nueva misión, viajar desde los Ángeles a la nación jardín de Tokyo, el último lugar libre de tecnología de la tierra, para acabar con el cacique que está en el poder y conseguir acceso a los recursos (agua limpia y comida) necesarios para mejorar la vida en el estado de Los Ángeles.

Debbie ve esta misión como una oportunidad única para desenganchar a Lead de las dosis de información y vita (nanobots que liberan agentes químicos varios en el organismo) que le alejan del mundo real, para recuperar al chico de quién se enamoró.

Fuerte crítica al abuso de la tecnología y la destrucción de la naturaleza en un cómic con una historia bastante original, una espectacular ambientación cyberpunk, un dibujo genial de Sean Murphy, que consigue modular el ritmo de la narración (vertiginoso en unos pasajes, pausado en otros) y un color esplendoroso de Hollingsworth que recrea a la perfección todos los ambientes, desde la megametropolis de Los Ángeles a los preciosos pueblos en armonía con la naturaleza de la nación jardín de Tokyo.

El final queda un poco en el aire a la espera de continuación y por eso no le pongo un 5, pero es posiblemente lo mejor que he leído en cómic este año.

Benjamin says

I have appreciated some of Remenders work, but I have never absolutely enjoyed any of it. He can bring you interesting concepts and make you think about the current state of humanity, but his dialogue and character development needs work. I don't know if I would pick up another Remender book after this nonsense.

Reviewed with honesty for Netgalley
(Honestly)

Jonathan says

5 stars

Remember that Jude Law movie Repo Men? This takes a bit of that idea and runs with it.

Absolute masterpiece dystopian sci-fi story here by Remender and Murphy.

Sud666 says

So when I first started reading this I wasn't sure I'd like it. Semmed like a rip-off of Judge Dredd and I am not a Judge Dredd fan. I am happy to say I stand corrected. Tokyo Ghost is a very interesting sci-fi story. Remender does a great job with any sci-fi world and his gradual world building for future LA is very well done. The two constables are a good team and their exploration of humanity without the need for the tech is a very interesting statement.

The story really takes off when they enter the Japanese Garden. Very interesting world they built. All in all, while the art isn't top notch, the story does drag you in. What the art fails to do with small detail, it does well with large scenes. I will be glad to read more of this dystopian action comic. Remender is quite talented when it comes to sci-fi.

Donovan says

"Consumption gives human life *meaning*."

Tokyo ghost is a beautifully illustrated dystopian tale of action, romance, and severe social allegory. And

damn it, even on my second read this is Rick Remender's most ambitious work to date.

Constables Led Dent and Debbie "Decay" Jacobs are trying to quit their employer and multimedia conglomerate Flak to escape Los Angeles, now a toxic, murderous, debauched city-state you can scarcely imagine. Somehow it is beautiful in its horror.

"Once upon a time there was a girl named Debbie Jacobs and a boy named Teddy Dennis."

The real story is Led and Deb: a kind boy turned tech-catatonic musclehead, cared for by a lovely but codependent, heartbroken woman. On their last constabulary mission they head to distant Tokyo, not knowing if it's even real, only to have a spiritual paradise waiting for them.

Led and Deb are very much a twisted beast and beauty, yin and yang. Led's is a tale of weakness, revenge, and addiction. A fragile teenage boy who makes the wrong choice with the best intention. While Deb's is a tale of purity, pity and loneliness. A lovely girl who falls in love with an irreparably damaged man.

Needless to say, characterization is incredible. I absolutely loved these believably human characters. My one criticism, though, as Remender is sometimes known to do, is the dialog can feel forced. Davey Trauma alone, with his hipster douchebag profanity, is beyond absurd. But the thing is this world is totally absurd, especially L.A. And in contrast to the calm and timeless Tokyo, it sort of makes sense. Other times the dialog is very self-aware. But incredibly well written. So I let it slide.

I could talk about this book all day long, but I want to touch briefly on the general tone and impression. When not about Led and Deb, this world is a pretty crazy and bleak but reasonable exaggeration of the world we know. Remender is scathingly allegorical, he's a dark cynic who sees the world of fast food, porn, pop ups and reality TV as a representation of the worst of modern culture. But the writing, while dark, somehow enlightens you to these truths and shows you there is light and transcendence beyond all this bullshit, that we're better than this, exposing the weak psychology of humans while affirming the inherent strength and good of our inner spiritual selves. That after all the hate and violence and debauchery we've still got love and willpower.

This book wouldn't be a quarter of what it is without Sean Murphy and Matt Hollingsworth. The artwork is fucking stunning. I'm not great with art history, but I can tell that Murphy "draws" inspiration from anime and classic Japanese artwork. It just has that look. And Hollingsworth is a god with colors. It's mystical the way he transforms pencils and inks. And the world building that's accomplished here is incomparable, involving so much planning and refining to capture the unique essence of a hyper-detailed super future.

So if dystopian allegory, hyperviolence, sex, technology, samurai, and tank motorcycles appeal to you, pick up this wonderfully different comic. Probably the best I've ever read from Remender, Murphy and Hollingsworth. Period.

Gianfranco Mancini says

Wow... reading this one was a real blast.

Like Pat Mills and Frank Miller writing Marshall Law meets Ronin after watching a Masamune Shirow anime marathon and drinking a fully loaded wagon of beers.

Not bad at all for being a random purchase, I got it after visiting a manga exhibit here in Rome and I was just in the mood... found this in the museum bookstore and the artworks hooked me for good.

If you like anime about cyberpunk dystopian settings filled with ultraviolence and an anti-technology message this is just the graphic novel for you

11811 (Eleven) says

Outstanding art with a clever and bizarre story that I maybe didn't like very much. Still not sure what to make of the story. 3.5 stars.

Cheese says

So this was one of Remender's earlier gems of another dystopian future.

As we all know Remender goes on and on about his mental health and in this one it really shows in his comics. I think he must have been going through therapy when writing this and this would have been a great outlet of his creativity. He uses physiological meanings and words, to the point when he's shoe horning them in like "I'm not codependent on you babe". It shows his immaturity and holds the characters back.

Nonetheless a really good story but I'm just not that interested in it.

Maria (Big City Bookworm) says

Actual Rating: 4.5 Stars

"We eat together. No one distracted by phones, no one politicking for money or stature. No loud egos. No one more important than anyone else...how sweet the simplicity is."

I grabbed this first volume of Tokyo Ghost on a whim while attending Fan Expo Canada at the end of the summer. I had heard of it previously because (if you don't know this yet, where have you been?) Deadly Class, also written by Rick Remender, happens to be my favourite comic series of all time. While exploring the other works of Remender, I came across Tokyo Ghost and knew I needed to pick it up as soon as I could. Well, I finally did...and even though it took me forever to finally read it, I'm super glad that I did.

What I Liked

The writing. Rick Remender just never disappoints. The first time I read anything by him was Deadly Class, and the writing was so instantly relatable, it hooked me right in. It was no different with Tokyo Ghost. The writing is phenomenal and I absolutely fell in love with it.

The art. Tokyo Ghost contains some of the most intricate and detailed artwork I have ever seen. Not only is the art style beautiful in itself, but the colouring is unlike anything I've seen in a comic before. There were moments where it may have felt a little too busy, but for the most part, Tokyo Ghost is visually stunning.

The creative storyline. I mean, how unique is this. A futuristic setting in which the drug of choice is technology. Honestly, this doesn't seem very far off from a possible future reality.

The characters. I won't lie, at first I wasn't really connecting with either Debbie or Led, but then we got to learn more about their back stories. That's when I fell in love. Their story is just perfect and I was not expecting that at all from this comic. Not only were our two main characters fantastic, but we also got to meet quite a few memorable side characters.

What I Didn't Like

The slow start. It took a little while before I really started feeling the story and the characters. Tokyo Ghost starts with a very action packed scene and it took me a while to understand everything that was happening. I'm glad I stuck with it though, because things definitely got interesting.

While Tokyo Ghost was slow to start, and maybe slightly confusing at first, it definitely picks up and is just as action packed, well written and beautiful as I expected. I have already ordered volume two because Rick Remender is the master of the cliffhanger.

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Initial post reading thoughts:

Rick Remender wrote it...so I bought it. It took a while to get started and I'll admit I was a little confused at first, but once the story got going, I was totally into it. I loved the writing, the art, the story and the creativity of it. This one is definitely worth checking out!

I read this as part of #SPOOKATHON 2016!

Logan Young says

Art: 4.5

Story: 1.0

Edit: On further reflection I downgraded this from two stars to one. The art fails to redeem the story enough.

I'll start with what's strong about Tokyo Ghost, and that's the art. This is the second comic I have read that is drawn and colored by Murphy and Hollingsworth and their work is just incredible. The world building they conceptualized and character designs are brilliant. If you are going to read Tokyo Ghost, pick it up for the art, because the story is trash.

I don't know where to begin with the story, this is the worst thing I have read written by Remender. I don't get how people think the writing is so great? Remender could not write a good piece of dialogue to save his life, the Davey character being the most egregious example.

I ain't no noob, I don't use cheat codes

Very hip Remender, that will connect to those cool young readers.

-YOLO BITCHES! You slags see that shit?
-That was killer, boss!
-Well thank you, Paulie Q, you cunty bootlicker.

What the hell am I even reading?

And the tons of boring exposition seemed lazy. And why are they going to Japan? There seemed no reason at all to set half the book in Tokyo or even title it "Tokyo Ghost," it just seemed like Remender wanted to set something in Japan and use all that cool samurai and ninja imagery while not giving a shit about being thoughtful and respectful to the culture. It's interesting how there was literally only one Japanese character that I could discern. And everyone in Tokyo speaks only English magically, although I guess that makes sense actually since they are all white. Then (view spoiler) But then Remender seems to be aware of how dumb it is that Tokyo is full of white people because he refers to them later as "samurai cosplayers." It is just another example of the oblivious racism we have seen for decades from American media when it comes to Japan.

Also, when does an author cross the line from referencing other stories to honor them to just plain stealing? Because I think Remender crossed the line into stealing. The Constable police figures are pretty much Judge Dredd, Led's bike design and all the motorcycle violence, as well as (view spoiler) are 100% Akira, the way people plug-in to the web (which I guess is just TV?? that's dumb) while moving through reality/the web-drug idea/the nation of Los Angeles are all Snow Crash. There's more I'm sure but everyone is praising Tokyo Ghost as being incredibly original but I have the opposite opinion.

And what was up with all the gratuitous sex? I don't mind sex if it advances the story but none of this was necessary. And I think Remender had Murphy draw a bunch of dicks as well as tits so he wouldn't be called a misogynist. I liked that the narrator was a woman but with Remender it always sounds like a man trying to sound like a woman. And you can tell that is was a guy who designed her character...

All in all, I liked the art lot but the story was bad, borderline offensive shit. It is one of the stories that if I find out one of my friends likes it, I will need to sit down and explain to them why it is so problematic. And dumb, so goddamn dumb. This is one of those comics that is now a standard for how I determine if I can

respect someone's literary taste.

Steve says

I received this from Netgalley and Image Comics in exchange for an honest review.

I was hesitant to grab this one, which was an automatic download on Netgalley. I've been snared a few times by Rick Remender, and it was the old "fool me once..." scenario.

Surprisingly, I really, REALLY dug this one. The storyline, the artwork, it all merged into a bang-up volume.

From the insanity of the tech-heavy LA to the peaceful tech-free Tokyo, this story of trying to escape one's past and build a new life was really quite good.

I'll definitely book looking for more volumes in this series!

Zane Hoffmann says

This was pretty awesome. Definitely not what I was expecting from Rick Remender after reading *Deadly Class*.

I loved the setting and premise, a dystopian cyberpunk society where in order to escape from the terrible world around them people plug themselves into tech.

The story follows Debbie, a pretty neat young lady who is attempting to survive day to day in the hellish landscape that is L.A. with her tech addicted boyfriend, Led or Teddy or something. Oh yeah, and Led is a constable and he goes around on a big motorcycle and kills people and shoots bad guys and all types of crazy SHIT for this guy named Flak, who's L.A.'s #1 supplier of tech. Anyways, Debbie is hoping to get Teddy off the tech and works out a deal with Flak to help them get away from it, but seeing as Flak is a big shady corporate glad hand he screws them over and uses them in hopes to exploit Tokyo, the last tech-free haven in the world.

I don't have any real complaints about the book except a certain character named Davey and a few dialogue issues, which usually are in regards to the character in question. He's pretty much an exact replica of the character Handsome Jack from the *Borderlands* video game and much like Jack he constantly spouts memes and other equally contrived garbage and it just seems like a poor attempt at humor from Remender. Other than that *Tokyo Ghoul* is a pretty solid book, good story, good art.

Can't wait for volume 2.
