



# Grandville Bête Noire

*Bryan Talbot*

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The baffling murder of a famed Parisian artist in his locked and guarded studio takes the tenacious Detective Inspector LeBrock of Scotland Yard and his faithful adjunct, Detective Sargent Ratzi, into the cut-throat Grandville art scene to track the mysterious assassin. As the body count mounts and events spiral out of control, the investigation points to Toad Hall, where a cabal of industrialists and fat cats plot the overthrow of the French State . . . by use of steam-driven automaton soldiers A Victorian anthropomorphic thriller, Grandville Bete Noire signals the welcome return of master storyteller and graphic-novel pioneer Bryan Talbot to his Eisner and Hugo award nominated steampunk detective series.

## Grandville Bête Noire Details

Date : Published December 11th 2012 by Dark Horse Books (first published December 6th 2012)

ISBN : 9781595828903

Author : Bryan Talbot

Format : Hardcover 96 pages

Genre : Sequential Art, Graphic Novels, Comics, Science Fiction, Steampunk, Fantasy, Mystery, Crime, Alternate History, Fiction

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# From Reader Review Grandville Bête Noire for online ebook

## Alex Sarll says

The sledgehammer politics continue to vex me, but this volume does feature a scene with a toad smoking a pipe, so it can't be all bad.

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## Laura says

Steampunk, mystery, adventure, characters are anthropomorphic animals, lovely art, but it lost me at the gratuitous female nudity. This is not a prudish complaint. The scene is very tastefully done and fits the story - but why does a female badger have a sexy human body? She's a badger, he's a badger, in a world where badgers wear clothes I'm sure the readers are intelligent enough to get that he'd be titillated by a female badger with no clothes without having to show us a naked human woman with a badger head. The answer seems to be that the reader needs to see a naked human female. I was further exhausted by the fact that the female badger is a "strong" female character in a historical setting so of course she's a BDSM mistress, a trope only slightly less worn out than the making her run a whorehouse to demonstrate her moxie. I'd have been far more impressed if the author had come up with a more creative profession for her. I had quit reading comics because of the rampant misogyny in the field and it disappoints me to see it in a Hugo nominee.

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## Nicola Mansfield says

Reason for Reading: I loved the whole premise of this series: animal fantasy, steampunk, crime mystery, and even though I hadn't read the previous issues, the cover art made me want to read this \*now\*.

What a fantastic comic. Steeped in allusions to James Bond, Wind in the Willows and Sherlock Holmes this pastiche of anthropomorphic animals had me intrigued from the get-go. Set in a steampunk Paris which is alluded to as "Grandville" in this alternate world where animals rule supreme and human beings are considered of a lesser evolutionary scale. This is a world in which Britain has just recently won its Independence from a France-ruled Empire that won the Napoleonic Wars. France itself has also just recently become a more politically socialist state and steam driven automata are the norm in this world. A fantastic world that I absolutely enjoyed.

This particular story sees LeBrock facing off against the evil Krapau, a Bond-like villain, and wooing his lady love the nude model/prostitute, Billie. A tantalizing story and I'll be going back to read the first two in the series. The artwork is superb and a delight to the eyes. Done in an overall black and white effect, though the blacks range from dark grey to blue shades. Colour has been used to great advantage, especially with red added to the b/w scenes but some panels even employ full colour. A truly eye-catching piece of artwork. Loved the story and find Inspector LeBrock to be a deep, mysterious yet amusing character.

Of note, this book is not for children. While the violence is not graphic. It is implied and there is plenty of blood and cold-blooded murder. The language is infrequent but doesn't hold any bars including a variety of colourful words up to and including the f-word. Finally, sexual situations are implied and full frontal female nudity is shown, even if they have the heads of badgers. Both the publisher and I agree on an age range of

16+.

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### **Sara says**

The first Grandville had a more nebulous alignment with Sherlock Holmes, but the newer two are very distinctly an homage. Still, LeBrock is great, the art is great, and the alternate history Talbot has invented is fascinating (and not TOO steampunk; just enough). There's a ton of new material hiding in there for future Grandville books. And it's always fun to read something from Dark Horse.

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### **Raina says**

Srsly.

I thought about dropping this series, but I'm so glad I didn't.

This one plays with ideas ripped from art history - particularly featuring the rise of abstract art as a counter to the political content of some of the figurative art during the cold war (see <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/wor...> for some of the real story). Lebrock tangles with corporate villains, mad scientists and depressed artists in a Bond-style adventure. Workers rights, racism, and class dynamics feature prominently. Meanwhile, Billie, Lebrock's current love interest, gets some seriously badass moments. Oh, and there's a meerkat gang, a creepy looking lady raccoon, and lots and lots of fun gadgetry.

SOO yummy. I feel like this needs more attention than it gets.

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### **Michael says**

I'm a big fan of Talbot's steampunk, talking animal mysteries and the way the characters develop and the situations build on each other. I'm an even bigger fan when he's clearly drawing inspiration from James Bond as he is in this volume. Can't get enough of this series.

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### **Seizure Romero says**

This is the third in the Grandville series (I use "series" because I hope there are many more). I didn't know there was a second. Where the hell have I been? What else have I missed? How are books getting published that I don't know about?

AAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH!!!

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### **Lauri says**

Kolmas osa nutika mägrast detektiivivi seiklustest aurupunk-Pariisis, mille elanikud on antropomorfsed

loomad. Kummardusi tehakse siia ja sinna, näiteks põhikurjam konn on pärit klassikalisest Kenneth Graham'i "The Wind in the Willows'ist".  
Ei, väga vinge sari, kiirelt mu personaalse edetabeli tippu tõusnud, kui mitte lausa esikohale...

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## Chris says

Grandville Bete Noire

Disclaimer – I got a copy via Netgalley.

I really hate star systems. I do. I believe many, maybe even most, readers do. Then Amazon has to go and foul things up by making a three star review a bad review, when it really isn't.

I'm conflicted about this graphic novel. I really am. I'm waffling between three and four stars. I haven't read the others in the series, so I think that if I had, I might be more secure about giving this four stars. But I haven't, however, after reading this I want to read them.

Grandville Bete Noire is James Bond meets Wind in the Willows. You think it wouldn't work, but it does. It really does. Our fearless hero Badger, LeBrock, finds himself caught up in a murder mystery. His world is one the reader will almost recognize – a steampunk, animal world, a what-if Napoleon had won. He travels to France where he and his faithful Sergeant meet LeBrock's love interest - a badger of the evening named Billie.

I found the plot, the detective story, to be a little under-whelming. It could be because I've read Ruth Rendell lately. Whatever the reason, the plot – just the plot – wasn't bad, but I didn't find it outstanding.

Yet, YET, the world building, the characters, and the little jokes and references make up for it and keep the book enjoyable. While LeBrock is more empathic than James Bond and more rough tumble (as a badger should be), he does have the flair and magnetism of James Bond. Yet, I must admit, my favorite character was Billie who I first dismissed as your standard Bond girl. She might be a Bond girl – in the tradition of Diana Rigg. While her job and clothing choices mark as the eye candy, she is far more nuanced and strong character. She knows her worth and does not change for anyone. She chooses – she isn't chosen. And she is a good shot.

What I really enjoyed were the allusions. Not only are there references to James Bond (as well as a certain famous villain), but there are appearances by Paddington, famous artists, and writers. Talbot really knows what he is drawing on - not only in the terms of literature and art, but also history. There is a beautiful sequence at an art exhibit, an opening attended by Billie and LeBrock. Look closely at the paintings on the walls, paintings that Billie posed for. They are perfectly chosen for her character. Then the protest that break out. Marvelous. There are also some funny instances of word play. Also Talbot is an author who seems to trust his reader. If you don't know what he is drawing on, it is explained in the Afterword, a good idea because the reader is not told what to notice – which is what a foreword would have done.

Okay, I guess I am no longer conflicted about how to rate this graphic novel. Extremely enjoyable.

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## Tom Mathews says

I'm not usually that big on anthropomorphic characters but the magnificent artwork, dynamic alternate-history steampunk setting and action-packed plot totally sucked me in. If you like subversive plots like *V for Vendetta*, you should appreciate *Grandville*.

*Grandville Bete Noir* is the third book (following *Grandville* and *Grandville Mon Amour*) in what will soon be a five-volume series of graphic novels. It can best be described as that you would dream after mixing *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, *The Wind in the Willows*, *Midnight in Paris* and psilocybin mushrooms. The *Grandville* of the titles is a nickname for Paris in this alternate university where the French rule the world and Paris is the center of all cultural and political activity. In this installment, someone is kidnapping all of the most prominent scientists and killing the most famous artists. (Be sure not to miss the afterward in which the author explains his inspiration for his **Art War**. It's an eye-opener.)

On my **Series ranking scale**<sup>1</sup> I give the *Grandville* series rating of three. The series has a substantial and evolving backstory and they are best read in order but readers without the inclination or access to previous books in the series will still be able to enjoy this book.

Hint: If you are looking for a copy of these books, check with your local library to see if they have access to Hoopla digital content.

<sup>1</sup> **A Note on Series:** Some people insist on reading series in order starting at the beginning. I believe that this is absolutely necessary with some series and unnecessary in others. In my reviews I assign books in a series a score of one to five in which the higher score denotes increased importance of reading the book in order. A series with returning villains, an ongoing story arc, and evolving family dynamics will rate higher than one where the plot in each book is totally unrelated to the others. As an example, a *Nancy Drew* book would be a one. There is no evolving story arc. *Nancy* hasn't grown any older in fifty years and, face it, *Ned* is never going to propose to her. *The Lord of the Rings*, on the other hand, is a five. Reading the trilogy in order is essential to fully understanding and appreciating the story. One book picks up right where its predecessor leaves off and *Fellowship of the Ring* contains information that readers of *The Two Towers* really need to know. Besides, Tolkien originally wrote it as a single volume.

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## Garrett says

*Grandville* continues to be an amazing graphic novel series. This one was a little bit slower than the last two volumes, but the climax totally paid off. It ended up being a great story with themes of representational vs abstract art and I loved that aspect of this book.

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## Emily says

Another winner in the *Grandville* series. I don't have much to say about this particular installment except that the art is striking and the mystery was decent. I continue to enjoy *Ratzi's* lines the most. The author's commentary at the end about what inspired the plot was interesting.

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### **Jonathan says**

Book 3 finds Detective Inspector LeBrock and his trusty sidekick Detective Sergeant Roderick Ratzl up against the formidable Baron Aristotle Krapaud, a fabulously wealthy industrialist and criminal mastermind who is intent on overthrowing the current regime in France and taking ultimate power for himself. Heedless of their involvement is a group of scientists who are creating machines that the Baron will use to achieve his aims. All very dastardly.

My favorite bits in this lusciously illustrated story are the Baron's concurrent plot to wipe out traditional art forms and replace them with purely abstract art, and in so doing prevent artists from criticizing him or his methods of control, and Bryan Talbot's chuckle inducing animal references (which on a serious note reflect how often we dismiss animals in everyday speech as worthless, negative things). A fine addition to this enjoyable romp of a series.

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### **Carrie says**

I knew I disliked Jackson Pollock, but now I know why! :)

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### **Jenny (Reading Envy) says**

One reviewer labeled this as Wind in the Willows meets James Bond, only she thought it was a good thing. I couldn't get into this story about steampunk animals, with a prostitute badger (with human feet? what?) and a godfather toad.

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