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Dororo Volume 1

Osamu Tezuka
Vertical (Apr 29, 2008)
Unknown $13.95 (312pp)
978-1-934287-16-3

The title of this book comes from the Japanese word *dorobo* which means *thief*, but little children often can't pronounce it properly, resulting in *dororo*. Of course, the name fits protagonist Dororo, as he is both a young child and a thief.

The story begins long before Dororo was born, and involves the other main character, Hyakkimaru. His father, Lord Daigo, gained power by making an exchange with forty-eight demons, letting each of them take a body part from his child in exchange for helping him to rule over the land. When Hyakkimaru was born he was missing his eyes, arms, legs, nose, and much, much more. Disgusted, his father abandoned him after birth, but a kind doctor found him and raised him like his own son.

To help him get around, the doctor built prosthetics for all of Hyakkimaru's missing body parts. Many years later, when monsters took over the doctor's house, he built new prosthetic arms with built-in blades so that Hyakkimaru could defend himself. Eventually, the doctor discovers that the ghouls are after Hyakkimaru and advises him to flee.

During his travels Hyakkimaru meets Dororo, whom he rescues from a monster. After seeing Hyakkimaru fight, Dororo decides that he must have Hyakkimaru's sword. He follows him around, hoping to steal it, but eventually they become friends and have many adventures together. During their travels, they come across a saint who gives her money to help the people of her village. Unfortunately, every time she distributes her wealth a monster comes along and steals it. Hyakkimaru and Dororo investigate the situation and discover that the so-called saint is actually the monster herself.

Dororo, with its decent graphics and excellent writing, is an exciting start to a new series and will surely appeal to almost everyone, and particularly to those who enjoy stories about the samurai and feudal Japan.
JOEY A. KANE (June 16, 2008)

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