



Man with No Name

Laird Barron

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Man with No Name Details

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From Reader Review Man with No Name for online ebook

Anthony Vacca says

Well, this was a treat. Barron's *Man with No Name* is a novella that fuses Nikkatsu noir with cosmic horror that is more reminiscent of the cinematic nightmares of David Lynch than of you-know-who. Barron's presentation of Yakuza in-fighting feels as authentic as any film directed by Seijun Suzuki or Beat Taskashi, which is to say that the novella exists in its own pocket of reality, one in which time is malleable and the true nature of spirituality is as incomprehensible as it is carnivorous. Barron's sentences swagger even after the notion of an objective reality goes tits up, leaving the reader with a sequence of striking scenes peopled with memorable characters, both human and other. The bonus story featuring a feminist riff on *Frankenstein* is entertaining but nowhere near as beguiling as the novella before it.

Matthew says

Weird, enthralling, and creepy as fuck. An incredible novella.

Ross Lockett says

The title novella is a blast, full of action and demanding a cinematic adaptation. And then there's the bonus story, "Blood and Stardust," a pure treat, a perfect dessert. Great stuff overall, and well worth picking up. (But someone at JournalStone should give me a call: We need to talk about layout.)

Dan Schwent says

The Heron clan of the Yakuza is tasked with abducting Muzaki, a former professional wrestler. However, Nanashi, loyal member of the Heron and a man with a mysterious past, has his doubts. And Muzaki might have just the answer for him...

On the heels of *The Croning*, nothing but another Laird Barron book would do. Fortunately, I already had this one on my kindle.

Man with No Name is part noir, part cosmic horror with emphasis on the noir. In fact, it's mostly a crime book until Muzaki's true nature comes to light. It's also an action-packed bloodbath ones things go pear-shaped and Muzaki tells Nanashi how things are. The unspeakable horror and the nature of time seem to be hallmarks of Barron's, a plus in my book.

The prose was great, just as it was in *The Croning*, full of colorful similes and metaphors. I highlighted quite a bit but I could have easily highlighted most of the novella. There was also quite a bit of dark humor. This would be a fantastic movie.

The bonus novella, *Blood and Stardust*, was also quite good, though I wish the space would have been

devoted to the main tale.

My sophomore experience with Laird Barron was almost as satisfying as the first and I can't wait to read more. 4.5 out of 5 stars.

Karl says

The book consists of two reprint stories:

2014's "Man With No Name" from Centipede Press's "A Mountain Walked"

2013's "Blood & Stardust" from Tor's "A Mad Scientists Guide To World Domination"

Cover Art and design by Rob Grom

David Bjorne says

So, so good. Need another collection soon. These novellas are great, but over far too quick!

John Muñoz says

The Man With No Name was originally printed in A Mountain Walked, an anthology that I sadly missed getting a copy of - at least in hardcover. When I received my copy of the trade edition I was disappointed that there were some changes to it, mainly that this story was excluded. Luckily it was reprinted in this chapbook along with an extra short story Blood & Stardust.

Plainly put: another great story, a novella this time, by Laird Barron.

One of the more interesting settings, for the novella, that I've read in a horror story: Japan and the underworld of Yakuza. Apparently this is the first of a series of novellas featuring Nanashi, the next coming out sometime this year titled All The Devils Are Here.

The extra story was a bit different than anything else that I've read so far by Barron, a good contrast in tone and characters from the title story.

As good as these stories are I can't wait to read more longer length works by Laird Barron. Another novella set to be released this year called Cult of the Bird Eaters sounds very promising, at least going by the title. I'm definitely going to have to set aside time this upcoming week to read some more Barron that I have, X's for Eyes and The Beautiful Thing that Awaits Us All.

Nicholas Kaufmann says

This slim volume contains two exemplary tales by the inimitable Laird Barron. The first, the novella "Man with No Name," is an excellent reminder that nobody captures the mystery and disorientation of being caught up in unknowable supernatural forces like Barron does. Hints of a much larger and more terrifying backstory pepper this tale of a Yakuza enforcer, a popular professional wrestler, and a terrifying excursion into the liminal realm between the worlds of the natural and the supernatural. It's an amazing piece of work, filled with darkness and disquiet.

The second story, "Blood & Stardust," is somewhat lighter in tone, an astute and often amusing take on mad scientists and their creations. Barron shows a deep sense of compassion for his narrator, despite her many crimes, and infuses the story with his trademark hints of a wider and scarier world than we're aware of.

Both stories provide ample evidence of why Barron is widely considered one of the finest horror authors working today. This small, two-story collection is a must-own for Barron fans, and not a bad place to start for those looking to experience his ghastly and arcane cosmos for the first time.

Bill says

There are very few authors out there that can consistently and successfully pull off Lovecraftian horror without it becoming an unoriginal, tired trope of unimaginable, indescribable horrors and old gods with unpronounceable monikers. Laird is head and shoulders above the rest of his peers when it comes to this kind of horror.

That being said, "Man With No Name" has significantly less H.P. overtones than some of his past titles, but Laird can't resist throwing in some crazy cosmic elements, layered beneath subtle innuendo and seemingly random passing themes. He can't help himself. It's what makes his work so fascinating to me. Laird pens just the right amount of "wtf" and then let's your imagination run with it. Don't get me wrong, there is plenty of in your face violence and gore on occasion, but he doesn't beat you over the head with it. He just gives you a little slap and then let's you decide how long it will sting.

Both the title namesake novella and the bonus short "Blood & Stardust" possess the vast themes, hinting of worlds much larger than our own that can terrify and enrapture all at once. I am left hoping that each was a bit longer, (but I feel that way about most good short works) and the length, of each, was probably perfect. Solid 4+ Stars!

Greg (adds 2 TBR list daily) Hersom says

This was creepy as hell which is awesome.

Gabrielle says

Hmmm. I never thought I'd say this, but I didn't love this novella by my dear Laird Baron. Now don't get me wrong, it was still quite good: the prose is as strong and atmospheric as ever, the sense of dread and weirdness that permeate his stories was present. But I had a hard time keeping track of when we were in reality, a dream-sequence or the underworld, it was all a bit too blurry and I was scratching my head a little by the last page.

The story uses Barron's usual elements: a protagonist with a secret who has a violent job, and intoxicants end up blurring the line between what is real and what isn't. But despite being relatively long-form compared to say his other short stories, it felt like it did not have quite enough room to breathe; or at least, not enough for this reader to understand what was going on.

The bonus story at the end of the book, "Blood and Stardust", about a mad scientist's assistant's emancipation, actually grabbed me more, with its touches of (gross) dark humor and satisfying conclusion.

3 and a half stars.

Bogdan says

In truth I liked more the second story, Blood & Stardust, about the witty revenge of a Frankenstein like creature.

The Man with No Name was interesting, well built, but not so explanatory and satisfying in the end.

Christopher Payne says

Nanashi was born into a life of violence. Delivered from the mean streets by the Heron Clan, he mastered the way of the gun and knife and swiftly ascended through yakuza ranks to become a dreaded enforcer. His latest task? He and an entourage of expert killers are commanded to kidnap Muzaki, a retired world-renowned wrestler under protection of the rival Dragon Syndicate.

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Mark Tallen says

Laird Barron is absolutely brilliant and consistently writes stories that are extremely good. This book contains two stories, 'Man With No Name' & 'Blood & Stardust'. Both these stories have been published before in anthologies. Man With No Name was published in previous expensive limited edition formats so it is great to see it now available in a format that costs less. For big Laird fans (like me) this edition is another must have for the collection and whilst it isn't my favourite Laird Barron story it is a definite 4 star novella.

Highly recommended.

Benoit Lelièvre says

I'm growing really fond of cosmic horror fiction. It's a subtle and ominous genre that has a lot of freedom to explore different angles. Laird Barron's *MAN WITH NO NAME* is a boundless and introspective noir/horror story that's intricately intertwined in Japanese mythology. Barron's accuracy and economy of language create rich and intoxicating atmosphere that could almost carry the storyline on its own even if there weren't any characters in the novella.

The cast of characters in itself is great and while some come off as stereotypes, they are all deliberate decisions by Laird Barron, serving the story the exact way they're supposed to. I very much enjoyed this book and am really looking forward to read more Laird Barron and more cosmic horror in general. A bold and original story for sure.
