Vagabond

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Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

vol. 1

English Edition
THE BATTLE OF SEKIGAHARA...

...HAS ENDED.
#1 Shinmen

Takezō

I'M A FAILURE.
FORGIVE ME...

...MOTHER...

URR

...BUT IT ALL CAME TO NOTHIN'...

I LEFT SAKUSHU...

...TO MAKE A NAME FOR MYSELF...

URR

...OTSU!!!

FORGIVE ME...
I SURVIVED, TOO...
MATAHACHI.
TAKEZO!!
YOU SCARED ME FOR KICKS!

SOB

SMIF

SOB

CAN YOU WALK?

FOR KICKS!

WE'RE TAKING OFF.
ONCE WE FIND A VILLAGE WELL GET SOME MEDICINE.

I CAN'T WALK ANYMORE.

ALL WE'VE HAD TO EAT IS GRASS.

THESE PAST FEW DAYS...

IM FINISHED.

JUST LEAVE ME HERE.

IT WON'T BE LONG.
Is this...

...all we amount to?
...Forget about the enemy...

The only thing we cut down was the grass to make roads.

But...

Maybe take down a general or two...

We left Sakishū to make names for ourselves...

And now, we're on the losing side...

We were handed machetes instead of spears...

Braap...
I'm going to last much longer...

I want you to... Takezo, if I die...

...take care of Otsui...

A survivor...
TAKE A LOAD OF THIS.

GIVE ME A BREAK.

YOU CAN'T FOOL ME TWICE, YOU JERK.

HUF HUF

HUF HUF

ARRGH

KRIK

HSH
THE REAL THING!

TAKEZO!

YOU LITTLE BASTARD!

REFUGEE HUNTERS!

FWUP FWUP
...IS STRONG!

THIS KID...

IF YOU'RE GONNA TRY TO KILL ME...

...I'M GONNA KILL YOU.
THOSE DAMN SAMURAI!

NO WAY I'M GONNA DIE.

PLISH

NOT ME...

PLISH
SHINMEN TAKEZO!
NO WAY IM GONNA DIE!

I'M HON'IDEN MATAHACHI!!!
Hey.

We're gonna make names for ourselves.

Yup.

Hey...

Matahachi...

Hey...
WHAT'S GOING ON?

NO SIGN OF ANY VILLAGES.

...FROM THE BATTLE TWO DAYSAGO...

THIS AREA'S SPRAWLED WITH CORPSES.
...WE'RE ALIVE.

TAKEZO...

WHERE ARE WE?

...

WHAT MATTERS IS THAT...
UR

HUH?

TAKEZO.
TAKEZÔ!

WHAT'S WITH THE "UR"??

I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE NICE TO HAVE A DRINK TOGETHER.

COME ON, HAVE A DRINK!!

YOU IDIOT!

WE'RE HEALED.

WE'RE GOING, MATAHACHI.
WE HAVE TO THANK THEM BEFORE WE LEAVE!!

NOT ONLY DID THEY SAVE US, THEY GAVE US SHELTER FOR DAYS...

AND WE'RE FUGITIVES.

YOU'RE WELCOME TO STAY AS LONG AS YOU PLEASE, TAKEZO.

HA HA...

...BECAUSE THE GENERAL OF THE WEST HASN'T BEEN CAPTURED YET.

I HEARD THAT THEY'RE STILL CRACKING DOWN ON FUGITIVE SOLDIERS.

ONE OF YOU SHOULD MARRY AKEMI AND STAY HERE FOR GOOD.

WHICH ONE DO YOU PREFER, AKEMI?
There she goes again.

She refuses to grow up.

Oh, no! That's not what I meant. I have...

My, you're confident.

I have...

I can't!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

FWIP FWIP

CRIMSON MUSHROOM.

YOU TRYING TO KILL US...

OHHH

FWIP

POISONOUS...

LETHAL...

FWIP

...TAKEZO?
Why don't you ask me any questions?

How we make a living.

Hm?

About what?
Why do you live in the mountains with your mother?

Why I wear these bells.

Ma-ta-hachi's been asking you questions relentlessly.

Every day...

How old are you?
KINDA SMALL FOR YOUR AGE.

SHUT UP.

15!!

HOW OLD ARE YOU?

17.

I THOUGHT YOU WERE MORE LIKE 30.

...!!

ANYTHING ELSE?
WHAT WERE YOU DOING...

...THAT NIGHT YOU RESCUED US...?
...IN THAT AREA FULL OF CORPSES?
SWORDS?

WHAT ARE ALL THESE SWORDS...

WHAT'S THIS?

OOPS!

WHAT'S HERE?

THERE'S SO MANY...

YOU FOUND THEM.
WE'RE THIEVES.
THIEVES...

...anything we can sell for money.

...and collect swords, armor...

After every battle we go to the fields...
WE STRIP THEM OFF THE CORPSES AND THAT'S HOW WE MAKE A LIVING... WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?
ANY OTHER QUESTIONS?

WHO'S THAT?
STOP.
That's...

...Tsujikaze Tenma.

BRR

Shiver

BRR

The man who killed my father.
THE TSUKIKAZE GANG WON'T PUT UP WITH THIS SORT OF CRAP!!

YOU WENT TO SEKIGAHARA AGAIN, DIDN'T YOU?

YOU TELL OKO THAT I'M WARNING HER...!
HEY!!

IS THAT ALL OF IT?

ALL RIGHT.

THERE'S MORE!!

...ALL OF THIS STOLEN FROM BATTLEFIELDS.

AMAZING...

AKEMI! WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME SOONER...?
THAT SHOULD BE GOOD ENOUGH TO FOOL TENMA.

THAT'S MOST OF IT.

WHAT A COLLECTION...

HAA?

PHEW

DID WE FORGET THAT ONE?
MUM?

TAKE IT EASY, TAKEZÔ...

...TAKEZÔ?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE THAT...

YUP.
I WANT IT.
I must say, even just an oak sword...

...makes you look more manly.

Smirk

Ha ha

So can I have it?
I WANT SOMETHING TOO!

OH?

I...

...
Come on, takezo.

Be a man and drink some sake.

We're going home to the village of Miyamoto in Sakishima.

You're not going to leave, are you, takezo?

I don't want any sake.

I have a fiancée back home.

I'm a stud.

Well, I won't stop you if you leave by yourself.

Sorry for keeping you here then.

You do?

Oh?

Glug glug glug

Haa?

Sh noor.

I see...
OH MY!

HA HA
YOU'RE PATHETIC!

TAKEZO!
FATHER...

FATHER...

MOTHER'S GONE.

WHERE'D SHE GO?
YOU'RE NO LONGER TO THINK OF HER...

...AS YOUR MOTHER.

YOU SISSEY...

YOU LITTLE BASTARD...

DON'T GIVE ME THAT LOOK...
YOU'VE GOT THE EYES OF A BEAST.
AH.

Takezo...

What is it?

You must know how I've been looking at you...

You're such a boor...
CAN'T YOU FEEL IT?
SHLP

STOP!

TAKEZO
IT'S THE TSUJIKAZE GANG!!
IT'S THE TSUJIKAZE GANG!!

#4 The Brigand Tsujikaze
FIND ANYTHING?

NOT YET!

WHERE'D YOU HIDE THE STUFF?!!

COME ON!!

OKO...

OKO!!
HOW ABOUT SOME SAKE?

...GET IT YOURSELF.

YOU KNOW WHERE IT IS...

I HAVE TO SEARCH YOUR HOUSE.

EVEN BRIGANDS HAVE THEIR CODE.

I HAVEN'T STOLEN ANYTHING.

HAH...
...AND THEN YOU WON'T HAVE TO LIVE LIKE THIS...

YOU BE MINE...

WHAT KIND OF WOMAN ENDS UP WITH HER HUSBAND'S MURDERER?
YOUR FACE...

...MAKES ME WANT TO PUKE.

CHECK THE CEILING.

YES SIR!

HEY.
"Hey."

"ZHH OOP"

"There's a kid here."

"Damn..."
YOU'RE A FOOL.
OKO...

...

BOSS?

DON'T MESS WITH ME.
YOU LITTLE TWERP!!
THWUNK
...BUT YOU'RE STILL A GENERAL...

YOU MIGHT BE A BRIGAND...

I'M GLAD I LEFT MIYAMOTO...
BOSS !?

ARGH

THOX
YOU COWARD...

HOW CAN YOU RUN AND STILL CALL YOURSELF THE LEADER!?
Fwish
F/P

HOW WAS THE BOSS?

FREEBOOTERS ARE WEAKLINGS!
NOTHING SPECIAL.

...FROM THE VILLAGE OF MIYAMOTO IN SAKitesU...

...AND SHINMEN TAKEZO...

HONTEN MATAHACHI...
WELL TAKE ANYONE ON!!

HA HA HA

PLAYING A GAME OF BLOOD.

THEY'RE LIKE KIDS...
AVOID GETTING KILLED.

WE WILL YOU TWO DO?

BY WHO?

...TO AVOID GETTING KILLED.

WE'LL HAVE TO LEAVE HERE NOW...

TSUJIKAZE KOHEI.
Vagabond
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO SLEEP...?

SHMP

HMMMM... I'LL TAKE EM ON! TSUIKAZE KOEHI...? TEMA'S YOUNGER BROTHER?

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE I KILLED SOMEONE
The Troubles of Hon'iden Matahachi at Seventeen
DOES: "SHE "MEAN:
TAKEZO-
OR ME?"

DOES THAT MEAN SHE WANT ONE INSTEAD OF THE OTHER... IS THAT IT?!
WHAT AM I THINKING?!

I'M AN IDIOT!!
I'M BEING AN IDIOT!!

I'M BEING STUPID...

FOUR OF THE TSUJIKAZE BANDITS!!

I CUT DOWN FOUR MEN!!
IT'S ME, TAKEZO...
WHAT DID I JUST SAY!?

WHAT AM I DOING!?

YOU'RE A BAD BOY.
I thought you had a fiancée.
YOU HAVE TO WASH BLOOD OUT IMMEDIATELY.

OR IT WON'T COME OUT.

YOU HAVE TO WASH BLOOD OUT IMMEDIATELY.

WHY DID I USE YOUR NAME...?
I'M SORRY...

...OTSU!!

...TODAY.

LET'S GO HOME...
BACK TO MIYAMOTO.

THUD THUD THUD

BE CAREFUL!

THERE MAY ONLY BE TWO OF THEM...
...but those brats killed the boss!!

...have some fun with Oko!!

Yeah!!

We can...

Now that the boss ain't around no more...

Hee hee...

Me too!!

I'm first!!

No, I am.

I am!!
YEAH.

MIYAMOTO VILLAGE...?

HA?

URK

...OTSU.

I MISS...

WHAT?

...YOU SHOULD GO.

YEAH...
...YOU'RE GOING WITH OKO AND AKEMI!!

NAH...

DON'T TELL ME...

YOU'RE NOT GOING HOME...?

I LEFT HOME KNOWING I'D NEVER GO BACK.

FROM THIS DAY ON...
I'M A VAGABOND.
THUD

AYAHH!

THEY'RE ALREADY HERE...
Vagabond
(IN SOME COUNTRIES THEY HAVE TO ERASE MY NIPPLES....)

(SOMETIMES THEY EVEN HAVE TO ERASE MY BEHIND.)
IT'S TSUJIKAZE'S MEN!!

THEY'RE BACK FOR REVENGE!

!!

YOU STAY HERE.

MOTHER'S BACK AT HOME!

YOU'LL JUST BE IN THE WAY.

LET'S GO.

!!

WE'LL BRING OKO BACK HERE. I PROMISE!

I'M GOING TOO.
#7 Farewell Takezō

YAHH!!
I'm going to be a vagabond...

You stay here.

I want to go with you...
WAIT, TAKEZO!

DON'T LEAVE ME BEHIND.

DON'T!!

HE'S SO FAST!!

DON'T LEAVE ME ALONE...
YAH! TUMP

HOW MANY OF THEM ARE THERE?

DO YOU WANT TO DIE?

ARE YOU CRAZY??
ARGH
AEE
URGH

MY SWORD...

I LEFT IT
IN THE
HOUSE!!

FWUD
FWUD
HEEN
HEEN

SO YOU'RE
THE ONE...

WHERE IS
SHE?

THE KID WHO
KILLED
THE BOSS!!

OMO!
WE GOTA KILL HIM OFF BEFORE WORD GETS AROUND!!

TENMA LET HIS GUARD DOWN CAUSE HE WAS TOO CRAZY ABOUT ORO.

HOW? THIS BRAT KILL TSUKIKAZE TENMA, LEADER OF THREE HUNDRED BANDITS?

HE'S JUST A KID.

HE'S PUT A STAIN ON OUR REPUTATION.

YOUR SIDE IS WIDE OPEN!!

AYAHHH!

AIEE

URGH
WHAT AM I DOING??

WHAT AM I DOING JUST STANDING HERE!?

THUMP
THUMP

JUST TAKE ONE OF THEIR SWORDS!!

SHUFF
SHUFF

THE TSUKIKAZE GANG ARE JUST A BUNCH OF WORMS

SHUFF
SHUFF
COME ON, FACE IT, MATA'HACHI!!

YOU'LL SPEND THE REST OF YOUR LIFE IN HIS SHADOW!!

IF YOU FALL BEHIND TAKEZO NOW...

WHY DO I FEEL SO INFERIOR TO MY BEST FRIEND? HE'S THE SAME AGE AND FROM THE SAME VILLAGE AS ME.

I'M GOING IN!!

GONNA FIGHT AND KILL THOSE BANDITS... AND RESCUE OKO!!

ONE!!

TWO!!

THREE!!

THEM, ON THE COUNT OF THREE!!
MATAHACHI!

Huh?

URR...

THREE!!

OKO!!

MATAHACHI!!

SO YOU'RE SAFE!!

HOW'D YOU GET OUT!!?
I'm glad you're safe...

So I stepped out and then they came busting in...

It was a close call.

I don't know why but I just had a bad feeling.

Brr

Shiver

Brr

Don't be mean to me...

Brr Brr

So even you... are afraid?

...Cause I knew Tenma had feelings for me.

I was only able to stay calm...
ARRGH!!

KLISH

YOU BASTARD!
KUCHING YAHH

FWUD

THUNK
Fwoosh

SHHHLK
STAY TOGETHER!!
HE CAN'T HANDLE ALL OF US!

UHH...

DON'T RETREAT!!

WHERE ARE YOU!? OKO!

MATA-HACHI!

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT!!?
IF YOU'RE ALIVE, SAY SOMETHING!!

MATAHACHI!

WHUD

SLISH

ARRGH!

THUNK

WHUD
SHUFF!

GASP!
...MATAHACHI'S STILL ALIVE.
GRANNY!

FINISHED WITH TODAY'S WORK?

ALREADY FINISHED WITH TODAY'S WORK?

HEITA--

SMACK!

I SAW...

SHIMEN TAKEZO!

WE, THE HONTEN, ARE THE PROUD DESCENDANTS OF HARD WORKERS! YOU MUSTN'T SULLY OUR REPUTATION!!

I ASKED IF YOU'RE DONE WITH TODAY'S WORK!!

FORGET ABOUT WORK! I GOT SOMETHING TO TELL--
MATAHACHI!!

NOPE...

Nah...

HAS MATAHACHI RETURNED!?

GRANNY...

...MAYBE YOU SHOULD GIVE UP ON MATAHACHI...

IT'S BEEN ALMOST A YEAR NOW. I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, BUT...
SHINMEN TAKEZO WHO WENT OFF TO WAR WITH MATAHACHI HAS COME HOME!!

THAT MEANS MY MATAHACHI MUST BE BACK TOO!!

WH- WHAT... WAS THAT FOR...

WHAT!!?

I WAS JUST--

Hey! Watch out!

Find them!!

WHAT!!? SHINMEN TAKEZO...!!

Go find them!!
IF SHINMEN HADN'T HAVE BEEN DRAGGED HIM OFF TO WAR...

NOW, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN A RESPECTABLE HEIR TO THE HONIDEN FAMILY.

..HE WOULD HAVE BEEN MARRIED BY NOW. HE WOULD HAVE BEEN A RESPECTABLE HEIR TO THE HONIDEN FAMILY.

PLEASE BE ALIVE...

WHAT NERVE!

I WOULD NEVER GIVE UP ON MATAHACHI!

AS MATAHACHI'S FIANCEE, OTSU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HIS RETURN. I'LL GO TELL HER THE GOOD NEWS.
JUST HAVE TO PAY THE SHINMEN FAMILY A VISIT!

DON'T TELL ME...

THAT BASTARD...

...YOU SNUCK BACK HERE WITHOUT MATAHACHI!

SHUF

I’LL JUST HAVE TO PAY THE SHINMEN FAMILY A VISIT!!

THOSE SAMURAI DON'T LOOK FAMILIAR...

KRICHI

KRICHI

KRICHI
ARE YOU PART OF THE SHINMEN FAMILY?

LOOKS LIKE HE HASN'T COME HOME YET!!

I'M THE RETIRED HEAD OF THE GENTRY ACROSS THE RIVER.

AND WHAT BRINGS YOU MEN HERE?
We're after a man named Takezo!!

DID HE DO SOMETHING WRONG?

He also know that he was one of Ikita's men.

He broke through the gates at the province border. He's already killed two of our men.

Not with my son? His name is Honiden Matahachi.

No, he's alone.

Is he alone?

H-He's...
You men stay here... just in case he shows up.

Let's go.

That Takezo's to blame for dragging Matahachi off to war!!

How abominable!!

He really did sneak back here by himself.

So your son fought in the Battle of Sekigahara?

I doubt that you will have an easy time...

...of capturing that bastard, Takezo.

What's that?
IF WE DON'T FIND HIM BY DUSK, WE'LL BE STUCK HERE FOR A WHILE.

I DON'T WANT TO BE STUCK IN THIS VILLAGE.

WILL YOU...

...HEED THE ADVICE OF AN OLD WOMAN?
Perhaps we need to be more patient...

Well, we'll have to see, though...

That Shinmen bastard...

...is incredibly strong.

And we've been after him for days...

He's ferocious.
YOU'RE KIDDING ME.
WHAT?

AT THE AGE OF THIRTEEN!

I AM NOT.

AT THE AGE OF THIRTEEN...

...THAT BASTARD KILLED A FULL GROWN MAN.

...WITHOUT MUCH SUCCESS.

THAT'S NOT SURPRISING.

IN THE END HE DRAGGED MY DEAR SON OFF TO WAR...

TAKEZO'S WICKED WAYS ONLY GOT WORSE.

OUCH.

TUGG
LEND ME YOUR EAR.

HOW COULD HE HAVE SURVIVED AND NOT MY MATANACHI?

HM...

...
THE BODY'S STILL WARM!!

TAKEZO MUST BE NEARBY!!

A BODY...

AH!! ANOTHER BODY!

TAKEZO'S DONE IT AGAIN!

HOW SCARY...
KYAAA!

OVER THERE!!

HEY!!

UH...

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT??

UH...

WAS IT HIM??
TAKEZÔ?
HELL FEED ON BIRDS, RABBITS, OR EVEN TREE BARK. WHATEVER IT TAKES...

...HE WILL CONTINUE TO ELUDE YOUR MEN.

HE WAS AN ODD CHILD WHO SPENT MOST OF HIS TIME IN THE MOUNTAINS! IN OTHER WORDS...

...HE'S A BEAST!

IT'S NO WONDER YOU CAN'T CAPTURE TAKEZO.

HEH.

...HE'S OUT OF HUMAN REACH.

ONCE A BEAST ESCAPES INTO THE MOUNTAINS...
ULP!!

ULP!!

ULP!!

RELAY THAT MESSAGE TO GRANNY AND OTSEL.

TELL THEM THAT AND I'LL LEAVE THE VILLAGE.

THAT'S ALL I WANT.

MATAHACHI'S STILL ALIVE.

SHISHISHIN...

BRR

BRR

TATA...
KWAK

**Fwich**

**Fwich**

---

**Nod**

**ARE THEY BEING ORDERED TO?**

---

**Nod**

---

**THey're after me?**

---

**WHY ARE THE VILLAGERS HELPING THE SOLDIERS?**
MATAHACHI'S STILL ALIVE.

BUT HE'S NOT COMING BACK TO MIYAMOTO.

I'M COUNTING ON YOU.

TELL GRANNY HONIDEN AND OTSU OF SHIPPÔJI TEMPLE...

...WITH A WOMAN.

...I CAN'T SAY HE TOOK OFF.

GIVE THEM THE MESSAGE.
IT'S TAKEZO!!
HE'S OVER HERE!!
I am the mother of Honten Matahachi who, after being lured off to war by that despicable Takezo... I am not returned home.

Allow me to introduce myself...

HMM? HMM?

AND YOU?

I'm Otsu.

MHB.

Be more polite!!

Otsu!
I CAN'T STAND HIS EYES.

SHE FEELS THE SAME HATRED TOWARDS TAKEZO AS I DO!!

SHE IS MY SON'S FIANCEE.

DON'T YOU, OTSU?

OKAY.

NOT "UH"?

UH...

DON'T YOU?

SAY, YES!

DON'T YOU?
PLEASE EXCUSE OTSIL. SHE'S AN ORPHAN WHO DIDN'T HAVE ANYONE TO TEACH HER PROPER MANNERS.

EVEN THOUGH SHE'S SEVENTEEN, SHE'S NO IDEA HOW THE WORLD WORKS!

YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GROW UP IF YOU'RE GOING TO BECOME A BRIDE OF THE HONIDEN FAMILY!!
YOU HAVEN'T DIED. HAVE YOU!? YOU MUST BE ALIVE!!

Urr.

OH, MATAHACHI!!

Zhoop

MATAHACHI!? MATAHACHI...

MATAHACHI!!
MOTHER!!
GRANNY...

HUF

HUF

HUF
MY DEAR,

THIS MAN MATAHACHI...

OTSU, MY DEAR, THIS MAN MATAHACHI...

...PROBABLY DIED ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

OTSU... WHY DON'T YOU POUR SOME SAKE... FOR OUR GUEST, CAPTAIN AKI?

OTSU, YOU'RE BEING RUDE!! URRK... WITH ONE HAND? SURE.

MATAHACHI'S DEAD. OTSU... IS ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED INTO THE HONIFDEN FAMILY... BUT...

HIHH?... SO--

I DON'T NEED YOUR COMPANY.

YOU CAN GO NOW, PRIEST.
MORE SO IF MATAHACHI WAS JUST A FOOT SOLDIER, HIS ONLY WEAPON A SPEAR.

ALL THE MORE SO IF MATAHACHI WAS JUST A FOOT SOLDIER, HIS ONLY WEAPON A SPEAR.

EVEN THIS TAKEZO WILL EVENTUALLY BE APPREHENDED AND KILLED BY MY MEN.

YOU MUST ACCEPT IT. MATAHACHI'S DEAD.

SECOND ONLY TO TAKEZO.

BUT MATAHACHI IS STRONG.

MEN PERISH EASILY IN WAR.
KYAAA!

OTSU!

FHUD

AEEE!

SO HOW ABOUT IT!? YOU AND ME!!

!? THOK

HUF

UH OH...

THIS ISN'T GOOD.

WHUD
I'm going to be a bride of the Honiden family!!

It's already been decided!!

Oh Matahachi... Matahachi!! Yuk! That was scary, and gross.

Forgive me, Otsu.

Otsu.

Hey!!
QUIET! I'M TRYING TO REMEMBER!!

FORGIVE ME, OTSU... THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO.

A COURIER DELIVERED THIS TODAY.
MATAHACHI, PLEASE COME HOME SOON.

FOR ME?

A LETTER? I HELD IT FOR YOU.

OTSU...
WHO WOULD SEND A LETTER TO AN ORPHAN LIKE ME?

I CAME HERE TO TELL YOU...

GRANNY...
MATAHACHI'S--

!!

FWISH

I'll kill you and then myself!...!?
MATAHACHI'S STILL ALIVE!!

EYAH!

TWISH!

THAT'S WHAT I CAME TO TELL YOU.
#10 | Left Behind
ISSS TRUE, TAKEZO?
DO YOU SWEAR IT'S TRUE?

SORRY, I DIDN'T MEAN TO.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, GRANNY?

BUT--
YEAH...

MAZAHACHI...

THEN WHY DIDN'T HE COME BACK HOME?
WERE THE ONE WHO DRAGGED HIM OFF, AND YOU END UP RETURNING...

TAKEZO!!
BRING MATAHACHI BACK HERE TO HIS MOTHER!
HE'S LIVING WITH A WOMAN IN ANOTHER PROVINCE.

WHO COULD IT BE...?
He is burdened by thoughts of you.

I am writing as the woman who is now with Matahachi.

The current situation is detrimental for everyone involved.

I am asking you...

...to forget Matahachi.
I'm sorry. Otsū. Just forget about me.

And have a happy life.

Matahachi

I REMEMBER NOW...

...MATAHACHI'S FACE.
WHO'S OKO?
AAAA!

ARRGH!

CHOMP

ARRGH

ARRGH!

WHAT'S WRONG, OTSU!?

WHO'S OKO!? WHY...!!!
BATH WHILE I PREPARE YOUR MEAL?

COME ON IN.

I'M SO ASHAMED. I LOST CONTROL.

EVERYONE'S LOOKING FOR YOU.

HURRY UP...

YOU CAN WEAR THEM.

I'M FINE.

But you must be hungry.

YOU'VE BEEN STUCK IN THE MOUNTAINS FOR SO LONG.

...I'M SORRY.

WHY ARE YOU SUDDENLY...

UR...

WHY DON'T YOU TAKE A BATH WHILE I PREPARE YOUR MEAL?

IM MATAHACHI'S MOTHER.

STAY. I'LL MAKE YOU SOMETHING TO EAT.
...YOU ARE MY BELOVED SON'S FRIEND.

AFTER ALL...


...


SO TAKEZO, WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS NOW?

IS THE BATH WATER HOT ENOUGH?

PUSH!

IT'S FINE...
I want to challenge men like Yagyu and Yoshio.

All the master swordsmen renowned throughout the land.

I really want to find out how strong I am.

...to polish my skills as a swordsman.

I'm going to journey all across the country...

To train in the halfl of the warrior, eh? Very admirable.
There he is!!

You can go now.

Good work, Granny.

Ha ha ha

Just in case.

Yes sir!

You men close off all escape paths.

All right then.
MATAHACHI IS ALIVE.

THAT'S THE ONLY PART I'LL BELIEVE!!

YOU PATHETIC BASTARD.

YOU LURE MY SON OFF TO WAR.

YOU DARE TO COME BACK WITHOUT HIM...

THINK I'D FALL FOR THOSE LIES?

...THEN YOU HAVE THE NERVE TO TELL ME THAT MY MATAHACHI'S IN ANOTHER PROVINCE WITH SOME WOMAN.

YOU'RE FINISHED, YOU BASTARD!!

HEE HEE HEE HEE!!
THUNK

HEY!

KRACH

THERE HE IS!!
It's all in the best interest of the village. Of course, once you do, your head will be chopped off.

Hee hee!

Don't bother putting up a fight. It's useless.

Just turn yourself in.

...Granny.

So this was a trap...

You're a demon!

This village doesn't need any troublemakers!

Take him!
YOU COWARDS.

IF YOU'RE GONNA COME AT ME, YOU BETTER BE WILLING TO KILL ME...

OF COURSE...

...IF YOU'RE GONNA TRY TO KILL ME...
MATAHACHI, YOU BASTARD!!

YOU JERK!!

YOU TRAITOR!!
Glossary and Extraneous Background Information

The Battle of Sekigahara (1600): The Warring States or Sengoku period (1482-1558) in Japan was a time of chaos and conflict. Central authorities, in the form of the imperial court and the shogunate, had grown increasingly weaker and the land was effectively ruled autonomously by numerous domainal lords (or daimyo). Looking to expand their spheres of control, the daimyo were constantly at war with each other. One daimyo, Oda Nobunaga, set out on a mission to unify Japan by means of conquest. Incredibly successful, by the time of his assassination in 1582, he managed to control approximately one-third of all of Japan. One of Nobunaga's chief generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, became Nobunaga's successor to carry on the quest for unification. Through a process of conquest and conciliation, Hideyoshi succeeded in creating an orderly federation amongst the daimyo and by 1590, order was restored to Japan under Hideyoshi's rule. Hideyoshi's death in 1598, however, presented the question of succession. Most of the daimyo from the domains in the west remained loyal to the Toyotomi Clan and its five-year-old heir, Toyotomi Hideyori. Tokugawa leyasu, however, leading the major daimyo from central and eastern Japan, challenged the Toyotomi clan's leadership. The two sides clashed at the Battle of Sekigahara in Mino (located in present day Gifu Prefecture) where the Tokugawa claimed an overwhelming victory. From that point on, the Tokugawa clan would effectively rule Japan for the next 250 years. In the opening of Vagabond, we find Takezō and Matahachi as young survivors on the losing side of the Battle of Sekigahara...

Sakushu: Also known as Mimasaka. The historical name for the area that is now the northern region of modern-day Okayama Prefecture.

Ukita Hideie: (1573-1655) Daimyo of Bizen and Mimasaka (located in modern day Okayama Prefecture). One of the leading generals that fought for the Toyotomi Clan at the Battle of Sekigahara.

The Yagyu Clan: Yagyu Muneyoshi Sekishusai (1527-1606) was the founder of the famed Yagyu-Shinkage school of sword fighting. His son Yagyu Munenori (1571-1646) was one of Tokugawa's key generals at the Battle of Sekigahara. Munenori was appointed as the official fencing instructor of the Tokugawa Clan and in 1632 the Yagyu were appointed as the onetetsuke—responsible for the surveillance of the daimyo. Although the Yagyu clan has been depicted in Kazuo Koike's Lone Wolf and Cub as the plotters of the downfall of Ito Ogarri, the general Japanese popular culture take on the Yagyu Clan is more positive. More specifically, Munenori's son, Yagyu Jubei (1607-1650), is viewed as a wandering hero protecting the people from evil doers.

The Yoshioka Clan: Yoshioka Kempo (dates unknown) was a distinguished warrior during the Sengoku period (1482-1558) and the founder of the Yoshioka school of sword fighting. Historically, Kempo's sons are thought to have dueled with Miyamoto Musashi on numerous occasions.
About Vagabond

Takehiko Inoue’s Vagabond, based on Eiji Yoshikawa’s novel Musashi, is a fictional account of the life of Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645). The historical figure Miyamoto Musashi, author of the philosophical strategy guide A Book of Five Rings, was a master of the sword and was revered as a “sword-saint.” He founded the Niten Ichi style of sword fighting which is typified by fighting with both long and short swords at once, holding the long sword with the right hand and the short sword with the left. Musashi was not only a master swordsman but was also a master of the “gentler arts”—he was a master of the sumi-e art form and even mastered the arts of metalworking and woodcarving.

About the Author

Takehiko Inoue is the author of the best selling manga Slam Dunk, with over 100 million copies in print worldwide. For his work on Vagabond, Inoue received the 2000 Media Arts award for Manga from the Japanese Ministry of Culture as well as the Kodansha Award for best manga. Inoue has also received the prestigious Tezuka award for his previous works. In addition to his numerous manga titles, Inoue also created the character designs for the PlayStation basketball game, One on One.

A note on names: The names presented within the context of this comic are presented in the traditional Japanese order—surname, followed by first name. “Miyamoto” is Miyamoto Musashi’s last name and “Musashi” is his first name. The name of the creator of Vagabond, however, has been presented first name first, last name second. “Takehiko” is the author’s first name and “Inoue” is his last name.
This is the LAST page of this comic!

*Vagabond* has been printed to read from right to left in its original Japanese format—presenting Takehiko Inoue’s dynamic artwork the way it was meant to be seen!

When most Japanese comics are published in English, a mirror image of the original artwork is printed in order to accommodate the left to right reading orientation of English. For this reason, errors in continuity occasionally occur and characters who were originally right-handed suddenly become left-handed, in order to present manga in its purest form. *Vagabond* is being printed to read from right to left. This way, kimonos are worn with the left side over the right and the samurai’s long and short swords are carried on the left side the way they were traditionally worn.

To properly enjoy *Vagabond*, start from the other end of this comic and read from right to left.
This beautifully drawn series has incredible action, a hint of romance, and a strong core of Japanese history...this book now has the possibility of taking off like a rocket with the American audience.
—Troy Brownfield, Shotgun Reviews

Shinmen Takezo is destined to become the legendary sword-saint, Miyamoto Musashi—perhaps the most renowned samurai of all time. For now, Takezo is a cold-hearted killer, who will take on anyone in mortal combat to make a name for himself. This is the journey of a wild young brute who strives to reach enlightenment by way of the sword—fighting on the edge of death.

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