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Day Of Vengeance (Countdown To Infinite Crisis)



Synopsis

Written by Bill Willingham Art by Justiniano, Ron Randall & Walden Wong Cover by Walter Simonson Spinning out of the events of COUNTDOWN TO INFINITE CRISIS and leading into INFINITE CRISIS, the reality-bending 6-issue miniseries from writer Bill Willingham and artists Justiano, Ron Randall, and Walden Wong is collected! In this volume featuring DAY OF VENGEANCE #1-6, ACTION COMICS #826, ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #639 and SUPERMAN #216, Superman and Captain Marvel face off against the evil of Eclipso! Meanwhile, Ragman finds himself at the magical core of the DCU, where he ends up aligned with an unlikely ally: The Enchantress. Together with a ragtag team of magic-based heroes they must face down a foe who has sworn to wipe out all magic...the Spectre! Featuring nearly every magical character of the DCU, DAY OF VENGEANCE may mark the end of magic as we know it.

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Customer Reviews

The issue with this trade is that it really collects two separate but related storylines, both leading into Infinite Crisis. Judd Winnick writes the first storyline, *Lightning Strikes Twice*, is a brief story about how Eclipso came to inhabit its current host. It involves a confrontation with Superman and Captain Marvel, but it really seems rushed and a bit contrived. Winnick does present us with a few interesting moments, but this part of the trade is pretty blah. Bill Willingham, of *Fables* fame, writes *Day of Vengeance*, the story of the Spectre and his rampage through the magical DCU. The thing with *Dov* is that while the writing is fantastic it does not hold up as the mega event it is supposed to

be. Instead we get the story of five incredibly minor characters and one silly silver age concept of a talking chimp trying to weather the storm. The dialogue and relationships among the characters are fantastic. You even get to care about Detective Chimp. Detective Chimp... good lord. It is a lot of fun. :)

The last few years have seen the resurgence of Eclipso as a major player in the DC universe and Day of Vengeance sets him up as the de facto villain in a plan to destroy all magic. The first quarter of the book is about Eclipso's plan to control Superman with the ultimate goal being to take hold of Captain Marvel. Apparently Captain Marvel is an even more tantalizing prize than Superman thanks to the fact that his powers are magic based. When that plan fails he acquires a female host and seduces the biggest gun in the DCU, The Specter. Without a host of his own a confused Specter easily falls prey to Eclipso and begins to carry out the objective of eliminating all magical beings. It's left to a handful of DC third stringers along with the indomitable Captain Marvel to take down Eclipso, The Specter and save what's left of the DCU magic beings. The problem with the story is that there isn't much of a story. Things just sort of happen. The third string magic users include characters I've never even heard of. The only ones I even vaguely know are Ragman and Detective Chimp and those two I only know because I saw their pictures in advertisements when I used to collect comics in the 70's. DOV just seemed rather devoid of emotion and depth leaving me with sort of a 'so what?' feeling. As a lead in to Infinite Crisis it may be important and the events of the stories ending may have major ramifications on the future of the DCU but as a standalone story it's just rather unmemorable.

The Spectre is the Wrath Of God, an immensely powerful entity charged by the Creator of the Universe with avenging the innocent and bringing righteous vengeance upon the evil. Unfortunately, despite all his power, the Spectre isn't the same as God, and can make mistakes, even become corrupted. The being who served as the Spirit Of Vengeance before the Spectre was Eclipso, who went to extremes in his mission and became wholly corrupt, eventually becoming one of the deadliest villains in the universe. Early in the existence of Eclipso's successor, the Spectre, the forces of Heaven saw that the same thing could happen again, and came up with the idea of splitting the charge given to the Spectre by binding him to a mortal as an 'anchor'. Knowing mortals tempered Spectre's tendency to go overboard, and also enabled him to more directly be a part of the world. Without going into even more of the character's epic back history, it's enough to say that "Day Of Vengeance" begins with the Spectre totally unhinged. He's lost successive human 'hosts'

over the years as they went on to the afterlife or were de-bonded from Spectre; and all the Spirit Of Vengeance's efforts have been unable to stop evil from occurring. And thus we find in Day Of Vengeance # 1 a Spectre far removed from his original purpose: he's now a merciless creature of destruction, killing in retaliation not only for really heinous acts of evil, but for shockingly minor transgressions as well. Into this already volatile situation comes the new female incarnation of Eclipso (the Eclipso entity takes on the gender of whoever its current host is), who has decided not to take on the universe directly, but to influence the unbalanced Spectre into acting on her behalf. Eclipso convinces the Spectre - currently in so much turmoil that he's unable to communicate with the hereafter and is desperately searching for someone to give him his marching orders - that magic is the actual source of all evil in the universe. And thus the stage is set for possibly the most powerful single character DC has ever created to go to war against all magic, everywhere, seeking its destruction. Numerous characters have sought to change the whole universe; the Spectre is one of the few who might actually be able to do so, especially with the also-incredibly-powerful Eclipso on his side. The Spectre's strikes range across the universe and through adjacent dimensions, and it's at a strange bar on the cusp of various realities - where numerous magical beings have flocked to find a temporary hiding place - that an unlikely group comes together as the Shadowpact to attempt the impossible by opposing the Spectre together. This group - Ragman, Nightshade, Detective Chimp (yes, seriously), The Enchantress, the Oblivion Bar's owner Jim Rook (aka Nightmaster) and its bouncer, Blue Devil - is in way over its heads, but much more powerful characters like Dr. Fate and the wizard Shazam are already involved; and who on Earth is Detective Chimp looking for in a small American town that he claims may be even More powerful than the Spectre?? The 6 issues of the Day Of Vengeance limited series reprinted here are awesome in and of themselves, but if you read only this you're missing out on a lot of the big picture, much more so than with some of the other crossovers. The most important books, by far, to have to go along with this are JSA #s 73-75, available in the Trade Paperback *JSA: Black Vengeance*, wherein the Spectre takes the fight to the Black Adam-ruled nation of Kahndaq. JSA # 77 (in *JSA: Mixed Signals*) is also marked as Day Of Vengeance, and it along with JSA 76 from the same volume (marked as an OMAC Project tie-in) actually figure into a few of the paths that were leading to Infinite Crisis. Blood Of The Demon #s 6 & 7 are also Day Of Vengeance tie-ins, although are not, in my opinion, quite as integral to the whole story. Now, the problem of which order to read the books in, should one decide to get the whole saga: there really isn't a definitive answer, but that's because they've been put together on a flexible framework, where there are several points with the 6-issue Day Of Vengeance in which other events Could be inserted. For JSA 73-75, my best guess is that

they happen fairly early, before the catastrophe of Hungary. But the Hungary angle enters midway through issue 2 of DOV, so reading them, say, after DOV # 2 and before # 3 means you're getting things a bit out of order (which isn't nearly as irritating as it must sound actually; a lot of comics nowadays tell their stories in non-linear fashion - DOV # 2 itself flashes back before DOV # 1 to show what happened before the Spectre's rampage began). JSA 73-75 theoretically could fit in between DOV #s 4 and 5, and that may be the order in which a lot of people would like to read them. JSA 77 and the Blood Of The Demon issues are at an indefinite place other than that they happen near the very end of the event. Of course, added on to this in the unnecessary difficulty within DC trade Paperbacks of telling exactly where one issue ends and the next begins - they all flow through like one big book without the issues being divided by cover reprints (like Marvel's collections and the collections of some other publishers are). That works great in collections like "Justice" or "Green Lantern: Rebirth" where it's all one self-contained story, but can be distracting in collections whose issues tie in to issues outside of themselves, or even collections that just reprint several distinct stories. Once you're used to it (most people reading this probably are) it's not hard to figure it out, but I imagine it's a pain in the neck for newer readers (although certainly not enough of a hindrance that it should drive anyone away). "Day Of Vengeance" - either taken in its entirety or just counting the 6 'main' issues collected here - is a dark and electrifying big-scale epic, with surprisingly effective doses of humor injected liberally (I suppose that making a character named Detective Chimp a main player demands some humor, but I wouldn't have thought the comedic elements would fit well with the overall apocalyptic tone). Leading into Infinite Crisis, this was one of the best arcs from one of DC's most exciting times, and an extraordinary display of imagination (check out some of the 'alternate dimensions' affected by the happenings) and emotionally-charged action.

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