



Marvel Graphic Novel #1: The Death of Captain Marvel

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The Death of Captain Marvel. One of the poignant comics ever, Mar-vell succumbs to cancer in this classic and touching story.

Marvel Graphic Novel #1: The Death of Captain Marvel Details

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Author : Jim Starlin

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Subu says

A superhero succumbs to cancer...friends and foes gather in his last moments to pay homage...unlike any other superhero comic I have read...

Tony Calder says

This is the first in the range of graphic novels that Marvel released in the 80s. Captain Marvel had never had his own title, rather he usually guest starred in the Avengers or the Fantastic Four and occasionally other titles. The death of a superhero? Why should that rate a graphic novel? Superbeings in the Marvel Universe die fairly regularly, and they rarely stay dead.

However, this graphic novel is different - released well over 30 years ago and the character is still dead, and Mar-Vell didn't die in combat or a villain's death trap, rather from a disease - cancer.

Jim Starlin is both the author and artist of this powerful tale, and there are some emotional scenes in this story. Both Marvel and DC choose to keep their comics universes reasonably close to real Earth levels of technology, so even the combined intelligence of Reed Richards, Hank McCoy, Tony Stark, Henry Pym and others is unable to come up with a cure.

Pablo says

Cómic pausado, reflexivo y bastante elegante. Bien.

Sesana says

The new-ish hardcover release of The Death of Captain Marvel packages Captain Marvel #34 and Marvel Spotlight #1-2 with the original graphic novel. I've read a handful of these 80s Marvel graphic novels. They're all short, though significantly longer than a regular issue, with extra attention paid to the art. X-Men: God Loves, Man Kills is another in the line.

As expected, the title graphic novel has the death of a Marvel superhero, Captain Marvel, not from violence but from cancer. I was pretty impressed with the way the story was told. It had rather more subtlety than I was expecting, and some very moving and effective moments. I'm thinking of Rick Jones's angry rant at the brilliant and helpless scientists of the Marvel universe, or Spider-Man getting overwhelmed at Mar-Vell's bedside and having to leave the room. It's a little hampered by the length (I think a longer book might have done a better job of delving into some of the deeper issues) and the conventions of 80s superhero comics.

Captain Marvel #34 did end up being important, since it details how Captain Marvel got cancer. Marvel

Spotlight #1-2 seemed kind of useless, though. It does show Marvel on Titan, and it does briefly show many of the Titan characters who show up in the graphic novel, but other than that, they didn't add much.

Dan Schwent says

After collapsing after a routine fight, Captain Marvel reveals he has terminal cancer and perhaps three months to live. In his last days, he records his memoirs and gets his affairs in order.

Captain Marvel, the Protector of the Universe, is stricken with cancer and none of the super heroes and scientists in the Marvel Universe can save him. This is his swan song.

For a book written in the early 1980's, this holds up very well. Captain Marvel is on his way out and his friends come to say goodbye. This was a touching read. Spider-Man and Rick Jones had some emotional moments and a single man-tear welled up when a Skrull gave Captain Marvel a Skrull medal of valor out of respect.

As Captain Marvel fights the disease, he recounts his memoirs, giving a condensed account of his super hero career and battles with the Kree, Skrulls, Thanos, and others.

Man-tears were a near thing at the end of this one. Super-heroes die all the time. Mar-Vell is one of the few that has actually more or less stayed dead. After reading this, I'm glad they didn't cheapen the story by bringing him back. Four out of five stars.

Jeff Skott says

Mar-vell dies

The title says it all, but it is how he lives and dies that makes the story. Starlin's work is amazing.

Jennifer says

I'd heard this was a really powerful story, but I knew next to nothing about Captain Marvel and didn't have much interest in the character. However, I spotted this at a comic shop sale and decided to give it a shot, and I'm glad I did. I really think the 80s-era Marvel graphic novels have produced some of the greatest writing about these characters. The length is just right for telling a complete, self-contained story in the pre-decompression style of the time, and the bigger pages and advanced coloring techniques really do wonders for the art. God Loves, Man Kills remains my favorite of these graphic novels that I've read, but the original New Mutants comes close.

And then there's this, The Death of Captain Marvel. In what could easily have become a cheesily melodramatic scenario -- a hero is dying! -- Starlin manages to craft a surprisingly subtle (for comics) tale of death and grief and acceptance. The various reactions to the Mar-Vell's death from different characters all feel very real, as does the hero's own struggle to accept his fate. Plus, I can see how it was very subversive, at

the time, to show a hero dying, not in battle or in noble sacrifice, but of a normal, common disease like cancer. The questions raised, and partially answered, here -- why DON'T the huge science brains in comics spend time curing diseases? -- are fascinating, and deserve further exploration in less-focused texts. But for what it is, The Death of Captain Marvel is an excellent story.

Dimitris says

One of my all time favourites!

Loved this as a kid. Loved it with every single one of my re-reads through the years.

You like cosmic stuff? It's a MUST!

You like Captain Marvel? It's a MUST!

You like Starlin? DUH!

It's about the life and times of Mar-Vell. And of course the death of Captain Marvel as well.

Really miss Mar-Vell... wish they'd bring him back, yeah Carol is great and all, but I miss him and always wanted him to be back. I loved every single issue of his when I was a kid and re-reading now all the Thanos stuff made me reminiscing his series and the times I'd read back in the days. Oh well..

WE NEED THE ORIGINAL CAPTAIN MARVEL BACK MARVEL!!!! BRING HIM THE FUCK BACK!

ALSO since we're on the subject, WE NEED THE ORIGINAL NOVA BACK TOO. What the fuck is that with a fucking kid for Nova.. fuck that shit and bring back the original one with which we grew up with DAMMIT.

Rant over.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!

Jon(athan) Nakapalau says

To understand the concept of "Death" in the Marvel Universe and the connection Thanos has with the entity that manifests the metaphysical concept of 'death' you should read this excellent GN.

Devero says

Questa fu la prima Graphic Novel della Marvel. Nel senso che il termine nasce e si applica per la prima volta a quest'opera di Jim Starlin.

Sono passati almeno due decenni da quando la lessi per la prima volta, nell'edizione Play press, ma ricordo ancora bene tutti i passaggi. In fondo è una storia comune, come tutte le famiglie moderne hanno avuto od hanno: un proprio caro malato di tumore. In questo caso è un eroe, simbolo di un periodo, la fine degli anni '60. A che serve l'eroismo di fronte a un male incurabile? Quando l'aiuto degli amici non può nulla, se non un conforto momentaneo, a che valgono le loro capacità fisiche, intellettuali, morali?

Chiunque abbia avuto una persona cara in quelle condizioni è passato attraverso gli stessi dubbi, travagli, dolori, rabbie e lacrime. Per giungere, si spera, all'accettazione del fatto.

La morte è inesorabile.

guanaeps says

Amazing work by Jim Starlin, writing a poignant and satisfying ending to a character whose legacy he helped create, all whilst pouring himself into every panel. A true work of art.

Paul says

When I first read this in 1982, I had no idea that they were reprints, so they were new to me.

Some of Marr-vell's friends and a couple of his enemies show up to pay their respects to a dying Super-Hero struck with cancer.

Now, this was back in the day where when an hero (or more likely one of his supporting cast) died, they stayed that way... well for a least a while, unlike in these days, when they die and are back in action a couple of months later in a big "Ressurrection" story. So yeah, I had taken this story seriously.

Although aimed at a more "mature" audience with its glossy paper, magazine-sized format and its exorbitant price, the story was still pretty much the usual comic-book fare. After all, that's what the writers were used to writing and I suppose they had trouble making the jump to an older audience.

The story hardly stands the test of time, but for the time at which it had been written, it was pretty much some of the best American stuff out there.

Jdetrick says

As a person recently in remission from cancer after initially receiving a terminal diagnosis, I won't pretend that I have any objective ness when it comes to reviewing works in which cancer is a central theme. That being said, I've always liked this graphic novel. Besides it's historical importance for Marvel, not only as the company's first graphic novel but as an example of one oft he few times they've killed a character and left them dead, it's simply a good story. Starlin's art is very nice, and this isn't nearly as overwritten as so much of his 70's work with Mar- Vell. It's explores death pretty well and it's a moving story. It still stands up pretty well.

Pablo says

Pequeño clásico de la melancolía orientada a nerds de los 80.

Juan says

I read this in 1982, when I was on vacation in New York, from Hong Kong. I remember buying it at a B. Dalton Booksellers on Fifth Avenue and reading it on the plane from NY to London. It was such a major event, as a thirteen year old, to be reading about the death of a superhero. I mean, they were superheroes and they didn't die. More than that, though, was how clever the story is. Captain Marvel doesn't die in the heroic throes of combat saving the world. He dies, equally heroically, but without glamour because of cancer. It's very real and the reactions of the other superheroes are equally as honest.
