



Sword of Sorcery, Vol. 1: Amethyst

Christy Marx, Aaron Lopresti (Illustrations), Various (Illustrations), Travis Moore (Illustrations), Tony Bedard, Jesus Saiz (Illustrations), Marc Andreyko, Andrei Bressan (Illustrations)

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Amy Winston leads a strange life on the road with her mother. She's about to learn why it's all been necessary when she discovers she's the lost princess of Gemworld -- and has powerful enemies hunting her!

Sword of Sorcery, Vol. 1: Amethyst Details

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From Reader Review Sword of Sorcery, Vol. 1: Amethyst for online ebook

Shannon Appelcline says

Amethyst. A fun new variant of the Amethyst character. It's true to her origins, but has a bit more fantasy flair. There's also a nice mix of characters, and some good connections to the DC Universe (which the original Amethyst was somewhat short of). Overall, a fun story, even if its ending is quite abrupt [7/10].

Beowulf. A fun mixture of fantasy and post-apocalyptic science-fiction, with some interesting characters and a neat history. This also feels like it was abruptly cut off [7+/10].

Stalker. This story isn't exactly bad, it's just incredibly shallow: there's no subtext to it, just extended fighting and killing that's too decompressed. There's also not a full story, just the start of something [4/10].

Overall, the fantasy stories here were enjoyable, though it's quite obvious that they were all cut off before their authors were done.

Nick Jones says

This book consists of three separate stories: Amethyst, Beowulf, and Stalker.

Amethyst is the first and longest, starting out very promisingly with stellar art from Aaron Lopresti, a good amount of fantasy world building, and an intriguing plot centering on Amethyst and her mother coming into conflict with Amethyst's power-hungry aunt. If the entire story had been about that family rivalry it would have been an overall interesting read, but any potential the story had was dismissed for seemingly no reason right in the middle, only to be supplanted by the sudden presences of DC Comics villain Eclipso and longtime Vertigo character John Constantine. The addition of these new antagonists shunts the prior issues between Amethyst and her aunt to the back burner, and the original plot is resolved as a side note to the entirely underwhelming and shoehorned conflict with Eclipso. The deck-chair reshuffling smacks of editorial interference, and the story certainly suffers as a result, ending on a rushed, unsatisfying, and unfinished note. If Beowulf and Stalker hadn't been included, perhaps the space they occupied could have been used to provide Marx's story with enough room to properly develop.

Beowulf is short and dull, featuring a genetically-engineered berserker in a post-apocalyptic future indiscriminately killing anything that looks at him funny, then tossing him back to the present seemingly for the sole sake of referencing other DC Comics characters. It's definitely hurt by its ham-handed attempts to tie itself to some larger DC Comics world.

Stalker is so pointless and stupid that I'm not going to go to the trouble of describing it or even bother finishing thi

Anna says

I agree with some of the other reviews that I've seen for this one. I was expecting more to happen and it was very good setup for a much longer series run that what it got -- the entirety of which is everything contained in this volume. Also, while I love crossovers, it felt like Constantine was dropped in here really awkwardly to try and gain new readers. Wasn't really a fan of his involvement in the overall story-arc. Does anyone know if it's in his comics as well, or just these ones? Cause it also felt like a significant chunk of that story, which I already wasn't a fan of, was just ripped out of the middle of the book or something...

I will say that I did enjoy the feminine dominance in regards to characters, plot, etc. Also while the whole gemstone thing did feel like something that dropped out of some mass-market high fantasy paperback for tweens, or an 80s cartoon, I really didn't mind. That was one of the things I actually liked the most about the world-building. That and the fact that Nilaa (or however it's spelled) was populated by people from Earth originally. Overall, I would say not to bother with reading this particular volume. It's good and if there was more after it, I'd recommend it for sure. But there's not, so it was more "meh" and frustrating than anything else.

Sesana says

I never read the older version of Gemworld. I know it's out there, and I would like to read it, someday. I like the idea of a very magical, female-lead fantasy comic. Christy Marx, probably best known for creating the truly outrageous Jem and the Holograms, can definitely write a magic-infused, female lead fantasy. And Sword of Sorcery works, for the most part. It's a shame it was cancelled.

I wonder if the concept of Gemworld itself was enough to make readers wary. It does sound kind of gimmicky, to have all of these gemstone themes. But I've seen worse in fantasy, so I was willing to suspend disbelief that far. And once I did, I liked what I saw. Sadly, Marx didn't get the time to fully flesh out her version of Gemworld, but it certainly looks like she had a good idea of where she was going. It may not feel entirely realistic, but it does make good internal sense. And, thanks to the efforts of artist Aaron Lopresti, it looks fantastic.

I feel bad judging the storyline. The first few issues seem like they're ramping up to something really interesting. I was really enjoying the book at this point. And then there's the Eclipse storyline. It comes out of nowhere, and shoves the previous overarching story to the side. It kind of smells like editorial interference (we must tie this book more closely with the rest of the DCU!) and it doesn't do the book any favors. And then it stops abruptly, with a cliffhanger ending that will never be resolved. If anyone ever picks up Gemworld for DC again, it's unlikely that they'll continue that story where they left off, instead of starting over again.

I would imagine that they'll also start from scratch with the characters, which is a shame. Amy/Amara is a great character. Her reactions are entirely believable in her situation, and I like her determination and bravery. There's obviously some culture shock for her, but she's willing to learn and a fairly quick study. The supporting characters are also great. There's a lot of capable, if fallible, people who are interesting to read. It's a nice cast. Unfortunately, I never really developed much of an attachment to any of the characters. This is probably my fault. I knew that the end was coming, abruptly, and I didn't want to get too attached to

characters that I would probably never see again.

This collection also comes with the Beowulf and Stalker stories that were, it seems, originally backups to the Gemworld stories in *Sword of Sorcery*. Beowulf starts out well, with a far-future, post-apocalyptic take on the tale of Beowulf and Grendel. I really liked that part, but then it shifted over into a time travel plot that I could have done without, especially because it ends up an unresolvable cliffhanger. The Stalker story does much the same, and it doesn't have the benefit of being well-written enough or clever enough to draw me in. This is the sort of thing that would have worked much better if we'd had more than a few pages to develop an emotional attachment to the main character. This one, at least, I wasn't sorry to see end.

As much as I enjoyed this book, I still don't think that I would recommend it to others. The problem is that the series was cancelled, which leaves every story thread unresolved. And it probably never will be. So what's the point in reading it? I probably would have been more engaged when I was reading it if I hadn't gone in knowing that it was essentially dead in the water. But it's probably a good thing that I knew in advance, because it would have been terrible to get attached to something that was doomed before I ever started reading it. I'm still sad about the cancellation, of course, because I feel like this could have been a really good book if given time to grow. I guess I'll just have to watch a few episodes of *Jem*.

Rosa says

I am so very sorry that they will not be continuing this series. I loved the artwork, the characters, and how they updated the book. I'm sad that they left it on a cliffhanger. Beowulf and Stalker were also pretty interesting stories although based on their inclusion in this volume I'm going to assume that they will also not be continued.

The Sapphic Nerd says

I have to split this review up into 3 parts: 1) *Sword of Sorcery*, 2) *Beowulf*, and 3) *Stalker* because they're unrelated stories with different creative teams

...

1) *Sword of Sorcery*

My first thought when I saw this was, "DC has a fantasy thing? Huh..." and then I figured, "Sure, why not give it a try? I love fantasy." And I bought it, got distracted by other books, and didn't get around to reading it until a couple years later.

It's pretty darn good! Maybe I'm biased because a lot of the themes are similar to a story I've been slowly writing myself, but *Sword of Sorcery* is set in an interesting world amidst political power struggles and features a quick-thinking, big-hearted female protagonist in her teens. Amaya/Amy is a likable hero who never gets annoying. She's surrounded by a cast of other strong women who play well off of her.

The only flaw that stands out to me is the seemingly instant flirtation between Amaya and Preet. He's the "dashing rogue" caught stealing from the royal treasury, their touch sparks a magical reaction that gives him away as heir to the throne, he tries to run, and then there's the whole "Oops, I fell on top of you!" moment.

It's saved by the series ending and not giving the characters enough time to solidify a romance.

The best part of the series? Mordiel's redemption arc. Yes, you can see it coming a mile away, and it does feel premature (probably because they knew the run would be cancelled) but it's still there, and it's still effective - if only because there aren't enough redemption stories around.

Artwork in this is lovely. It belongs in a comic. Colours are generally vibrant, adding to the magic and fantasy of the book.

It's a shame the series didn't continue. There are a bunch of plotlines left open and I would have loved to learn more about the rich world and its characters. Some parts feel rushed, but there's only so much story you can cram into about 6 issues. It's ambitious (rightfully so), memorable, and has a lot of potential that it would have lived up to given the time. Hopefully, DC takes a chance on bringing it back someday.

This story is alone worth the price of the book.

4.5 stars.

...

2) *Beowulf*

And then there's the issue of *Beowulf* afterwards. Why? I dunno... I guess he fits into the fantasy theme? He's basically Wolverine: a lab-altered supersoldier who's gruff and kills like nobody's business but has a soft spot for kids. So yeah, I like him. There's an intriguing backstory to him that I want to know more about, and it's interesting the way they twist the old legend with modern technology. The art is nice, too.

4 stars.

...

3) *Stalker*

This issue, on the other hand, doesn't have an obvious reason to be part of this book. Unless DC really wanted him to tie into something Constantine related. Amaya does go on an adventure with Constantine, but we're missing half that story in the collection. Why they didn't include that story instead of this one, I can't figure out.

Some guy makes a deal with the devil to save his wife and unborn child. Of course, they eventually die and he's given immortal life and murders a bunch of people because he's angry. He's makes a deal to get his soul back if he kills this one specific woman, and he doesn't do it and has to fight the devil.

The art is ugly and what was an interesting idea wasn't executed well enough for me to care about anything that happened.

2 stars.

Allison says

When I heard DC was rebooting comics through the new 52 line I did not expect this to be one of them. I am so glad they did.

The story starts out with Amy, a goth chick who gets pulled into Gemworld because of her royal bloodline. She quickly learns that she needs to learn to control her family's magic in order to survive. The artwork is beautiful, the dialogue is realistic, and *le gasp* the women work together!

This is the first graphic novel I've read in quite some time where the women are voluntarily working together. Not because they have dirt on each other, not because a male character says to play nice, but because they genuinely understand the value of teamwork. It works well for them and I'm looking forward to seeing what volume 2 brings.

Mike says

A surprisingly decent modernized reboot of "Amethyst, Princess of Gemworld". I'd have to do some more research, but I think the old Amethyst series was aimed at tween girls. this one seems to be good general fantasy fiction, as the story lines are mature in nature but still hold down a PG level of sexuality, maybe a PG-13 violence level. If the title had gotten the boot by DC, i woudl continue reading.

There were two darker back-up features included: a Beowulf retelling that I thought was excellent, and the Faustian thriller The Stalker. Beowulf retold the old Norse legend faithfully, as set in a post-apocalyptic world with B. as a frozen super-soldier from the readers' near-future. I'd suggest the book for the B. back-up alone.

Going to come back around when I have some time and see if this fits any of my Seasonal Reading lo local library Summer Reading Challenges.

Devann says

From what I understand this is kind of a revamp of several older DC titles, but not really being a DC girl I've never read or heard of any of them. I mostly just read this because it was a single volume and also because it was a tie-in with Justice League Dark. Although it wasn't anything super amazing, it was definitely better than I, Vampire, the other tie-in I read. The unimaginative title really says it all because it is a very standard sword and sorcery fantasy series, but the characters are fun and the different gems having different powers is an interesting although not entirely original plot device. I actually wish this had a longer run because I think it could have been a fairly decent title if it was given time to warm up. Also if you're just reading this because of JLD and/or Constantine it's not REALLY necessary and he seems pretty OOC to me, but I'm starting to think that's to be expected when he's outside of his own title.

Jeff says

Sword of Sorcery!?

I don't think DC was even trying when they came up with this book title, which is a shame because their

revisiting of Gemworld isn't too bad. The crappy title umbrellas several different stories here, the most prominent being, Amethyst.

The characters are what carry the story. Basically, it's women harnessing magic and doing it for themselves. Amy/Amaya has lived on Earth for the first seventeen years and now that she's of age, she travels back to Gemworld. There's an evil aunt and crystal portals and magic and sword play and magic sword play and stuff...the whole different kingdoms ruled by different gems has a vague been-there-done-that feel to it.

The "T" rated Constantine is a player here, but warning (!), there's a big chunk of storyline missing when he brings Amaya back to planet Earth. After the battle you never get to see, she travels to Chicago for deep dish pizza. Mmm deep dish pizza!

It's not until Eclipso (picture the Green Goblin, but dressed in purple) that the story picks up considerably. Eclipso was involved in a memorable crossover from the 1990's, the last time DC apparently gave a crap about writing compelling stories company wide. I have vague memories of a possessed and angry Batman and the Joker beating the crap out of each other all because of one of Eclipso's black diamonds. Good times!

The **Beowulf** story is a nice futuristic update on the book that you were forced to read in high school and **Stalker** reinforces the old trope about trusting some hooded creepy guy with a bad manicure who promises you stuff if you just give him your soul. Hello Satan! Paging Doctor Faustus!

DavidO says

The main story is a bit of a mess. As someone else mentioned, it feels like the editors had the author change the story about halfway through and the story suffers for it.

It's a bit of a shame that it wasn't very good and it was cancelled so quickly, since it's one of the few comics I've seen where the artists control themselves and don't make all the women look like idealized porn stars.

Dustin says

This was a great reboot of the old Amethyst series and now I'm kind of sad that DC canceled it. A great sword and sorcery tale and a strong origin for the heroine. All of the characters, especially the main character Amaya were well written. I would recommend this collection for the Amethyst stuff alone. This collection also features two other tales: DC's post-apocalyptic reimagining of the epic hero Beowulf and a story about an Immortal killer named Stalker. I really liked the the two Beowulf stories. The first is a pretty straight retelling of the poem with the post-apoc twist of Beowulf being a pre-fall super soldier. The second story was a brief time-travel tale to introduce a modern day character to the setting. The Stalker tale kind of sucked in my opinion. It started with a warrior king of ancient times making a deal with the devil (unlike Marvel's take on the subject of Hell, DC has no problem with this being straight up Lucifer.) As most deals with Ole Scratch go, it went badly and he was cursed to walk the earth. Being called Stalker, you can imagine what he did to pass the time. After dumping his origin on you it drops into the plot of End of Days.

Kyle says

It wasn't the most mind blowing story, but it was SO very entertaining and I enjoyed it tremendously.

Amethyst is a fun character and she contradicts a lot of what is happening in the new 52, so I found her fantastical story to be refreshing, light-hearted and much-needed. The script and pencil-work are only so-so; however, the colouring and scenic art were excellent. Bright, vivid landscapes illustrated using lush, deep hues and really great lighting stole the show for me.... It was the exact opposite of everything we have seen in all those Gotham-based titles. A total relief from the darkness.

The big surprise for me in this collection was the Beowulf story. I loved its glimpse into the future DC Universe and I found the heightened language of the script perfect for the narrative being conveyed. Beowulf (a character I've never really thought much about) was totally hot, thanks to some brilliant artwork and characterization. And was it just me, or was there a little chemistry going on between him and his sidekick? There were a lot of questions raised about what happens in the distant future of the DCU, and I sincerely hope we eventually get around to some answers (although it clearly won't be discussed in this series any further)... I would really like to see more Beowulf in the DCnU.

A shame they went and cancelled what I thought would have been a great way to balance all the grittiness and seriousness that has infected the DCU in recent years. Sword of Sorcery had a lot of potential; it was taken from us too soon.

4/5

Ivy says

5 stars

Thought this comic book was very good. Would be cool to learn sword fighting and sorcery. The house system seems a little weird though. Not used to houses. Sad that this series got cancelled. Hope they will be able to defeat Kaala. Don't really like Constantine either.

Can't wait to read more DC comics!!!!

Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says

I have to admit that the cover made me pass this by a few times because the cover looks like a Barbie-theme graphic novel. Don't get me wrong. I went through a huge Barbie doll phase. I still have a collection of Barbie dolls. But I never got into the Barbie merchandise and have no desire to read a Barbie graphic novel or watch a Barbie movie. I really wish the cover wasn't so bubble gum-looking.

Nevertheless, I decided to check this out. It's actually not bad. It's definitely sword and sorcery. I like the genre, and I think it was done quite well. The whole idea of Amethyst as a seventeen-year-old who comes

into her heritage as a powerful princess of another kingdom is pretty cool. I like that each kingdom represents a different precious gem. However, one of my issues with the way Amethyst is drawn is Amy looks like just her mother and aunt. It was only possible to tell them apart based on what they were wearing. I think there was more variation in the other kingdoms, thankfully. While I wasn't loving the whole Barbie verisimilitude, the action and magic was actually pretty cool.

Talking about strange bedfellows. Amethyst is paired with Beowulf and Stalker, which are both very violent and more male-oriented sword and sorcery tales. It was a bit of a rough transition, probably moreso for readers who don't jump back and forth between male and female-oriented fiction.

Beowulf was kind of a cool update on the old tale. Instead of it being the original Beowulf, it's about a genetically engineered warrior of the same name, created by the Basilisk (who I know about from reading The Suicide Squad series). There is a link between Grendel and Beowulf because of Basilisk. Beowulf isn't strictly likable, but he definitely is good at killing monsters. I would read more of these stories.

Stalker is about an ancient warrior king who makes an unwise deal with Lucifer that comes back to bite him in the rear. He goes on a mission to get revenge in return. It was the darkest story. Readers who like horror action will enjoy it.

Overall, pretty good. If the cover makes you want to avoid it, I say give this a try.
