



## The Maxx, Vol. 2

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A perplexing adventure of fantasy and reality, THE MAXX BOOK TWO tells the compelling tale of three ordinary people caught in an extraordinary maelstrom of deadly denials and lost identities. After enduring a tragic event as a child, young Julie Winters created a fantasy world within her own mind to escape to whenever she was overwhelmed. But after a lifetime of repressed memories and pain, her "Outback" has grown in power and pulled a hulking purple super-hero named the Maxx into its sphere of influence. Now as the Maxx finds himself leaping between the two planes of existence, the amnesiac creature must unravel the mystery of his own true origin while protecting an adult Julie from the sadistic and enigmatic Mr. Gone. SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS.

## The Maxx, Vol. 2 Details

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Author : Sam Kieth , William Messner-Loebs

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## **From Reader Review The Maxx, Vol. 2 for online ebook**

### **Patrick says**

I'm man enough to admit it...this title is truly something special.

I don't think I can explain it so much as just say that having read this as a teenager my mixed memories of then and now may well be combining to make the experience something more.

It challenges perception and it messes with reality. But not in a cheap kind of way. It forces you to slow down and really take it all in.

Also, the art is PERFECT for this story. I'm actually reading this digitally and the reader I'm using emulates the shadowed crease in a 2-page spread so I can get the full effect. Love it. There are a lot of spreads where I kind of want to turn them into desktop backgrounds.

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### **Joseph Heath says**

This volume improves on the first volume. Things are a little more clear as I think the writer is figuring out what he wants to do more. It's still very surreal and odd, but more focused. The first issue or two in the volume has a cameo from another comic book and honestly I have no idea who he is, so those issues are a little on the meh side for me. But the rest is pretty fantastic. It's also established itself enough to move away from Maxx and explore the rest of the characters. They really dive into some deep stuff. There's a particularly amazing issue involving an injured bunny that just on its own is worth a read.

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### **Chris says**

This volume went kind of in a surreal WTF is this all about, further down the psychosis rabbit hole (which is relevant to Julie and/or Maxx's psychosis). It's very interesting, but very weird. There is a couple cameos, Savage Dragon and the shark baddie, and Pitt - which made little sense and then disappears. For whatever reason they shrink down in the real world, and everyone is left wondering what is real and what is not. Julie is starting to realize she's deranged as well. Starting to wonder if Maxx is even real.

On a bonus note, v3 starts right off with a character asking "is this going to make any sense?" so the creator clearly knows what's going on. And it doesn't always have to make sense.

The art still looks great. There are some cool experimental pages that look like weird water colors, or other things. Some that look like they are akin to Boris Vallejo and other whacked out 70-80s era Wizard illustrations that I have seen, kind of psychedelic in ways. very cool.

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### **Magila says**

The first 3/4 of this comic was awesome. In particular, the story conveyed in Julie's youth was super interesting and uniquely presented. However, I found that this installment went a little sideways in the end (excepting the Mr. Gone piece).

For those who enjoy this series, it's unlikely you'll be disappointed. Pitt makes his appearance in the beginning. Major plot developments occur, and you learn a great deal more about the characters and the worlds they inhabit. The beginning is great, and it carries through 2/3 of the way before I found myself a little less entertained. Then every other page became enjoyable.

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## **Christopher says**

Several shocking revelations and loose threads coming together (and fraying back apart) as this volume explores more of the psychological bridges between the two worlds shared by our heroes. I had never read this far as a kid and I think much of this would have gone over my head. But today - goddamn. There's some emotional weight in here that will keep your shoulders slumped for a few days after finishing Vol 2.

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## **Jon Hewelt says**

The short of it: Surreal, confusing, but thoroughly enjoyable.

Upon recommendation from a college friend, I ordered the first few books of this series from my local library. Unfortunately, I was not able to get my hands on Volume 1. As if The Maxx wasn't bizarre enough, starting knee-deep in the plot left me clueless as to who, where and what was going on.

And I dug it.

The Maxx is--to the best of my understanding--a superhero: a large purple fellow from another plane of existence, here to fight the forces of evil. He's friends with Julie and Sarah. Julie and Maxx are in a relationship. Sarah's father is a murderer and rapist and all-around bad guy. This, at least, was what I was able to glean. The rest? Eh.

The setting switches constantly between the "real" world and an exotic plane sometimes referred to as The Outback, though it's suggested that the plane changes depending on who is there. Sometimes it's The Outback, sometimes it's a jungle. Sometimes Julie is Julie, and sometimes she's a jungle warrior. I . . . think.

The Maxx is curious to me because it positions itself as a surreal work, but at times can be very explicit within that surreality. We as readers won't know where we are or what's going on, and then a character will have a very pointed word-or-thought bubble to explain the present circumstances. Which, on the one hand, is fine, because even surreal works need some sort of coherence, some of sort of through-line (often emotional) to propel the reader forward. But on the other hand, it feels like those explicit explanations are there to clarify confusing imagery, rather than to support the overall surreal tone.

Make no mistake, I like the artwork of The Maxx. It's colorful, but dark and shadowy. The otherworld characters are inventive, and it's fantastic in displaying what I can only think to describe as "cartoony grit". But the surreal subject matter can also be surreal in terms of layout, so at times it's difficult to tell when to

read which panel, and so often images from different panels blend together in a page-long collage that's striking, but nevertheless confusing.

Would things have been clearer if I'd read Volume 1? Maybe, but even if I had a firmer grip on the "plot", I don't think that is The Maxx's primary purpose of being. These are fleshed-out characters with dark emotional depths. Action happens, yes, but the story progresses much more frequently through feeling and self-reflection. Layers of a character peel back. And the surreality of the environment juxtaposes against the heart of its inhabitants. It reminds me a little of David Lynch, in that way. It's the lens that's most bizarre.

So yes: absolutely check out The Maxx. I know I'll be returning to it, someday.

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### **Michael says**

Still my favorite Image book (and I'll always think of it that way).

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### **Rodney Wilder says**

Sam Kieth creates such a twisted, darkened vision of the world we live in, yet it is wholly accurate. Injecting The Maxx with equal degrees of realism and fantasy, the story comes to life magnificently. The fragmented, fragile states of the characters is mirrored in the fluctuating artistic mediums used throughout the comics, to create an entirely magical hallucinatory trip for the reader.

As far as storyline, Kieth tugs at heartstrings, bringing the reader to a place not dissimilar to that of Julia Winters or Maxx, or even Sarah. Through the occurrences and lessons the characters must undergo in the book, Kieth does nothing short of forcing the reader to ruminate over his or her own life and hurts. It really brought me to a point of tears multiple times throughout. It's just a beautiful narrative, and the art only works to boost that quality.

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### **DeAnna Knippling says**

This was great...but I am so freaking lost. Of course the library doesn't have vol 1.

The reason that this isn't five stars is that I think that yes, this isn't supposed to be easy, but no, it doesn't have to be this hard. The structure is so complex that the characters have to be stripped down, the plot has to be stripped down, all to show off the structure. So, eh, points off for biting off more than you can chew and only partially getting me to swallow it--but points given for same, too. Will keep reading.

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### **Fugo Feedback says**

Impresionante. Cuando dejé el tomo 1 hace casi un año más o menos me imaginé con qué me iba a encontrar en tomos posteriores. Y le pifíé horriblemente. Y ahora que leí la serie completa (en los tres tomos de Norma que ya reseñaré luego) veo que cada historia, cada capítulo, a veces hasta cada página, es como una pieza de

un rompecabezas que sabés que no va a encajar jamás, pero cuyo armado te puede dejar atónito, en el mejor sentido posible. Altamente recomendado para todo el mundo, sobre todo para los que no entren en los ideales de perfección de ninguna sociedad.

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## **Michael says**

The Maxx is a decidedly surreal, emotionally challenging, utterly bizarre series. You open that first book, and you see a big purple guy with a giant claw on each hand battling for his life. You think you're in for a thrilling super-hero adventure. There are even some good jokes thrown in to keep the mood jovial. Then, you're in a story about abused people, mostly women, coming to terms with themselves, their attackers, and their loved ones.

The Maxx has two very clear arcs - the first three books tell the story of Julie Winters, freelance social worker, rape victim and all-around cynic. Her Maxx is Dave, and he fights for her soul in the real world and in Julie's mental "outback." And Mr. Gone operates somewhere between the villain and the wise mage who instructs our heroes. All in all, the first three books are extremely engaging - Emotionally real, and full of intriguing metaphysical and psychological notions.

The second major arc encompasses the final two volumes and deals with Julie's friend (and Mr. Gone's daughter) Sara's struggle to cope with feelings of abandonment (As Kieth points out, where do you think the name Mr. Gone came from?). Although Sara is a much more empathetic character than Julie, I still found the final two volumes less fulfilling than the opening books.

The early books have plenty of interesting digressions and stories detailing our characters' histories, but the side-plots in Sara's story seem much more numerous and constantly interrupt the momentum of her story. There is a point in the second half of Book Five when I wondered if Kieth was simply stalling for time because he didn't know what would happen next. And, in fact, the ending seemed almost tacked on. After all the time spent having these characters face up to what they'd done and what had been done to them, for it to end with a magic reboot struck me as an emotional letdown.

It's a very bleak series at times, and yet there is also genuine charm and funny humor throughout. Kieth's art progresses at an amazing rate. The earliest stories are filled with clumsy designs, many of which work, some of which don't. He also experiments with different styles more frequently in the early volumes, often creating a palpable emotional reaction by doing so. The later books eschew much of this complication and experimentation for a clearer sense of storytelling (without losing any of Kieth's quirky illustrations).

The first three volumes of The Maxx are smart, funny, emotional and imaginative. The latter two volumes are interesting and worthwhile, but not as fresh or challenging as Sam Kieth's first, clumsy steps into the world of Outbacks, lampshades, Isz and freelance social workers.

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## **Dan Schwent says**

In the second collected Maxx volume, Maxx and Julie venture across the Outback and meet Pitt, another Hulk inspired character from the 90's. Meanwhile, in the real world, Julie is locked in the bathroom while Pitt and Maxx, both at four inches tall, fight an Isz in her apartment. After that, things get weird as Sarah

James, a minor character in the last volume, finds out her true parentage and goes searching for her spirit animal...

The second volume of The Maxx is where things really get going, both in terms of weirdness and the overall plot. It is in this volume that you realize that the central character of the title isn't The Maxx at all, but Julie Winters. I don't think a series titled The Julie would sell as well...

Sarah James's role in the series greatly increases in this volume, partly due to fan support. She was the mouthpiece of weird awkward teens everywhere. Has it really been 16 years since this came out?

Anyway, things really take off in this volume. Sam Kieth seems more confident and relaxed in his style and the weirdness factor is dialed up to eleven. Not to be missed if you liked the first volume.

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### **Shane says**

Even if there were no words on the page it would still be worth it to look through the Maxx comics. The story is strange, dark and surreal and for someone my age, very nostalgic. Not sure I would be as enthused about the story if I had been born in 1980 instead of 1970.

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### **Nate Balcom says**

Continuing my reread of this classic 90's comic series. Very much still holds up.

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### **Christoph says**

„Click ... Whrrrr ... This is a Recording ...

Hiya, Doc.

I suppose you're wondering why you've been tied up, dragged out of the Morgue, carried into the basement of the abandoned Bulldog Ja Rubber Factory, through a Bathroom decorated in a Cow Motif and are presently in the Dark, surrounded by Dark Blue, cannibalistic Homunculi.

Everyone does.“

-Mr. Gone

Veränderung, insbesondere Trennung in Freundschaft wobei in Partnerschaften können schmerzhaft sein. In diesem besonderen Fall trifft es die Hauptfiguren in der Serie "The Maxx" am Härtesten.

Warum? Weil sich bei diesen auch eine existenzielle Frage stellt - gibt es mich wirklich, oder existiere ich nur aufgrund der Traumwelt des anderen?

Im Mittelpunkt steht hier die Trennung von Max und Julie, denn Julie hat erkannt, dass die Existenz dieser Traumwelten und die Existenz von Max selbst durch sie entstanden ist. Sie sieht die Lösung darin Brücken abubrechen und die Wohnung zu verlassen. Im Zuge dessen verarbeitet sie ihre Kindheit, insbesondere jene traumatischen Erlebnisse, welche zur Entstehung dieser Welt und deren Wesen geführt hat. dabei entdecken wir auch wie es zu Mr. Gone gekommen ist und welche Schlüsselrolle er hier spielt.

Eine weitere Figur, welche auf der Bühne erscheint, ist Sarah. Teilweise sehen und verarbeiten wir diese

Erkenntnisse durch ihre Augen und im Zuge der seelischen Aufarbeitung durch Julie erkennen wir, wer Sarah wirklich ist und welche Rolle sie spielt.

Grafisch und erzählerisch ein weiterer Schritt nach vorne. Sam Kieth und William Messner-Loebs fokussieren sich in diesem Kapitel ganz stark darauf, der Traumwelt mehr Substanz zu geben. Vermehrt driften wir als Leserschaft hier hinein, dieses Mal aber mit dem Wissen, woher diese stammt und wie diese funktioniert.

Diese - schrittweise - Lieferung an Informationen, kleinen sowie umfangreicheren Hinweise, hält die Spannung massiv aufrecht, mehr noch, die ganze Serie beginnt damit richtig lebendig zu werden. Ich erinnere mich noch gut an den damaligen Lesegenuss und rund um Ausgabe 12 herum war's, als mir der Knopf aufging. Die Anspielungen an mythologische Querverweise an die australische Sagenwelt und manches mehr wurden immer deutlicher und damit faszinierender.

Vor allem der Rolle des vermeintlichen Bösewichts - Mr. Gone - wurde weitere Substanz gegeben. Seine Macht wurde etwas eingeschränkt, alleine dadurch ersichtlich, dass er die Hilfe eines kleinen Jungen benötigt um überhaupt etwas machen zu können.

Spannend und heute - emotional betrachtet - noch aufregender als beim ersten Lesegenuss.

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