



Black Panther: Marvel Masterworks Vol. 1

(Jungle Action)

Don McGregor, Rich Buckler (Illustrator), Billy Graham (Illustrator), Gil Kane (Illustrator)

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Black Panther: Marvel Masterworks Vol. 1 (Jungle Action) Don McGregor , Rich Buckler (Illustrator) ,
Billy Graham (Illustrator) , Gil Kane (Illustrator)
Collects material from Jungle Action #6-24.

In 1973 comics' first African super hero took the headlining slot in an ambitious ongoing series, beginning a 13-issue epic unprecedented in its time. Writer Don McGregor teamed with artists Rich Buckler and Billy Graham to tell "Panther's Rage," a story so huge it ranges across the savannah, into the deepest jungles and up to the snow-topped mountains of Wakanda. Over its course McGregor & Co. would define T'Challa, give full depth and life to the Wakandas and their culture, while pitting the Panther against the murderous Erik Killmonger for control of the kingdom. Not one to rest on his laurels, McGregor then set out to raise the bar once again, sending T'Challa to the American South to investigate the murder of Angela Lynne and its connection to the Klan and the history of the Soul Strangler.

Black Panther: Marvel Masterworks Vol. 1 (Jungle Action Details)

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From Reader Review Black Panther: Marvel Masterworks Vol. 1 (Jungle Action for online ebook)

Michael says

It's hard to believe that Marvel was publishing these stories at the same time that other lesser stories were flourishing. Everything is so dynamic. I admit that I felt fairly confused at the beginning as I've never been a big Black Panther fan. Also, nothing here ties into other Marvel lore. That having been said, I was wowed. What a gem.

Luiz Santiago says

Crítica | Pantera Negra de Ed Hannigan e Jerry Bingham
<http://www.planocritico.com/critica-p...>

Katya Kazbek says

Pretty great. Fantastic art, fun storylines. I loved King Cadaver a lot. Mr Lynn was great and the dynamics between Taku and Venom made me wish for sexy spin-offs. Don McGregor is such a badass!

Timothy Boyd says

Black Lightning, The Black Panther and The Falcon were the first mainline black superheroes to appear in comics. Only the Falcon never got his own starring title. But the Black Panther of the early 1970s was a different character than one of today's movies. Still the king that is concerned with his country he adventured much more in NY than Africa. Great character and very good stories and art make this collection a enjoyable read. Recommended

Michael Borshuk says

Thick volume of collected Blank Panther adventures from the 1970s includes the much-ballyhooed "Panther's Rage" saga (an arc that spanned over a year and traced T'Challa's efforts to stave off a coup in his native Wakanda; I found it a bit repetitive) and the even better Panther vs. the KKK issues. The latter is innovative in its writing, even if its engagement with white supremacist violence is a little bit predictable and on the nose. In any case, these were worth reading as a lead up to the Ta-Nehisi Coates reboot.

Bob Garrett says

This volume reprints JUNGLE ACTION #s 6-22 and 24 (Issue #23 contained a reprint and no original material.), originally published in 1973-1976. There are two stories: “Panther’s Rage” (from JUNGLE ACTION #s 6-18) and “The Panther vs. the Klan” (from JUNGLE ACTION #s 19-22 and 24).

The first and longest story, “Panther’s Rage,” is also the best. It’s set entirely in the Panther’s fictional African country, Wakanda, and contains only one Caucasian character (a Panther antagonist named “Venomm.”). In this volume’s introduction, McGregor notes how unusual this was for the time (Heck, it would be unusual NOW.), and states that editorial pressured him to add more white characters. McGregor didn’t, and in the aforementioned introduction, he explains that he also wrote two other characters as homosexual. Of course, under the Comic’s Code of the 1970s, he couldn’t openly identify them as such, and if I hadn’t read McGregor’s introduction to this volume, I’m not sure that I would have gleaned that intent. Regardless, I give McGregor props for attempting diversity.

As a writer, McGregor has some weaknesses, but for the most part, they’re typical among comic writers of his generation. Like many of his contemporaries, McGregor is overly verbose and tends to stuff his stories with an abundance of captions. While the captions can be distracting, I will grudgingly admit that some of his prose was quite poetic, and I ended up admiring much of it. I don’t know if McGregor wrote any novels, but you can see his talents as a novelist. In fact, “Panther’s Rage” is a very novelistic work, with individual chapters that are enjoyable on their own and become even more impressive as parts of a whole. You might wonder if McGregor wasn’t a frustrated prose writer unhappy about writing super hero comics, but...his love for the genre is actually pretty apparent. Black Panther wears his super hero costume at virtually all times (He belongs to the Panther Cult, and the garb is an important part of his religious views.), and he fights plenty of super villains, as well as wild African animals and, of course, dinosaurs. There’s also a bit of world building here, as McGregor designed maps of the fictional Wakanda and makes his stories consistent with the maps.

Surprisingly, McGregor abandons this world in “The Panther vs. the Klan,” set in the American south. He takes a similar novelistic approach in this tale, and in fact, it reads like a second novel featuring the same lead character, rather than a continuation of a monthly adventure serial. “The Panther vs. the Klan” is a weaker story than “Panther’s Rage” for several reasons – not the least of which is that the series was cancelled before McGregor could finish it (I understand that other writers finished it later, but this volume only includes McGregor’s original installments from JUNGLE ACTION.). The Wakanda setting also served McGregor better for at least one slightly odd reason: His characters tend to be “natural philosopher types” who speak in unnatural dialogue, and that dialogue seemed more believable when spoken by the characters from a fictional country. On the plus side, McGregor does imbue his supporting characters with some charm, and I acknowledge that his new American characters eventually won me over. I was also somewhat willing to overlook the stilted dialogue when McGregor had his characters make an interesting point or provide an interesting perspective. For comics, the 1970s was a time of “social relevance,” and while I suspect that McGregor does hold progressive views (and you can’t expect a story titled “The Panther vs. the Klan” to be exactly subtle), he does largely eschew the preachiness that we saw in contemporary series such as Denny O’Neal and Neal Adams’ GREEN LANTERN/GREEN ARROW (the poster child book of the “relevance era.”).

I have not yet mentioned the artwork. The two main artists are Rich Buckler and Billy Graham. Both are quite good, although I like Graham better – largely for his dynamic and interesting page layouts and design. Unfortunately, there are a number of different inkers, resulting in some inconsistency of product. When Graham is matched with the right inker, his work looks very nice, and I think that the two best inkers here are Bob McLeod and Graham himself.

Admittedly, though, I'm more into comics for the stories, and it's the writing here that impressed me the most. I had read little of McGregor's work until now, but I suspect that I'll be looking for more of it. Congratulations, Mr. McGregor – you've got my attention.

Ed says

This is generally considered one of Marvel's 1970s triumphs and a predecessor of the modern graphic novel. While it has some flaws, it's absolutely fascinating and contains some of the best comic art I've ever seen.

Of the two artists, Billy Graham is the better. But some of Rich Buckler's work is just as incredible. While the art of both is in the Marvel house style, both do work with layouts that are just mind blowing. The way that Graham both uses and ignores panels to create a sense of movement and tension is unlike anything I've seen. Graham also draws some amazing action scenes that are coherent and thrilling. Buckler, on the other hand, has a title page that just knocked my socks off. I put some example of both at the bottom of this review.

The story Don McGregor is good, but very 1970s. The overall arc of the meaning of revolution and what it means to rule is compelling, as is the palace intrigue. The characters are well rounded and the stakes feel very real. But something about it just didn't make me want to blast gleefully through each issue. Maybe it's pacing? The cuts between locations and storylines were a bit awkward and jarring. It's also fairly decompressed, like modern comics, but with lots of text, like Silver Age. Which makes for an odd (and slow) read. However, I think the biggest weakness is that the prose can be so purple that, at times, it defies comprehension.

After the main Panther's Rage arc (issues 6-18), the story jumps the United States where the Black Panther fights the Ku Klux Klan. Which should be amazing, but doesn't quite work. It's overstuffed (a murder mystery, two competing Klans, a reunion with T'Challa's girlfriend's parents, shady land deals, etc.) which makes it a bit of a slog. But there are a few great action scenes. However, there's also a legitimately bad issue (#22) which tells a story of Reconstruction era harassment of freed slaves by a Klan leader called the Soul Stealer. However, it tells the story twice in parallel: once the way it happened; once as a fantasy with T'Challa there to save the day. It's both eye-rolling and kind of icky in that "If I lived back then, I would totally have killed Hitler!" kind of way.

Anyway, after that they introduce more over complicated shenanigans, including a super powered character with no motivations named Wind Eagle. Then it got cancelled and replaced with a totally bonkers Jack Kirby Black Panther series. A few years later, after Kirby got fired, some other writers come back and try to pick up McGregor's threads and weave them in to Kirby's goofy-ass adventures. It works better than you'd expect.

Rich Buckler's Title Page from Jungle Action #8"

Billy Graham's art on page 26 of Jungle Action #11

Shawn Manning says

Not all 70's comics have aged well. This one, however, has. Don't get me wrong, there are some real chuckle-worthy moments, but overall good stuff. Equally good is the backstory behind the book itself. I had missed these during their original run in the 70's but am very glad to have caught up.

Lsharathkumar says

Just loved it. Yes there are times when you feel the authors are just dragging the story along, especially the panther's fight with Killmonger. But what I enjoyed most was the Panther battling the Klan. Wish they had brought the story to a conclusion though. Still loved reading the old comic book. Old comic books have a charm which are hard to find in new ones.

Rob says

A quick read. Good but doesn't really make me want to pick up more Black Panther.

L. (Super Easy. Barely An Inconvenience.) says

T'challa, the Black Panther (who simply looks like Batman sans the cape), has returned to his African country of Wakanda in this collection. He's brought along his American girlfriend, Monica Lynne. Her main purpose in the story seems to be wringing her hands and waiting for her man to come home after he goes out and does his thing.

T'challa's country is under attack from Erik Killmonger and his unsubtly named cohorts (Malice, King Cadaver, Lord Karnaj, etc.) as they ride in on the backs of dinosaurs.

I will admit there is plenty of action. Black Panther is always getting his outfit ripped to shreds as he battles tons of bad guys and animals. He kills a lot of animals in this comic. I don't believe this book will make PETA's recommended reading list. What my main complaint is has to do with the pages being junked up by pseudo-intellectual verbiage that dissolves into a deep hue of Purple Prose.

Pain births insanity within his mind... and desperation is the midwife.

Wha...?

Eyes and mouth working toward one purpose, the eyes stealing across ego valleys, ID centers, and super-ego reservoirs.

Wha...?

A sound like tattered curtains monotonously playing eternal chants for days when they were whole.

Wha...?

Just tell the damn story!
