



Velveteen vs. The Seasons

Seanan McGuire

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A doorway opens in mid-air. The body of a woman falls to the ground and lies there unmoving as the door slams shut behind her, dissolving like confetti into the wind.

As the grass beneath her slowly dies, Velma Martinez–Velveteen–once architect of the downfall of The Super Patriots, Inc., most recently the servant of the Seasons, has come home.

But ah; we are getting ahead of ourselves. That is the difficulty, once holidays become involved. They want everything to be a fairy tale, and nothing to be true. Perhaps this would not hurt so much, except that they remember the meaning of fairy tales, before we sanded off their edges and called them suitable for children.

The holidays remember how to bleed.

So much as it hurts, we must leave the body in the grass, alone and untended, with no one to confirm whether she will live or whether she has already died. For all things must begin at their beginnings, and the beginning of this tale is far, far behind us...

Join us as award-winning author Seanan McGuire returns to the story of Velveteen, where the choices that a superheroine makes always have consequences.

Velveteen vs. The Seasons Details

Date : Published May 23rd 2016 by ISFiC Press

ISBN :

Author : Seanan McGuire

Format : Hardcover 250 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Urban Fantasy, Comics, Superheroes, Paranormal, Fiction

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From Reader Review *Velveteen vs. The Seasons* for online ebook

Lindsay says

The first two *Velveteen* books are my favorite Seanan works and this one is a really unexpected continuation of the fantastic world and friends of the brilliant Velma.

Velma Martinez is *Velveteen*, a superhero with the rare animus powerset and a marketing theme based around the *Velveteen Rabbit*. As has been established in the previous two books, the power to animate anthropomorphic toys and make their weaponry, skills and powers real is just the tip of her abilities and to quote a character in this book: she's f'ing terrifying.

In this one we pick up directly after the previous book and go to the action of *Velveteen* following through on her promise to serve each of the Seasonal lands of Winter, Autumn and Spring. Each of these kingdoms have their own personifications, some of whom are familiar to Vel and some who aren't, and all with their own agendas. *Velveteen* doesn't know these "people" as well as she thinks.

This book is good, but the previous book was *amazing* and this is therefore something of a step down. We do get lots more detail about the seasonal lands, and we get to play with the Hall of Mirrors and the multiverse again, but very little of it is at the emotional intensity of *Velveteen vs. The Multiverse*. Unfortunately, like that book, this one finishes with much undone and just as little uncertainty about whether there will be more in the series. That being said, I had no expectation that this one would ever be done, so I remain hopeful for further *Velveteen* books, hopefully working towards resolving Tag's situation and the power vacuum left from the Super Patriots Inc. changes as well as some of the new problems raised with this volume.

If you haven't read these yet and you like any of Seanan's stuff, you should correct that immediately. The first two are some of the best things she's done, and this one is still pretty good.

Sunil says

Velveteen vs. The Seasons directly follows *Velveteen vs. The Multiverse*, as *Velveteen* must make good on her word to versus The Seasons. She must try out Winter, Spring, and Autumn and choose which one she likes most. Or hates least, really.

Seanan McGuire has shown us bits and pieces of the Seasonal Lands and their inhabitants over the course of the series, but this is her chance to really dig in, and she clearly relishes it. My God, there's so much love in the writing. She plays with the metaphors of the seasons and how they shape the realms, and the language is so rich and beautiful...and then you have *Velveteen* walking around muttering, "Fucked up times five thousand." The contrast between the high fantasy tone and Velma "Fuck This Shit" Martinez is a delight; I love that it *works* such that it doesn't undercut the serious work McGuire has put into her worldbuilding but instead makes it feel that much more real.

Meanwhile, we get some updates from the Calendar Country (aka the real world) and things are *not* going well in *Velveteen*'s absence. And when she returns—not a spoiler, as the book *begins* with her return before flashing back three years—Vel has to set some things right. And it's going to get...complicated.

The *Velveteen Vs.* series has become more and more serialized as it's gone on; now the "stories" feel far more like chapters than the individual short stories that made up *Velveteen vs. The Junior Super Patriots*. That does make for a more cohesive book experience, though. As much as I liked seeing the Seasonal Lands, however, I found that very little *happened* for the most part; Velveteen essentially has to survive some weird fucked up things but it doesn't feel very active. That didn't keep me from being immersed in the narrative, but it didn't excite me as much as the plottier stories. I also missed the superhero antics in the real world, so I was glad we did get the occasional glimpses. And there is an overarching story—one I was not expecting—that resolves...somewhat satisfyingly? Fucked up times...something, though.

I do love all of McGuire's musings on superheroes and the multiverse in this world. It's such a fantastic series.

Rachel says

I read all the Velveteen stories online. They are quite a romp through Seanan McGuire's imagination, which is prodigious. They have pretty much everything: superheroes (some with very odd superpowers), the multiverse, seasons as their own dimensions, archetypes that are embodied (including a god or two), rewriting of reality, an evil marketing department, a hyperintelligent steampunk girl, politics, and I think there's a kitchen sink in there somewhere. Coherent world-building takes a back seat to fun, and I don't have a problem with that. But it does seem like, as the stories went on, that new explanations rewrote the old. In fact, that's a lot of the plot of this third batch of stories. Three and a half stars, rounded down because I didn't like it as much as other of the author's books that I rated four stars. But still good, and lots of fun

Dee says

I absolutely loved the first two books in the series, and was actually surprised to see there was a third. I just didn't enjoy this as much for some reason. The writing is still good, the characters still interesting, but I suspect the length of time between books has let me forget a lot. I plan on a re-read of the first two and then will try this again to see if my opinion changes.

Ruby Ridge says

Seanan McGuire is in my opinion one of the most underrated authors around.

I love the character Velveteen and the series just keeps getting better. Great book and awesome supporting characters (well, maybe not action dude), I also love the little asides that Seanan fits in every so often.

Bad points - none

Please, more Velveteen novels

Mikhail says

Between this and the Toby Daye series, I'm starting to think of Seanan McGuire as a sort of 21st century

Piers Anthony -- incredibly prolific, very talented (Anthony used to be, anyway, before he started phoning it in), but dear god, does not know when to let a series END. And so they all seem to start very strongly and then gradually decline.

I mean, this is not a bad book. But it's weaker on pretty much all levels than the first two. Plotting is shakier, characterization is all over the place (we get a batch of new people in each season, we barely see old favorites like Victory Anna, and lots of characters just end up changed for somewhat dubious in-book reasons), and the whole thing is a good deal preachier than is necessary (and I say this as someone who is in basic agreement with everything said).

Amy (Other Amy) says

Today is a great day to be a Seanan McGuire fan, apparently. (Or, maybe I just need to keep up better on my news.) She announced on December 22nd that the third book in this series is under discussion for Memorial Day release next year:

<http://seanan-mcguire.livejournal.com...>

(Of course, she posts the stories in this series for free as she writes them, but I really prefer them in book form. If you don't mind reading them online, see here: <http://seanan-mcguire.livejournal.com....>)

Sarak says

I didn't want to finish this book but I couldn't stop reading it. This is a continuation of the story of Velveteen and the other Supers and Seasonal characters. Continuing just after "Velveteen vs The Multiverse". She is off to serve three seasons for one year. Santa didn't lie, exactly, but it isn't exactly straight forward. There is always a cost and Velveteen/Velma chose to pay the cost. She could stand it, she could sacrifice herself for the freedom of the supers. She hadn't counted what it would cost her friends or the world. Will she choose humanity or her own humanity to survive? It is difficult to read this book without coming to care for Super heroes and the Villains - they are beautifully developed and as worthy of care as the heroes and some of them are real heroes. You can read this book as a stand alone but the other books are wonderful and you really will want to get all the backstories.

Lauren says

I love Seanan McGuire's Velveteen stories, and I've been waiting for a long time to read the entire third collection. Velveteen is McGuire's take on superheroes. It is also different from her other works since it is not distributed by a major publisher; all of the Velveteen stories are released for free on her LiveJournal before being collected roughly after every major story arc.

You can tell that the Velveteen stories are made up of some of Seanan McGuire's favorite things. There is always a sense that she is having a ton of fun writing them, and while some aspects can be incredibly silly

there is also a strong (and sometimes surprisingly dark) emotional core. Velveteen is also a great series for someone looking for diversity in their fantasy fiction. Just as an example, one of Velveteen's closest friends is a transgender woman who is the living embodiment of the Disney princess concept.

In this third collection Velveteen is dealing with the repercussions of her final battle in the previous book. At first this mainly means fulfilling her promise to serve the seasons for a set period, although the real consequences don't show up until the last third or so of the story.

If you like any of Seanan McGuire's other work then I strongly recommend trying to track down copies of the Velveteen collections. The collected volumes can be a bit hard to find (eBook copies do exist but are sometimes unavailable), but several of the earliest stories are available on Seanan McGuire's professional website. The rest of the series can be found on her LiveJournal under the tag "Velveteen vs". This series is one of my favorite takes on the superhero genre and I hope that Seanan keeps writing Velveteen stories for a long time.

Kevin says

I love this series, and this book was just as terrific as the first two. This universe that the author has created is so amazing, there is the "real" world with superheroes, there are alternate versions of the real world some with and some without super heroes and then there are the metaphorical worlds like the "seasons" and Vel gets to visit all of them in this book.

Thomas E Carman says

I really like the Velveteen Vs. books, but the first 2 (which I have as Audible books) more than this one. It's the difference in tone, I think. Not that it's so much darker, because "Velveteen Vs. the Multiverse" was plenty dark, too. Things are still up in the air at the end, but less so than at the end of Multiverse.

By the way, for another Velveteen story, check out Marion G. Harmon's book "Teamups and Crossovers" for the short stories Velveteen vs. The Crossover and Everybody vs. The Team-Up. I was reading the Grrl Power webcomic, and so was introduced to both Velveteen and the "Wearing the Cape" series. These 2 stories are not canon for Velveteen Vs, I understand, but happen in some very close parallel universe.

Stephen Mandrgoc says

A slightly darker turn to the story, in that it feels very Gaiman-ish in that she's dealing with the idea of seasons and representations of that seasons made real. Great worldbuilding, enjoyable characters, and a fun plot, if one where you really feel for poor Velveteen and her friends at times.

Devann says

I really didn't enjoy this book nearly as much as the first two. I think partially because I don't like

Christmas/Easter [or spring or whatever] because I did get a little more interested in the general story once Vel got to Halloween [which is definitely my season/holiday]. But I felt like the plot was very rushed once Vel got back to the real world and also rewriting the past to fix [almost] everything always seems like such a cop-out to me. Although I guess in a series with a history of different dimensions etc it does fit.

Also did we just completely forget Tad even exists? Like she doesn't once think about him after she gets back and who knows if they even dated in the new retroactive continuity. I really liked Tad and I feel like he just got completely pushed out in favor of Aaron/Vel's ~childhood true love~ even though they've been on mostly bad terms for years.

Karina says

Took a while to read, mainly because I enjoyed Velveteen's time in the seasonal lands about as much as she herself did. The whole arc was excellent in the end, of course.

Angelica says

This was as enjoyable as the previous two books, but it does feel darker than them. Still, I'll continue to keep tabs on Velveteen.
