



The Animal Man Omnibus

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From Grant Morrison, Eisner Award winning writer of ALL-STAR SUPERMAN and bestselling author of *Supergods: What Masked Vigilantes, Miraculous Mutants, and a Sun God from Smallville Can Teach Us About Being Human*, this new hardcover collects Morrison's entire groundbreaking run on ANIMAL MAN altogether for the first time .

Buddy Baker is more than just a second-rate super hero--He's also a devoted family man and animal rights activist. Now, as he tries to jump-start his crimefighting career, he experiences visions of aliens, people transforming into strange pencil-like drawings, and hints of a terrible crisis lurking around the edges of reality. And as his odyssey of self-discovery gives way to spiritual enlightenment as well as the depths of despair, Buddy meets his maker: a writer named Grant Morrison.

Collects ANIMAL MAN #1-26 and SECRET ORIGINS #39.

The Animal Man Omnibus Details

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From Reader Review The Animal Man Omnibus for online ebook

Mark Smiley says

This was a strange one. Kind of disjointed, bopping back and forth between timelines and parallels and storylines...made the story difficult to follow. Then it went down a morose path from which there seemed to be no return. The author did bring it together by a proclaimed deus ex machina which was not satisfying. The artwork was okay, the color palette was off (pink blood?) and it wore me out when reading. I felt sorry for Animal Man throughout most of it as the author struggled his way through the story, which, we find out, is a companion to the author's story.

Craig says

I was sure I'd read this at some point over the years, but turns out I hadn't. This was one of the ground-breaking runs in comics in the late 80s and early 90s and one of the neatest things about it is that once the weird, "meta" things really start happening toward the end, you can go back to the earlier issues and see just how carefully Morrison had it all plotted-out from the very beginning. The artwork is a bit sketchy from our current perspective, but it does the story justice. Glad to finally catch up with this.

Cheese says

Spoilers

I can understand why so many people like this comic. It's by far one of the strangest and most unique comic I've read so far, even compared to Morrison's Doom Patrol.

Morrison was definitely on something strong when he wrote this, but surprisingly it work really well.

Buddy's (Animal Man) super powers come across as really lame at first and later on you realise how powerful he is. At one point he is captured and sealed in a room with no animals around him to replicate and he does something spectacular! I love the way he is so resourceful with his powers it makes him very adaptable to any situation and always underestimated.

The most favourable storyline in the book was volume 1, where he fights with a fellow justice leaguer. There is a really emotional scene where a super intelligent ape gets experimented on with Anthrax. As you can imagine it's quite horrific. This really adds depth, character and meaning to the whole story. From that stage onwards buddy becomes a vegetarian and an animal activist, it puts him in some interesting situations, some situations are extremely horrific and have most definitely happened in real life at one point or another.

I'd say the negative parts of this story are the hallucination and meaning of the universe parts, it's very Morrison and I think this bit in particular must have been written after a massive acid binge.and Aliens stupid bloody yellow aliens that talk in riddles about the continuum (the infinite crisis.), I'm so bored of hearing that word especially with DC and Marvel launching convergence and secret wars. FFS, if they want to create a world, stop changing it, introduce new characters or worlds instead.

Secondly, there are several really good stories which build up and up and then slow down again (mainly because of the stupid aliens). It's not a consistent ride of action and excitement, but it builds a great overall story of enlightenment, discovery, love and tragedy.

There is real meaning to this character, Morrison writes him as a real life human being, but stuck within a comic, so he is written uniquely different from any DC or any other comic book character I've ever read. One point within the story that puts into perspective is when he is challenged by a villain that can control time. The so called villain wants to turn back time at the graveyard located in Paris, so that people can get another chance to see their lost loved ones once again. The justice league rush in to stop him and they are quickly defeated by the villain, but then animal man steps up and asks him to stop. The villain says you can hurt me and animal man says "No, I don't want to hurt you, but you should think about what you're doing right now!" The villain is completely taken back and they have a conversation about what he is doing to people's lives. It's a great example of how differently he is written. Anyone else would have just hit him, which is what eventually happens to him by a fellow justice leaguer, causing more harm than good.

There is a massive part of this book which is shit. The end. Morrison decides to put himself in the comic and bring buddy alive and break the fourth wall. WTF? Typical GM.

In a lot of ways this book was far ahead of its time and in some ways it still is. It addresses issues with global warming and animal experiments and aims the story towards a more intelligent reader. Some people say this is Morrison's best. I don't agree with that. If I were to choose I'd say his run on New X-Men or Allstar Superman.

Buddy is not a traditional hero, but he's definitely one of my heroes!

Marcela says

Wow. I really didn't expect to like this as much as I did. All of Morrison's preachiness aside, the fourth-wall breaking was some of the most masterful writing I've ever seen of this kind. Brilliantly done.

Morgan says

This was FANTASTIC! One of the best Grant Morrison books I've read in a long time. Usually Morrison can get very confusing at times, but this one is written clearly. You can also see all the influences other comic books had after this one was finished, especially with the entire fourth wall concept. I found it funny how the character in the book viewed us as the reader calling us "perverts" sometimes. If you like the fourth wall concept, this one is one of the good ones. Many comics try to attempt it, but it not as well done and kind of just a copy of this book. The only other comic book that came close and succeeded using the fourth wall that I've read before was Alan Moore's book Promethea. That comic made you feel like Promethea actually existed.

I first came to admire Animal Man in the series 52 DC comics did a few years back (not to be confused with the New 52's Animal Man which I have yet to read). I always seem to like his character though. I liked the fact he was a family man and just an all-around good person. Most comics in the late 80s and early 90s just get too weird and always seem to have an emo type of character. I was surprised to see Animal Man is a

happily married man with two kids and a couple of pets. It even includes some family friends and neighbors. The artwork worked for the everyman type of comic too. It's nothing that special, but it simple and well detailed at times.

The one thing that stands out with this comic book among other is there isn't one issue that I didn't like. Many single issues stand out the most like Issues 5, 7, 6, 15, 19, and 26. Those are just fantastic reads and really show the power of Grant Morrison's writing. The entire comic you need to read from start to finish to get the point of it, but as I said before no issue that will leave you disappointed.

Whom would I recommend this too? Anyone who read comic books and wants to read a superhero comic that is just pure fun without all the sappy melodrama. The people who might enjoy this the best though are fans of Animal Man (obviously), people who want to read Morrison's first successful comic book, people who like animals, people who like the fourth wall and metafictional books, and mostly (as I said previously) people who just want a fun comic book to read.

David says

I remember liking Animal Man way back when they first came out. Re-reading all these years later? Not so much. Didn't even finish the book.

If you're a Grant Morrison fan like I am, you should give this book a shot.

Peter Derk says

Grant Morrison, why do you make my life so hard!

I love some of your stuff. Then you get cosmic and I can't love you anymore. It's like we're dating. You're a super hot Scottish lady (for readers here, Grant Morrison is Scottish. So I've decided to turn his work into a Scottish woman I'm dating. I kept the geography, lopped off the anatomy)and you're great, but every three days you drop acid and then I can't fucking stand hanging out with you because while you're still sort of sexy and interesting (god, I'm lonely) and look really great in the nude (ew, lonelier than I thought!)I just can't have one more conversation about how the planets and the moon and something something. I just can't.

Here's the thing. This volume starts strong. Grant Morrison does some pretty interesting stuff with Animal Man, who is a total second-stringer. Which doesn't sound so bad, but when the first string is Superman, you aren't going to get a lot of time on the field. In fact, this book makes some arguments about the badness of eating meat that I wouldn't hear in the rest of the world for another ten or fifteen years. So it's pretty far ahead of its time there.

And then this train derails and goes all Trial of Galactus on us.

I'll explain.

Once upon a time there was this guy named John Byrne. A controversial figure in comics, he wrote some great stories and some not so great stories. He also had a habit of getting himself in trouble by saying things

like, well, when they asked him about Jessica Alba playing Sue Storm in the Fantastic Four movie, his reaction was: "Personal prejudice: Hispanic and Latino women with blond hair look like hookers to me, no matter how clean or 'cute' they are."

Woof.

I mean, WOOF.

But, y'know. Orson Scott Card says fucked up shit about gay people that would twist your head clean off your body, so this isn't new.

Anyway, John Byrne writes this story. And actually, it's good. I might go so far as to say great. In it, Mr. Fantastic saves Galactus, a giant creature that eats whole planets and wears a purple tuning fork helmet thing. I mention the getup because he has committed many crimes against various races, but fashion crimes are EVERYONE'S jurisdiction.

So the setup is that Mr. Fantastic somehow saves Galactus from dying, and then some Council of Weird Aliens (there's always one of these, right?) puts Reed Richards on trial, asking the question of whether or not he should be held responsible for the destruction of planets that follows his saving of Galactus.

Okay, makes sense. Pretty good story, really.

Here's how it ends.

In the final issue, John Byrne shows up in the comic. Yes, the writer, for no real reason, is drawn into the comic, and all the characters seem to know him. "Hey, John." "Sup, John."

Now, reading this, it's not really in tone with what's been happening. You're thinking, super serious trial, what's going to happen, holy shit!?

I'm going to spoil the ending here. So if you were planning to read this, I guess stop now. Or skip to the next part. The ending is total bullshit, so in a way I think I'm saving you some wasted pages, but that's for you to decide for yourself, not me.

What happens is, and this is narrated by John Byrne, is that some crazy eternal creature is summoned, and this creature uses some bizarre psychic mind meld shit to explain to everyone why Galactus must continue and cannot be allowed to die. HE DOES NOT ACTUALLY SHARE THIS REASONING ON ANY LEVEL. John Byrne just tells us that it's some very compelling shit, and we're pretty much left to understand that we could never understand. Even if he tried to explain it.

I feel like he could have tried, but hey, that's me. I thought I was reading some sort of narrative that hinged on the ending here.

Anyway, if you want to talk to me about John Byrne, I will ALSO rage for hours at a time about the machine Lex Luthor built to discover Superman's secret identity. My father left our family when I was in my early teens, and I still can't summon the emotion for that whole thing that I can for the Lex Luthor Secret Identity Gizmo of Shit.

So back to Animal Man.

At the end of his run, Grant Morrison writes himself into the comic. Animal Man is pretty confused, and so is the reader. But basically, Grant Morrison is himself, Animal Man is still the character, and somehow Animal Man has traveled into the real world and is now talking to his creator.

Here's what I didn't like about it.

It's not really a comic book anymore. Or it's not an Animal Man comic book. It's Grant Morrison Man. Who doesn't have a lot of super powers or anything, but there he is on the page. Also, I didn't care for the way this happened over the course of three issues. At some point, Animal Man is outside the panels, fighting bad guys by pulling them outside the panels and shit. I just...it's cute, but it's not for me.

Here's what I did like about it.

The final issue, the one where Grant Morrison shows up? It works. Sort of. The premise is insane, and it's still a bit of a cop out. But what happens is that he handles it differently than Byrne did. Instead of making him a character in the story, he uses the page to do a few things. He explains how he felt like the way he was writing Animal Man was getting stale, that basically he had Animal Man addressing whatever animal-cruelty-related issue had come up that day. He told a story from his real life that had been incorporated into the comic earlier.

One of the most interesting parts, he tells about his cat dying. It's horrible, and he admits in the comic that the way his life was, his cat dying was terrible, but he caught himself saying, "Well, at least I can incorporate this into Animal Man somehow." He was almost excited about it, and that didn't sit well with him.

It's a big reversal. Oftentimes you'll hear a writer say that he or she used pain to create a story. Channeled pain into something great. But rarely do you hear someone admit that they're starting to feel like a vulture, picking at the bones of their dead pets and relationships and the corpses of the selves that they've left behind. You don't usually hear about the guilty part, the part that feels bad about living life that way.

So while I don't appreciate how we got there, I think the final issue was a success. It was a very different ending than I've seen in a lot of comics. And the way it differed from Trial of Galactus, I didn't get the idea whatsoever that Grant Morrison was trying to glorify himself by including himself in the comic. Instead, the tone was far more confessional and heartbreaking in some ways.

I didn't get an ending to Animal Man, not really. And in that way, the book is a failure. It also broke the rules in a way that doesn't really work for me, and that I also consider a failure. But on the other hand, I'll probably remember the things he said about his cat and his imaginary friend that he used to signal by flashlight. So as much as it pains me to say: You win this round, Morrison. And I hope you're doing better.

Blindzider says

So, how to talk about this without spoiling it? Basically, you *need* to read it.

If you've ever read any of Morrison's stuff before, typically there are lots of off the wall ideas and out of the box thinking in a story that barely makes sense, but then at the end it all comes together. I've never figured out if Morrison has it planned out from the beginning or he's magically able to pull random concepts and story elements together and have them make sense.

Either way the story comes to a conclusion that is fairly unique to comics, **literally** breaking boundaries, and yet somehow it still works, makes sense and is enjoyable. Early on I had some reservations about the direction of the story but rest assured any concerns you have will be addressed (and in a matter you didn't expect.)

Art-wise it was just average to me. It fit the story just fine, and there were a few fill-in artists which weren't too noticeable so it wasn't a jarring change. The Bolland covers were outstanding as well.

Overall, a definite read and one of Morrison's better works.

Peacegal says

With the daily terror going on against the weakest and most vulnerable amongst us, it's clear that the world needs an animal rights superhero. While the subject of animal rights has been tackled a few other times in the comics medium, it is still a rare subject to see, despite its timely nature.

As with many of Morrison's comics, ANIMAL MAN eventually throws us into an existential crisis as the hero discovers he is nothing but a character and he meets his maker (literally). I do wish that Animal Man had stuck with battling the dolphin slaughterers, poachers, vivisectioners and so forth--while Morrison worried that he was being too preachy, the fact is, precious few mainstream people are still aware of these issues. Especially in ANIMAL MAN'S pre-Internet age, this comic may have been the first access comics fans had to this information. Morrison is himself a supporter of the animal rights cause, and he infuses his character with a realistic passion.

Robert says

This one came so close to a five star review! I had never even heard of Animal Man until I was browsing graphic novels/comics at our local library. Seeing an omnibus, or complete collection, of any comic is always a cause for excitement as I will supposedly get the full story. And that is really true here. You get some really neat stories that all tie together and come to a very interesting conclusion with great artwork supporting the whole thing. The ending was somewhat of a rub for me. While I liked the conclusion, it did get a bit bizarre and dropped my rating by about a half of a star. Still, if you have not met Animal Man and enjoy off beat comics this is a really nice collection.

Kevin Williams says

If you like meta, this is the comic to read. Grant Morrison began his mainstream career with this 26 issue run on a b-list DC character right after Crisis on Infinite Earths when the whole lineup was shaken up (before that was an annual occurrence like comics today). If you have ever read Grant, you know he is bonkers. Really, that's the best word for it. His writing is always mind bending and stretches outside the box, sometimes to a point where it becomes difficult to understand. Well, that is not the case here.

This is as simple and straightforward a narrative as you get from Morrison, but so, so enjoyable. He gets a bit preachy at times when it comes to animal rights, which becomes a big part of the series, but this is warranted

and comes about organically because of the values of the hero. Grant actually criticizes himself for harping on this "soapbox" of his in the last issue of the series. I mean that literally. Grant writes himself into the last issue and reflects on his run as the "creator" of the comic. I will not spoil how this comes about, but the threads of this plot begin early in the series and naturally progress until the big payoff in issue 26.

This is meta goodness!! At one point, Animal Man is walking through comic book limbo of partially pencilled landscapes and meeting obscure characters in the DC lineup that had not been used for decades while carrying a dying monkey who had supposedly been writing the issue holding the script of the issue he is in! (Whew!) At another point you are seeing characters who have become self aware busting through the panels they are in and entering the white space in between the panels! There is even a splash page of Animal Man looking right at the reader and saying "I see you!" Deadpool had not even been created yet, much less breaking the fourth wall. I've read a ton of Deadpool, and I'm a fan, but trust me, he has never broken the fourth wall like this.

It is impossible to talk about this meta storytelling without mentioning the masterfully-written 5th issue of the series "The Coyote Gospel." However, this one-shot story has been discussed so much on the internet that I will leave it to you to lookup. Just google "best one-shot comics ever written" and you will find it. Guaranteed.

Lastly, a mistake many critics make when reviewing Grant Morrison's work is forgetting to give credit to the artists, unless it's Frank Quitely of course! Chas Truog and Doug Hazeldwood did a wonderful job capturing these mind bending concepts. I feel it is always a special treat when an artist stays on a run for the writer's entire stay on a character. Ennis and Dillon on Preacher. Snyder and Capullo on Batman. Morrison and Quitely on All-Star Superman. Vaughan and Staples on Saga. Remender and Craig on Deadly Class. The list goes on. A series never has the consistency of one that has the same artist on most of the series. You feel as though you get to live in the same world from start to finish. I wish this was done more in comics.

Well, there you have it. Animal Man is a masterpiece from arguably the greatest comic creator at the start of his career. You get it all. Superheroes, zany outfits, aliens, silver age style writing, witty humor, devastating heartbreak, time travel, and did I mention fourth-wall breaking? Yes. A bit of that. If you like any of these things, read it! You will be surprised how much you enjoy reading about a superhero named Animal Man.

Anthony says

Much easier to read and more enjoyable than his Doom Patrol. I also liked the the final issue were Buddy meets Grant Morrison and Buddy is begging for his family back and Grant Morrison couldn't give a shit because they're dead and it's just comics and it added drama. Poor Buddy.

Emi Morales says

Sandman y esta joya son los mejores cómics que leí en mi vida, simplemente increíble.

Shannon Appelcline says

It's terrific to have Morrison's amazing *Animal Man* run in a single volume with great reproduction of the original artwork.

The storyline itself gets the most praise for its fun and very innovative look at creators, the created, and the fourth wall, something that Morrison sets up very early in *The Coyote Gospel* (#5) and continues through to the last issue (#26). In fact, I think those are the two best issues of the run.

However, his "normal" superhero issues are quite good too. They're well written, and he plays well with both "realism" and "dark-and-gritty". Amusingly, Morrison derides both trends in his last issue ... but that doesn't mean that he doesn't write them well.

What's particularly amazing about this run, besides the ideas themselves, is how well everything is foreshadowed and setup. From #5-26, everything builds toward a very coherent whole, with mysteries appearing, then being explained in great ways many issues later. The first time you read *Animal Man*, this makes for a real treat.

The omnibus is a little weak toward the middle. Part of that is because you get lots of setup without resolution (though this matters less now that everything is gathered in one volume), but part of this is because Morrison gets overly preachy about animal rights toward the middle of his run -- something that amusingly he acknowledges at the end.

Still, that's a minor complaint. This is one of the best runs of a superhero comic, one of the most coherent runs, and still some of Morrison's best work.

Kevin says

52 piqued my interest in several heroes, but the one that I found the most intriguing was Animal Man. So, I went looking for his best stories and found that this was a must read. This time, the internet was absolutely correct. I've gone on to read the current series by Jeff Lemire: *Animal Man*, Vol. 1: *The Hunt*, and it is also great.

This book has a few different sections with the beginning establishing Buddy Baker as Animal Man dealing with being a superhero family man. The whole superhero having a family is one of the most interesting and vital things for this hero. It also makes him stand out against heroes who have had their marriages ripped apart: Spider-man in *One More Day* and Superman in the New 52 (ironic as Morrison is also writing New 52 Supes). This idea of family is what makes the book interesting before it gets to the section it's commonly remembered for.

The Coyote Gospel hits the book and suddenly everything is up in the air. Shit gets weird. Real weird. However, the character of Buddy remains and his struggles retain their reliability through him. The last half of the book is a masterwork in surreal comic writing and the best I've read from Grant Morrison. He relies on a few things that have become somewhat common since then, but the innovation and care which are demonstrated here put this series on another level.

