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The Wicked & The Divine Volume 5: Imperial Phase I



Synopsis

The gods are free to do whatever they want. Inevitably, they do. Collects issues 23-28 of the series, including the critically lauded Kevin Wada magazine issue.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I finally feel like this story is back on track. If you were thrown by the inconsistent storytelling that were volumes 3 and 4, it gets better. The twist at the end of volume 5 and the plot that appears to be forming has me looking forward to volume 6. PS- please never do a volume of guest art ever again.

I loved the idea of the first issue in here being a magazine, but quickly becomes apparent this volume is spinning its wheels waiting for something to develop...

Story continues to be interesting, and the art is still beautiful and vibrant

Good

I enjoy the craft put into each of the stories in Wicked and Divine. It's always tough to finish each volume but have to wait several months before getting the entire trade-paperback.

The series premise: 12 young people get God-like powers every 90 years. Part of the Faustian bargain is that they all die within 2 years. As a group, they are known as the Pantheon. This series takes place near the beginning of the latest 90 year emergence. Each member has different powers - some of them have the powers/personality traits of Greek Gods, while others are from other myths (like Norse). This Pantheon have revealed themselves to the world and have become celebrities. But what are they famous for? Some of them haven't done anything. You can see the creators' attitude towards modern celebrity culture play out here (some of the Pantheon are dead ringers for current singers). Volumes 1 and 2 were great. Volume 3 was a series of one-shot filler stories, and volume 4 really went off the rails, only to be redeemed with some plot twists at the end. This volume starts off with an issue that is totally composed of interviews - the kind you would find in Rolling Stone, People or Entertainment Weekly - completely uninformative, vapid, and a general waste of time. After that, the issues pick up as the plot moves along. We have begun the second year for most of the members, and they really feel their clocks ticking. In addition to their scheduled demise, they are faced with a new threat called "The Great Darkness" (it looks like a swarm of bugs that takes on humanoid/monster form, but apparently it is dangerous to them). A few issues are spent arguing about what to do, with no united resolution found. The celebrity/gods continue to engage in hedonism (I would like to see one member leave the group altogether (they are all hanging around London) and travel the world, take in the sights, trek to hard to find places, eat wondrous food, watch sunset) and/or bickering, with only two of them trying to deal with the threats and their demise in an organized fashion. Cassandra engages a professor to help evaluate their moves. He's great - his few pages are the highlight of the volume. His best speech: "Death is never pretty. Put it like this... There are very few stories of gods bathing in blood in the first year of their return. The salad days are in the first year. For those who live into their second... well. There's always the imperial model of godhood. It's well-supported... The bloody retreat in the 1920s. Whatever happened to the late medieval Lucifer. Even the wilder theories about 455... Is it that the good die young, or is it simply that the old turn bad and mad? Do their grains of sanity go tumbling into the abyss along with the sands of time.... Empires are born. Empires reach their peak. Empires contract. Empires die. Any concerns about your peers' sanity? Hmmm" *by the way, the expression salad days comes from Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra"

As another reviewer has said this is still a bit confusing. We have gods reappearing that haven't been around for a while, then you have an issue of interviews and no comic panels (which was weird..), and then we go to the gods arguing.. a lot. The ending does pick up though, thankfully, and

leaves you on a major cliff hanger. If you're this far in the series you already know you want to know how deep this goes, and I feel like we are finally turning back around to the first volume type of story telling that hooked us all. We may also finally be getting closer to a few answers. The artwork is on point, though some pages do get a little confusing about the story layout as sometimes it seems the panels are going left to right together over both pages instead of reading one page and then going to the next.

The new gods spend a lot of time jostling for position and arguing. There's a lot of talk particularly from Cassandra as they seek a suitable response to the Great Darkness. Many are incredibly self-centred and ignore the others. Still confusing but the artwork is excellent and well-executed. The volume ends with the obvious consequence that there is more to come, especially as some of the gods near the end of their two-year lives. It's entertaining stuff and I've read enough to want to know how this is all going to finish.

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