



## Punisher: Dark Reign

*Rick Remender (Writer) , Jerome Opeña (Artist)*

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The fight against the **Dark Reign** begins as the duty of chronicling Frank Castle's war journal is passed to the new regular team of writer Rick Remender (*End League*, *Fear Agent*) and Jerome Opeña (*Wolverine*, *Fear Agent*).

One man with one bullet, in the right place, at the right time, can change the world. That's why the Punisher is perched atop a building on the Jersey shore with a high-powered Skrull rifle, his crosshairs trained on a target in Midtown Manhattan. But who is his target - and why? One thing's for sure: They're anything but helpless. Someone is watching their back. Someone big. Enter: The Sentry.

**Collecting:** *Punisher* 1-5

## Punisher: Dark Reign Details

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Author : Rick Remender (Writer) , Jerome Opeña (Artist)

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# From Reader Review Punisher: Dark Reign for online ebook

## Jimbo says

Nothing special about this story, but it is entertaining enough for a low 3 star rating.

It has a lot of super heroes and super powers. That took away from the story because there is no reason The Punisher would not have been easily killed by one of the super villains. So that made it kind of annoying for me. But otherwise, if you can handle an ex-Marine beating Superman in a fight, then the story is pretty decent.

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## Gavin says

3.5+ stars.

Rick Remender and Jerome Opena! One of my fave teams, like Brubaker and Philips.

Frank begins the book aiming to assassinate Norman Osborn, only to have the bullet from his Skrull sniper rifle snatched away millimetres from Normie by Sentry.

Cue Frank getting his ass handed to him. This led to his running into help from a new Ally, Henry, a young hacker.

They take down Osborn's interests publicly, changing public perception against Normie. Osborn lets the Hood loose against him, but he's not alone, one of the few friends Frank ever had has come back...to help take him down.

There's humour, but Frank isn't Chatty Cathy here, back to kicking ass. But the Remender edge is present, and that's a great addition to the Punisher Arsenal.

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## Jedhua says

**Book Info:** This collection contains *Punisher* issues #1-5.

ABSOLUTE RATING: {3+/5 stars}

STANDARDIZED RATING: <3/5 stars>

*"In war, there are no rules. Two hundred years ago, the British army learned this fact the hard way. Courtesy of a bunch of guys who picked up their guns, ran into a bush, and spanked their pale, tea-sipping asses. That's where the caped crowd always misses the point. Some enemies you charge head-on. Others you shoot through the head with a high-powered Skrull sniper rifle from four miles away."*

– Frank Castle

In *Punisher: Dark Reign*, Frank Castle sets his sights on his most dangerous and high-profile target yet: Norman Osborn. In the wake of the Secret Invasion, Osborn has been granted substantial power and influence as director of H.A.M.M.E.R. But though he may have most of the American people fooled, Frank easily sees through Osborn's facade, and aims to take him out with a high-tech alien sniper rifle four miles away from his public appearance. But when the Sentry (i.e. Osborn's superhero bodyguard) foils the plan and beats him to an inch of his life, Frank finds himself rescued and sheltered by Henry – a young and extremely talented hacker who's just as eager as Frank is to permanently take Osborn out of the picture...

It seems to me Remender's intention was to use this title to forge the purest possible vehicle for gunslinging, evisceration, and big explosions. His narrative is brutally fast-paced and efficient, and he has Frank back on the streets chasing Osborn before halfway into the second issue; his recovery, introduction to Henry and his mission, as well as their bond of trust is all fit (rather neatly) into 7 pages. I suppose this is somewhat understandable, seeing as the story is intrinsically too simple to require a whole lot by way of plot setup anyway. But although this structure was great for solid action thrills (for a time), it did prevent the characters and conflict from being as developed as I would have liked.

With respect to the characters, Frank is just a tough guy killer, and his computer-nerd partner is just that – a computer-nerd partner. For those people who are crazy about the Punisher as a character, trust me when I say that Remender easily writes him well enough to please, and with an extra two sides of badassery to spare. So he's cool and everything, but unlike Ennis' *Punisher MAX*, there still isn't much of a character to get behind. And later in the book, when things get a little dicey for Henry the hacker, I realized that I didn't care at all about him or his level of well-being. Maybe things would have been different if Remender bothered to give Henry his own very personal motive for risking his life to help Frank, but that isn't explored or even hinted at here.

Perhaps the one thing that stood out the most (in a good way) about the volume was how long the Punisher managed to stay in constant motion. I'm sure we all know that every *Punisher* comic book is gonna have a whole lot of action, but I'm not sure I've ever come across one that kept Frank so thoroughly on his toes. It really doesn't get any more relentlessly intensified than the first issue, wherein Frank faces off against the Sentry. It's a very *TDKR* showdown, which kicks off the volume at a level that's never matched again, and alone features most of Remender's best writing. Things slow down for the second and third issues, and I enjoyed seeing Frank and Henry form a fresh rhythm as partners, which allowed Frank to gradually take on more formidable threats. This portion marked the strongest balance of plotting, action, and dialogue in the whole book.

Have you ever had the experience of watching the entire first season of a TV show, and at the end, feeling like the pilot promised more than it could deliver? (Think *The Americans* or *Fargo* .) Well that's what happens here; it feels like Remender situated his climax at the very beginning of the book. So in chapters 4 and 5, when he tries again for issues with straight action from start to finish, I felt like I had already seen it all. There were no more surprises anymore. And the fifth issue was the weakest one of all; here, Remender just gives Frank a shitload of ridiculously powerful new toys, and he totally eradicates his opposition. With this, the writer pointlessly does away with most of the unpredictability and desperate improvisation that made the previous issues as exciting as they were.

Artist Jerome Opeña is not someone who I'm very familiar with, but something told me I've run into him at least once before. As it turns out, he's a frequent regular collaborator of Remender's, so it must have been *Fear Agent* where I saw him last. Hard to say exactly how I feel about him one way or the other, but he does his job well enough for the purposes of this book. But there is a subtle cartoonishness to his gritty drawing style, so maybe a couple more years could establish him as an illustrator to watch out for.

Quality-wise, *Punisher: Dark Reign* is a bit uneven, but there's still some fun to be had here, and a couple decent twists. But the elimination of narrative boxes after issue #1, meager characterization, and breakneck pacing made it tough to be too invested in Frank's goal or appreciate the stakes he and Henry were up against. Unfortunately, Remender's *Punisher* doesn't appear to be going anywhere worthwhile, and I walked away feeling oddly empty and unsatisfied coming off the first issue. I'll probably just stop right here.

### **Postscript:**

Here's some snippets from the last issue:

(view spoiler)

Doesn't this look drastically one-sided, or is it just me? Not saying it was a \*bad\* issue or anything, but it just wasn't very interesting.

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And can somebody please explain to me the significance/meaning of this cliffhanger?

(view spoiler)

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### **Martin says**

This is another book I can read over and over. It's witty, full of cool action set-pieces, and it doesn't let up for five full issues. It's a great start to Remender's run on the title with eye-popping art (and explosions!). Great escapist fun.

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### **Eric Mikols says**

If ever there was time the Punisher would feel needed, it's during the Dark Reign era of Marvel. Though, there's a surprising lack of the Dark Avengers. Instead, there's a lot of the Hood and this is the only time he's ever interested me as a character. Such a step-up from the previous, Civil War-centered series, both in writing and art.

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## Mike says

Remender writes a fast-paced, man-of-few-words Punisher story like I've come to expect from the best like Ennis and Fraction. Great, dark and action-friendly art. The only drawback to this Dark Reign story is, as with the rest of these stories from the grand crossover, the meta storyline (Osborn as world ruler) doesn't move an inch forward. As part of the new dark Marvel universe tho, this is an instant classic.

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## Darkcharade says

A solid interesting story that showcases action and the characters' personality well. The big negatives would be that there really isn't a conclusion or even a culminating show off between the antagonists and Frank.

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## Christopher says

*Punisher: Dark Reign* is a graphic novel that collects issues 1-5 of the 2008 *Punisher* series written by Rick Remender and with art by Jerome Opeña (with colors done by Dan Brown, probably not to be confused with the author of *The Da Vinci Code*). The story centers on Frank Castle (also known as the eponymous Punisher) trying to take down the corrupt Norman Osborne and, in the process, finding himself the target of the merciless supervillain the Hood. He also finds an ally in a young man named Henry who helps him by hacking into computers and acting as his eyes and ears when he is on missions; Henry is effectively the new Micro and reminds me a great deal of David Lieberman from the 2017 Netflix series *Marvel's The Punisher*. The graphic novel's pace is pretty fast, and as can usually be expected from a Punisher story (considering the fact that he is undoubtedly one of Marvel's most violent characters), the art and coloring (which are appropriately gritty and void of bright colors, relying instead on a lot of browns and greys) are full of action and violence. As a fan of the character, I vehemently enjoyed *Punisher: Dark Reign*, although I, for the most part, prefer the more recent Marvel NOW! run of *Punisher* comics written by Nathan Edmondson; in that series, Castle is a more complex and even likable character, and his outfit is a lot cooler. *Punisher: Dark Reign* is a lot of fun, however, and I would definitely, without a doubt, recommend it to any fan of the character. (It is also definitely worth mentioning how cool that it is that the cover of the graphic novel, which I believe was originally the cover of the first issue of the series, is a not at all subtle nod toward the iconic cover of *The Amazing Spider-Man* issue 129 first published in 1974, which is fondly remembered for featuring the Punisher's very first appearance in any comic.)

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## James DeSantis says

So odd coming from Max to this. It's like all the grit and blood and "fucks" are gone...Well I mean they are but yeah...okay anyway...

So first issue starts off with a bang. No really. Frank tries to snipe Osborn as he becomes president of the united states. Sentry stops it and then chases Frank down. This leads to some epic shit which eventually leads to Osborn hiring The Hood (people really loved this guy around this time) to hunt down the Punisher. This is

basically a cat and mouse game throughout.

Good: Enjoyed a lot of the first and 2nd issue. It's high speed chase that feels scary as fuck. Imagine a superman like figure chasing your ass down. Also enjoyed Frank's internal dialog and him actually being scared.

Bad: The Hood stuff feels a little safe. Like you know this dude isn't going to kill Frank. I also thought the side kick character feels a little lame. The revive bad guys to haunt you too has been there done that feel.

Overall it's decent fun to be had. The first issue in particular is great. I can't help but feel it's missing something though. A 3 out of 5.

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### **Fugo Feedback says**

Creo que de nuevo le estoy tomando idea a los comics de superhéroes "comerciales y cumplidores", que son adjetivos que perfectamente se le pueden aplicar a este tomo. Leyendo este nuevo re-re-relanzamiento de Punisher (personaje que si existiera en el mundo real me parecería nefasto pero que en los comics le encuentro cierta gracia), sentí que no la pasé mal cuando me metí en sus páginas, pero me molestó ir previendo cómo iban a darse las cosas, y que quieran hacerme creer que ahora sí que está todo jodido cuando sé que el rambo del protagonista va a terminar saliendo increíblemente airoso de cualquier enfrentamiento con cualquier batallón. Ya sé que son parte de las concesiones que uno tiene que hacer para leer un comic así, pero simplemente a veces me las tomo con ganas y otras no (por eso van a resultar algo contradictorias las reseñas que tengo que escribir de Reinado Oscuro La Lista y los tomitos de El miedo mismo que llevo hasta ahora). En fin... Mucho quejarme pero ya tengo a mano para leer el tomo 2, así que veré para dónde sigo mi discurso luego.

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### **Zack! Empire says**

I'm usually a big fan of Rick Remender. I've enjoyed his X-Force work, his Captain America stuff, and I loved the Uncanny Avengers series. But this just didn't do it for me. Maybe it's because I'm just not a huge fan of the Punisher. As a kid who grew up reading comics in the 90's I can't help but know who he is. And maybe I even feel some nostalgia for him because of that. But this was all just so blah, blah, blah. It's all just surface and no depth.

The covers all being Homages to classic Punisher covers was cool though.

I just don't think Punisher is really a character for me. Or, at least, this kind of Punisher.

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### **Roger Royer says**

This is one of the best books in the Dark Reign collections that I have read so far. It has all the details that could make it a classic Punisher story in one place and it does it while making the reader uncomfortable and happy with the story at the same time. Just awesome work.

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## Joey says

The first issue of this volume features the Punisher facing the Sentry, and it's one of my favorite single issues. Total thrill-ride!

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## Sonic says

I really wanted this book when I first saw it, but the cover was so lame I just couldn't do it. Then I saw it at Half-Price-Books and so I had to get it. And it was much fun! And the artist inside is much better than the artist they used for the covers.

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## Scott S. says

Adequate time killer about *the* rough-and-tough killer, seen here squaring off with some super-powered foes (?) in the dark streets of NYC as well as joining with a new 'guy in the chair' ally named Henry. While it's usually entertaining to read about the Timex wristwatch ("it takes a licking and keeps on ticking") of vigilantes, this story had little to recommend other than a few good scenes and Castle's thought boxes, which referenced everything from the Revolutionary War to Sun Tzu.

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