



The Punisher MAX, Vol. 9: Long Cold Dark

Garth Ennis , Howard Chaykin , Goran Parlov

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The Punisher MAX, Vol. 9: Long Cold Dark Details

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From Reader Review The Punisher MAX, Vol. 9: Long Cold Dark for online ebook

Steve says

The return of Barracuda. An excellent excellent portrayal of the character of the Punisher. Some of the art is a bit less than perfect at times, but overall it is a great example of what Punisher comics can be. Only thing is, you HAVE to have read the whole series to follow it.

Jedhua says

ABSOLUTE RATING: {3+/5 stars}

STANDARDIZED RATING: <3/5 stars>

Steven Montano says

If I gave "The Slavers" a 6, "The Long Cold Dark" may deserve a 7.

Barracuda is back! The indestructible gangster wants Frank Castle in a big way...not just to hurt him, but to break him, and he might have found a way. Already being plagued by dreams of a life he might have lived, The Punisher finds himself dragged into the fight of his life when Barracuda proves his cunning by hitting Frank in a vulnerable spot he never knew he had...

With the exception of some shoddy 1st issue art (which thankfully improves when the original "Barracuda" artist takes over), "The Long Cold Dark" is near perfect. This isn't a typical Punisher story line, but a 5-issue duel between two of the most dangerous men alive, and with so much at stake the tension is ratcheted to an almost unbearable level by the time the smoke starts to settle.

We have never seen The Punisher this vulnerable, or this human. Ennis has made clear Frank's serious mental issues through the series, but seldom before have I felt Castle's hurt conveyed in such a profound manner, or truly comprehended the depths of his loneliness.

While there are still 6 issues to go before Ennis wraps up his most memorable run with the Punisher, "The Long Cold Dark" is the early emotional catharsis the series needed, a hard look at the heart of a man the readers have probably come to regard as heartless. Highly recommended!

(It's also a credit to Ennis as a writer that we actually feel some sympathy for Barracuda along the way, in spite of the many terrible acts he commits. Truly a villain for the ages!)

Sam Quixote says

Frank's confronted with an unexpected surprise - he's a father again! Except Barracuda has abducted the baby and intends to draw the Punisher out for a final showdown. It's up to Frank to rescue the baby and take our Barracuda once and for all. But can Frank be a father again? And can Barracuda be put down once and for all?

The penultimate book of Garth Ennis' run on the Punisher Max series calls back to previous books for its plot so isn't the best place to start if you're coming to this fresh. Frank's deadliest foe returning is good fun to read as for once it's Frank who's on the ropes rather than gunning down gangsters left and right. It shows him having to think on his feet, especially with the added element of a baby.

There's some background to Barracuda's childhood that isn't particularly original (abused as a kid, grew up to be a killer) and the artwork isn't up to much, but it's still a great book to read. Also, Frank's choice at the end is quite touching and reaffirms his desperado status and sad life, adding some pathos to a character often seen as one dimensionally macho. Not the best in the series but still a good read, can't wait to see how Ennis closes out this series in the next book!

Steven Guitink says

In the Beginning

Kitchen Irish

Mother Russia

Up is Down, Black is White

The Slavers

Barracuda

Man of Stone

Widowmaker

Barracuda's back in town. And he wants revenge on Frank. He's found a loose thread; a daughter Frank didn't know he had by O'Brien. And Barracuda's going to make Frank hurt.

This arc had a rough start. The first issue had artwork by Howard Chaykin before Chaykin was unceremoniously dumped for Gorlan Parlov. And honestly, I can see why. Chaykin's art style is really not designed for this series. The characters look off in all the wrong ways (O'Brien's hair is red instead of brown, Barracuda's height fluctuates like crazy, the Punisher and Barracuda looked too cartoony), the linework is ugly and the colours are flat and thickly painted on. Parlov's art by comparison looks miles better and while my opinion of his work hasn't changed much since Barracuda (Frank still looks like a roided up Clark Kent) it's at least servicable and good to look at.

The story is ultimately one long knock-down drag-out fight between Cuda and Frank and for the most it, it's decent. There's a bit of cat and mouse going on where one of them will get the upper hand only for the other to pull something that swings the pendulum back the other way. Overall it's handled okay. But to drag it out over six issues seems a little excessive. There's some downtime in the form of Frank confronting O'Brien's sister/guardian of his daughter and their interactions are a good setpiece to show Frank's slightly softer side.

On the note of characters, Frank and Cuda are the real focus here. Sarah, Frank's daughter is mostly a Maguffin for them to fight over, although like I said, it does give us a chance to see that beneath it all, Frank is still somewhat human. He tells O'Brien's sister to lie about him, never tell Sarah about him, all in an effort

to save her life, spare her the pain of knowing. Frank knows what he's doing isn't for normies. He knows he's damned.

Barracuda meanwhile I think at this point, has overstayed his welcome. Like Frank, Cuda is something of a one-trick pony. A massive gleefully psychotic one-trick pony but a pony nonetheless. And watching his complete and total mental breakdown to the state of a wild rabid animal by the end of the story kind of confirms it for me. It's like Ennis saw the praise Barracuda was getting from readers and decided to double down to show just how worthless the big shit was. In Yorkie's own words (just before his own death):

He's going to kill you. Not over me. You're going up against him, so he'll kill you. Because you're a joke in spite of it all, and he's the most dangerous man that ever walked the earth.

The Long Cold Dark is kind of a flub in my opinion. It's not a bad story, but it doesn't really add anything to the Punisher MAX series that we didn't already have in a lot of better written ways. It's a fun read, full of lightning fast action and brutal violence, a decent sprinkling of suspense and some okay characters but overall I got the impression that Ennis knew his time on the series was coming to a close, so he wanted to finish it off the way he knew how - by slaughtering all the characters he'd helped to create, so no-one else could use and abuse them.

Next up, the last for Ennis. Valley Forge, Valley Forge.

Stephen says

It...was...simply...amazing. I'm stunned.

Xavi Reixach says

Duel Castle-Barracuda, tant de bo Netflix faci servir els fils argumentals d'Ennis per l'adaptació de la sèrie.

Art says

Barracuda didn't listen to Yorkie.

Emre Yavuz says

Howard Chaykin is one of the most overrated comics artist ever!

Brad says

The strength of this book comes from rooting the Punisher's struggle in his feelings and memories about his

family. He's an unkillable loner: it's hard for him feel pain or remorse, but Garth Ennis does a decent job opening up old wounds.

Punisher goes against another seemingly bulletproof villain, Barracuda. He's a particularly unenjoyable villain, but lining these two guys up against each other works well.

Kurt says

Great story marred by highly inconsistent art.

Jonathan Maas says

A fitting end to the Barracuda part of the Punisher saga.

Garth Ennis finds a way to raise the stakes, and then keep raising them onto the very last page.

Octavi says

Barracuda vuelve. No hay más que añadir.

Datsun says

Funny, this is the first Punisher book in 30+ years of the character that I've read which properly acknowledges one of the key features of what is an undeniably simple character.

This Punisher guy is a veteran of the marines, and after surviving 1-3 (depending on which book you read) tours of combat, tries to return to normal life, only to have his family accidentally killed in a mob war. So he swears vengeance and spends the rest of his life wearing a lot of black and killing criminals, as one does. Pretty gritty stuff in the late 1970s, much more ridiculous today. Thanks to a couple decades of increasingly heavy reliance on single characters propping up multiple books, this guy has supposedly bumped off multiple hundreds of Marvel universe mobsters. 10 or 20 bad guys per book, a couple books per month between 1987 and 2005 plus annuals and mini-series and special appearances and cross-overs, and there you are: the world's most successful comic-book (anti-)hero serial killer. But he only kills bad guys, so it's somehow an acceptable fantasy, a la Dirty-Harry-Rambo-Death-Wish.

But this particular story works by making a pretty good point: if this guy is still doing this punishing thing after X number of years and "a body count in the thousands" of , he's either still grieving, or doing it by choice, or both. And it's the choice that makes this book stick for me.

Well, that and Garth Ennis' sense of humor, which is right fucked up. Haw haw haw!

Bram Ryckaert says

The last four pages of this volume are the best of Punisher MAX, great summary of Frank as a character. Ennis continues to amaze as this series moves along.
