



Astonishing X-Men: Gifted Prose Novel

Peter David (Text)

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The X-Men have evolved. Cyclops and Emma Frost re-form the team with the express purpose of "astonishing" the world. But when breaking news regarding the mutant gene unexpectedly hits the airwaves, will it derail their new plans before they even get started? As demand for the "mutant cure" reaches near-riot levels, the X-Men go head-to-head with the enigmatic Ord, with an unexpected ally - and some unexpected adversaries - tipping the scales Experience the blockbuster re-imagining of the X-Men like never before in this new adaptation

Astonishing X-Men: Gifted Prose Novel Details

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From Reader Review Astonishing X-Men: Gifted Prose Novel for online ebook

Ben Mariner says

Reading a novel based on the X-Men is bizarre in a way. It's not bad, just weird. There are certain things that lack the effect you feel when reading a graphic novel. When Wolverine unsheathes his claws, for example. You just don't get the same feeling. Graphic novels are so visual that translating them to prose makes them lose a little something.

That being said, this wasn't a bad book. Eventually I got past the lack of visual stimulation and created it in my own mind. It probably wasn't as good, but it sufficed. I read the series of graphic novels this book was based on, but sadly I don't remember enough to say how it holds up. I remember the story going much, much further than this book does. However, more books may be forthcoming that complete that arc.

David wasn't a terrible writer, but I could tell he was a comic writer and not necessarily an author. The phrasing, word choice, and descriptions he used throughout the book made me wonder if he was purposefully writing for a younger audience or if he has just spent so much time in graphic novel world that he just doesn't quite know how to create a picture in the reader's mind with his words instead of the actual pictures.

Overall, I like the book, but it wasn't anything impressive. If you like the X-Men, you'll probably like this book, but don't expect anything over the top amazing. The X-Men are, in my opinion, one of the most difficult superhero groups to peg down in any medium outside of graphic novels, and even some graphic novels fail spectacularly. They are also my favorite, so I'm a little more harsh of a judge when people try to expand the X-Men universe into film, tv, or prose. Decent book. Could have been better, but could have been a whole lot worse.

Tarl says

The X-men, a superhero team that I have always had a bit of an issue with. Sometimes I love them, sometimes I hate them. But yet, here I was, again picking up a novel about them, because for some reason I can't stay away.

David, flat out, did an amazing job with this novel. I realize that it's tied into the comic, but I have read some pretty crappy superhero novels in my time, some of them X-men. David manages to keep the flow of the story interesting, as well as delving into each and every one of the team's personal issues. Heck, he even keeps Cyclops interesting, a massive feat in my eyes. And that's what makes this novel as good as it is, the characters.

'Gifted' deals with the X-men as they are now in the comics, and I have to say the team dynamics are fairly well done. Couple this with a few new students and their interactions both with each other, and with the X-men, keeps the reader interested and engaged. (not to mention, there is pretty much someone in this book you can relate to, which is always a plus)

Another glowing thing in this book is the fight scenes, and there are plenty. David seems to know his way around a punch and manages to keep the fights both interesting and quick. No bogging it down in endless

prose or useless details. Instead, he gives you what you need and nothing more.

My only issue with this book was how Kitty was written. Again, this may or may not have to do with David's writing as I have not read the comics. Kitty seems to be treated as far younger than she is in the novel, her inner dialogue sometimes coming across as almost 'Bella-esk' in some of her laments/opinions/etc... Now, it works in the storyline, and really doesn't detract from the story, but it does feel out of character for someone who has been an X-man and done the things they have.

In the end, this was a good book, and I really enjoyed it. Anyone who is a superhero fan, or an X-men fan, I suggest this book to you. There's a good chance I will read this again down the road.

Stewart says

Listened to this in advance of the upcoming series, but I don't think it's connected.

Fine story with great narration. You'll have to roll with getting dumped into the X-Men timeline at a random point and exiting without wrapping up all of the loose ends.

Recommended.

Steve says

Perfect holiday season light, fun reading (although there isn't really a holiday theme, I just happened to pick it up in the second half of December, and read it rather quickly).

Full disclosure: I've long been entertained by prose novels about conventional/popular comic book superheroes. I know, I know, they're not for everyone. But ... but ... to the extent I've (pretty much always) enjoyed comic books, *why wouldn't I* prefer a prose novel, telling the same story (without the drawings, but offering lots more detail and (as a general rule) presenting a complete story arc in a single volume???? *C'mon*, does anyone else remember being a kid and reading *Big Little Books* about Aquaman, Batman, Dick Tracy, Daktari, Flipper (you bet!) Space Ghost, Tarzan...??? As a result, over the years, I've read novels featuring Batman, Spider-Man, Superman, and, somewhat recently, the Guardians of the Galaxy ... as well as some less conventional novels, including *Soon I Will be Invincible*, a personal favorite, and the splendidly entertaining zombie mayhem *Ex-Heroes* series ... and this book was plucked from a stack of Marvel prose novels I recently acquired (alas, a long, complicated, and value-based story)... Having said all of this, I was never a big X-Men fan, so my expectations for this were low enough that, no doubt, I was easy to please.

Anyway, this is what it is - and it's ain't literature - but it is fun and it's surprisingly gratifying. My guess is this markets well on the YA shelves, but it kept me reading (and turning pages). There were more than enough poignant moments to engage an adult reader, and, frankly, the ending worked well enough to satisfy me with the overall effort.

Nick says

Interesting story that the film 'The Last Stand' was partly based on. The characters are well written and have

some interesting conflicts and its nice that it doesn't feel like the normal X-men exploits.

Pat says

It was a decent story, though it rehashed the standard X-Men storyline of curing the mutant gene vs. allowing the mutant gene to be a natural thing. The Kitty Pryde interpositions between the narrative breaks was at first confusing, but it came around. Most of my X-Men knowledge (OK, all of it) comes from the movies, and even they don't have continuity, so I didn't realize that ...

(MAYBE SPOILERS)

Jean was dead, Emma and Scott were together, and Mystique was the leader of the bad guys. Once I understood who was what, the plotline was straight forward.

I enjoyed the audiobook, but it wasn't stellar.

Kimberly says

For what this book is, it's absolutely AWESOME. It's action from beginning to end, although I'll admit, the ending of it seemed sort of abrupt. However, I really enjoyed this book, not just for page-turner action and the comic book characters that I love, but also for the questions it makes you ask that you wouldn't expect from a comic book series converted to a book. People really don't credit the themes that run through our favorite comic books and all their adaptations... whether it's the X-Men, learning and teaching others to be OK with differences in others and in themselves, or if it's the Avengers, asking if it's really worth it to trade your freedom for security. Plus, superheroes are wayyy more developed as characters than most people think.

Aivel says

The plot of the book taken from the graphic novel of the same series is actually pretty basic for a super hero team, I have not read the graphic novel so i cannot say how it holds up to the original version or how much it diverge from the graphic novel. What i can say is that this is my 3rd book from Peter David, I have read his novelization of the first Iron-Man and the Incredible Hulk movies, and both show me that David is one hell of a writer, He seem to know the innate strength and weakness of each particular genre. Like in the movie, its strength is in its visuals while the novel form its strength is that it can dig deeper into the character and he did that with the 2 books, He-he I never thought Bruce Banner has such a sarcastic inner voice it actually makes him funny or that Tony Stark is just a misunderstood playboy. Peter David makes the superhero actually human. So I went into this book expecting more of the same and He definitely did not disappoint. Since I did not read the original I don't know which part is from the graphic novel and which is from David. I love the team dynamics, usually with stories that stars a team, the members trust each other explicitly and

they work as a family, while in this book fights seems to breakout every time they are in the same room together and there is always a slight mistrust at the back of their mind, it actually made it funny and the fact that given their histories and personality being able to work together and trust each other with their lives for a common goal makes them more heroic in my eyes. The scene in the Danger Room wherein they are in the Hawaii, each of them are so juvenile its hilarious. For me the star of the show is Emma Frost, as in she actually has better leadership skills than Scott Summers, the fact that she can handle Logan is a testament to her leadership skills. It is actually heartbreaking when she told Beast that she has a drop dead gorgeous body, intellect and wit to match but she still rate second to a corpse. This is one readable book even for those who are not familiar with the marvel universe because as always David wrote the characters as humans who just happens to have superpowers and not as superheroes.

Brent says

As a comic book fan, I'm giving this an easy five stars--your mileage may vary. This is the novelization by Peter David of an X-Men comic book series written by Joss Whedon (yup--THAT Joss Whedon), but--as a novelization--it definitely holds its own weight. Both Peter David and Stuart Moore (with his excellent "Civil War" prose novel) have managed to take stories told with pictures and words (mostly pictures) and translated them into very well written novels. That's the most important thing here: This novel stands up all on its own. You don't need to have read the comic books. You really don't even need to know much about the X-Men. Mr. David has crafted a story that walks you through all of that without ever making it seem like he's holding your hand. And that's just kinda awesome. So... HIGHLY recommended to comic book fans, superhero prose fans, and X-Men fans. Strongly recommended to sci-fi fans, action fans, and conspiracy fans. Not recommended if, at any time in the last twelve months, you've read a book that had "50 Shades" in the title--for you, I'd recommend an X-Men coloring book. Or maybe a pet rock.

And on the million-to-one chance that anyone from Marvel happens to see this review: PLEASE MAKE YOUR PROSE NOVELS AVAILABLE AS eBooks! So far, only "Civil War" and those god-awful She-Hulk and Rogue novels have been available as eBooks.

David Caldwell says

First off, this is a prose novel adapted from a graphic novel which collected Astonishing X-men #1-6.

The X-Men are starting another year of teaching young mutants. The team is made up of Scott Summers (Cyclops), Emma Frost(the White Queen), Logan (Wolverine), Hank McCoy (the Beast), and Kitty Pryde (Shadowcat). When they aren't trying to kill each other, they are trying to change people's opinion of mutants as menaces. Now, a scientist claims to have found a cure for the mutant disease. Is this the first step towards the government forcing mutants to give up their powers? Do the X-Men have the right to tell others to not use this chance to lead a life without their mutant powers?

Start with one of the strongest comic book series around. Let Joss Whedon write the series for awhile. Joss excels at writing stories about superhumans that focus not only on the super aspect but the human aspect as well. Then have Peter David adapt the graphic novel (that collected the first six issues and the first story arc). Peter David has experience both as a comic book writer and a novel writer, so he knows very well how to adapt from one medium to the other. This is about the best team that I can think of to do this project.

I think my only complaint is that while this is a complete story, there are parts that are not resolved. This is

natural since it is based on just a few issues of an ongoing comic book storyline. I have read the graphic novel collections that followed this one so I know the whole story but I would still have liked to have seen the other graphic novels in the series turned into novels as well.

My favorite little bit from the book is an inside joke about the Beast.

"If he [the Beast] had walked in and announced that he was going to move to Seattle and start giving psychiatric advice on the radio, he could not have received a more astounded look from the others."

Of course, this is a reference to the TV show *Fraiser* that starred Kelsey Grammer. Kelsey Grammer also provided the voice of the Beast in the X-Men movies.

Enfermo Diaz says

The cure

It's a good story but not great. Needs more action and less talking but it's still a good story about how everyone is different and nothing is wrong with you no matter what others say.

Craig says

This is one of the best-written comics/prose books I've read in years. It's a fairly straight adaptation of Joss Whedon's early *Astonishing X-Men* sequence, but is fleshed out in ways that add a lot and make it a successful prose novel. Being a Whedon creation, Kitty Pryde is obviously the main character, but Cyclops, Beast, Wolverine, and particularly Emma Frost are also featured. Kitty has some first-person narrative sequences, and some great lines like: "This place has been destroyed more times than the post-season hopes of Chicago Cubs fans" in describing the Xavier School. Emma Frost has some good Easter-eggish lines too, such as threatening Wolverine with wiping away his real identity and making him "a musical-theater god. And I'll make sure we have front row seats for every performance," if he doesn't do what she wants. The high points of the story, I believe, lie mostly in the distrust and dislike of Kitty and Emma for one another. Nick Fury appears (as does Lockheed!), and a lost team-member is found (causing another great one-liner from Emma), and the story closes before the *Breakworld* arc, which I thought was an excellent choice. It's a real treat for X-fans.

Cory says

Before I listened to this audio book I didn't think I liked any of Joss Whedon's comic book writing. Well this was great. I am not sure how much of it is due to Whedon and how much is due to Peter David. I am probably going to pick up the issues so that I can compare.

A part of this book had me in tears. The voice actors were so good.

My favorite part was when Kitty Pride saved Wolverine by have Colossus throw her in the air to catch wolverine and then phase through the ground.

I don't really know anything about the villain beside he is royalty from a planet called *Break World*. I am sure that gets touch on more in later issues.

Ian Shen says

A very good adaptation of the Gifted storyline by Joss Whedon. In my opinion, the novel was written much better than the comic, in the sense that the events flow much more fluidly. The background done for the characters are much more detailed, obviously, than the one presented in the comics. To my pleasurable surprise, all of Kitty Pryde's parts are written from her P.O.V, which, while refreshing, creates a sort of teen, Bella-esk narration. It can be seen in both good or bad, however it does make her sound younger than she is presented in both the novel and comics and come across as somewhat of a whiny teenager. Although, all the dialogue is done extremely well, and is accurate to their character. Whedon at his best, for sure, and David captures his wit fantastically.

However, the pros far outweighs the cons and in conclusion, it is on my list of highly recommended reading material. 4/5

Neil says

This book was better than I thought it would be, in some respects. It is an adaptation of the first 4 - 5 issues of the Astonishing X-Men series written by Josh Whedon. It moved at a decent pace; it held my interest throughout the entire book. It has decent character development [I guess], except that I liked some of the characters even less than I had before when reading just the comics. So many I should say it was character devolving or character destruction instead of character development.

What this novelization does is fill in a lot of gaps and explains things that the reader has to interpret while reading the comics [including facial expressions, gestures, and body language in general based on individual pictures]. I did not mind the 'gap-filling' so much, but I did not care so much for what appeared to be the author's insertion of his own views into a story-line written by somebody else. I shall have to go back to read the comics to see if I glossed over what I took to be cracks made by the author (view spoiler). I get that the X-Men being what they are [hated and feared by those the X-Men protect] lends great possibilities for 'Civil Rights'-kind of stories, but sometimes the shlockery gets to be a bit much and detracts from the story. By the same token, if the storyline had been written today, I am sure some of those same questions Peter David had the various reporters asking would have been included in the comics themselves. It just gets old, because the liberals do not have all of the answers, either, for making the world a better place. Ah, well. Enough soap box.

I did like the 'gaps' being filled in during the novel [such as after Kitty asks Hank where Logan is, and Hank has said that Logan is elsewhere, and that they have narrowed it down to 'else' - it was a great 'scene' and tied directly into Logan appearing in Scott and Emma's bedroom]. There were a lot of 'gap fillers' and backstory in the novel, but it did not necessarily detract from the pace of the novelization. In fact, I think it added to it. For instance, there is quite a bit of gap in the comics from when Peter and Logan perform the much-vaunted 'fastball special' and Ord's ship being brought to the ground. Peter David explains how Logan was able to bring Ord back down by destroying the ship and how Kitty saved Logan and Tildie, none of which was in the book.

I think the 'bad thing' about the book is that the X-Men really suffer in the presentation. Especially Emma Frost. Yes, she is a villain trying to live the straight and narrow, but she is such a horrible person! In the

comics, Xavier used to alter people's minds on a regular basis, usually one of those 'the ends justify the means' 'for the greater good' of something [i.e. - forcing people to stop an action with horrible consequences, making people forget things, forcing people to act against their wishes/will to assist in some action, controlling people]. Xavier might have thought he was acting altruistically, but Emma abuses her powers by using them to exact vengeance against those who offend her. It does not matter if they are friends or foe, or even innocents. I felt she was a despicable character already; this novelization only served to cement my feelings/opinions of this woman. Yet she is portrayed as somehow having some kind of moral high ground to judge 'normal humans' merely because she is a mutant who can read the minds of others. She freely admits she will forcibly rearrange people's minds who do not agree with her or do as she wants. It's horrible! How can somebody who claims to be about 'freedoms' and 'rights' and whatnot do the very thing she decries by enforcing her will upon those around her? Yet she is angry with the 'Government' wanting to do the same thing with Mutants? Such hypocrisy.

I think Cyclops actually had some of the best character development in the story. He starts out as a boring jerk and ends as a boring jerk, but he does have an epiphany (view spoiler).

It is almost 'funny', but for a group that claims it wants to 'protect people', they sure did not care very much about the young girl Tildie. Their actions and attitude were at odds with how one pictures a 'super hero' acting when a child is in danger. Then things 'turn around' when Logan saves the day [where we are told that Logan becomes incensed when children are endangered. Really? Not too many pages ago he was ready to dismiss her as a 'casualty of war' [as it were] and not worth saving]. [No, I do not believe it was sarcasm on his part prior to saving the girl, either.] I do not think this book did the best job portraying the X-Men in the positive light in which Cyclops wanted the X-Men to be viewed. But perhaps that was the 'genius' of this book [and the comic series] in that here were people who wanted to make the world a better place, yet it showed them with their warts and all. I shall have to go back and reread the comics to see how the characters do develop in the comics themselves.

I do think Kitty was the best addition to this team. I loved her verbal sparring with Emma and the others.

As everyone knows, Josh did the impossible and brought Colossus 'back to life' in such a way that it was universally accepted by everybody. It was a great idea on his part, and the 'process' by which Colossus is resurrected is utilized later in the comics [to great effect]. It was hard to read about Kitty finding and freeing Colossus from his prison in the comics - not so much his being freed as much as the sound effects from Colossus either seriously injuring or killing the guards. The book makes it very clear as to what he is doing. I get that he was tortured for years, and I do not know how I would respond if I had been tortured for years and then set free with some of my captors nearby. But the fact remains that Peter injured and/or killed those men, and yet we never see any internal regret over his actions. It is never even brought up. Kitty is appalled by it, and prevents him from immediately murdering a guard [who probably still dies from the wounds inflicted by Colossus], but she never wonders how much Peter has changed to the point that he willingly murders other people. It really should have been a powerful moment for the two of them, and it should have had some kind of 'lasting effect' [based on what liberals state should happen in terms of one person killing person, or any living thing], but the opposite happens. They move on as if nothing has happened. It is one of the weirdest parts of the story [and the comic], how they totally blow over Peter's resurrection, imprisonment, torture, and being used for medical experiments.

Emma's quip about how she has the best body money can buy, a superior intellect and excellent wit [in her own inflated opinion] and she still rates second to a corpse is great! hahahahahah Take that, you home-wrecking skank!

I also liked how Peter David focuses on the students as well as the X-Men themselves. There are events that are mentioned in the comics, and he fleshes them out. He also discusses further other events that happened at the school [such as Wing losing his power] and goes further in describing how the students reacted to the

events that happened. It was a nice touch, in my opinion.

(view spoiler)

(view spoiler)

This book does a great job of expanding the original comic book storyline. I did enjoy reading it [despite my disgust of some of the X-Men characters afterwards]. I could not help but wonder if Peter David spoke with Josh Whedon at length about Josh's vision for the Astonishing X-Men series, or if Peter David merely extrapolated from Josh's storyline to write this novel. There was some great material in the novel [in my opinion] that helped further refine and define the characters and the team. It was well done. I am glad I read it.
