



Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind, Vol. 1

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Hayao Miyazaki was a budding filmmaker in 1982 when he agreed to collaborate on a project with the popular Japanese anime magazine Animage. This was Nausicaa, which would make Miyazaki's reputation as much as his 11 films and TV shows. Set in the far future, Nausicaa visualizes an Earth radically changed by ecological disaster. Strange human kingdoms survive at the edge of the Sea of Corruption, a poisonous fungal forest. Nausicaa, a gentle young princess, has a telepathic bond with the giant mutated insects of this dystopia. Her task is to negotiate peace between kingdoms battling over the last of the world's precious natural resources.

Nausicaa took Miyazaki 12 years to create, in part because he worked with few or no assistants, doing both the writing and drawing using a meticulously detailed style that critics have compared to the work of the French artist Moebius.

Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind, Vol. 1 Details

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From Reader Review Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind, Vol. 1 for online ebook

Julia V says

I'm on a bit of a dystopia binge right now on accident so this fit perfect with my current reading. I can see how the extended volumes might be a bit better because the story was rushed but I really loved this. I fell in love with the princess almost immediately.

This version was better for me because I don't get to read a lot of graphic novels recently and it was nice to have one with a bit of length to it.

Jackie says

I found the world and characters interesting, but my enjoyment of the graphic novel was constantly interrupted by the lack of color. I've seen a few Studio Ghibli movies, so I'm not unfamiliar with Miyazaki's art style, but I've never read one of his graphic novels before. All of the characters look alike, and in black and white, you don't get a lot of help differentiating between them. Also, some of the blocks are detailed to the point where it can be hard to tell what is even happening. Not sure if I'll continue with this series or just watch the movie to find out how it ends.

Lindsay says

Gosh, I'm trying to find a way to get into manga, but it's just not happening. I kinda like the storyline, but it was difficult for me to follow who was saying what, which wasn't helped by the muddy, claustrophobic art. It hooked me enough that I'm going to try the movie to see if I can parse things better there.

Jeffrey Gao says

Very interesting read of the manga that started everything Studio Ghibli. The movie is noticeably similar to the manga but there's quite a few differences. It's alright because I enjoy both. Time to read the rest!

Amy says

It's interesting to see a Miyazaki narrative on page instead of on screen. In a lot of ways, it's better. He writes such interesting stories, and his dedication to the character of Nausicaa shines through brighter here than in the movie. The part of his work that was lost in print was his art. I don't know if it was the edition I read, but Miyazaki has such intricate artwork - the towns, the corrupted forests, the insects - they're all amazing to look at. But my copy was tiny and often times I got confused shifting through the layered illustrations to find what was really happening. Hoping to find a larger copy for Volume 2.

Seth T. says

[This is a review of the whole series.]

Several years back (this was maybe 2002, right before *Spirited Away* hit American shores) I was finally able to see Hayao Miyazaki's film *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind*. I had heard a lot of good things about it both from friends who adored the bastardized American release fifteen years earlier, *Warriors of the Wind*, and from friends who regularly sought out Japanese fare. Weeks earlier, I was able to get ahold of a Hong Kong set of all of Miyazaki's works up to that point and was slowly working my way through the collection. When I finally arrived at *Nausicaä*, I was very excited, having saved the best for last.

Long story short: it sucked. Or at least it did in my mind at the time. The problem was that I was still too much a purist, too much a fan. It's an issue that I've mostly sewn up in a burlap sack for disposal into the nearby lake, but at the time my disappointment in the cinema realization of *Nausicaä* was tremendous. The source of my complaint was that I had read Miyazaki's manga by the same title. Two works, both named *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind*. One was a masterwork, an epic adventure fraught with complex characters, intrigue, and a sense of grandeur; the other was just a movie.

I'm sure that I would have loved the animated film as much as anyone else had I not read Miyazaki's collection of the story in comics form. The problem was that once I had immersed myself so deeply into a sprawling world in which characters were built as if human, with multi-layered motivations, histories, cultures, and customs, the film version almost had to suffer by the comparison. *Nausicaä*, for many, was an example of Miyazaki's directing and Ghibli's animation style in top form. But for me, fresh from what I considered to be one of the best examples of the comics medium, there was no way for me to see the film as anything but a sad, incomplete replica of what was a staggering work of genius.

Granted, Miyazaki was only one-quarter-finished with the story (in comics form) when he made the animated film version of it, so there's no way it could have the depth of the graphic novel. Granted, it would be impossible to convey even a fraction of *Nausicaä*'s story in a single two-hour film. Granted again, I was an overly-invested simpleton at the time, a purist through-and-through, demanding that film versions of beloved stories be faithful adaptations of their source material. It wasn't a happy way to live, being constantly disappointed by product that didn't hold its source as valuable as I did. Fortunately, I've been healed of my purist tendencies. Maybe I'll one day be able to approach the cinematic *Nausicaä* with new eyes. But for now, I'm just happy to reread the original.

The story of *Nausicaä* is robust. It travels a lot of territory and the narrative terrain shifts constantly. The story at page 100 is different from the story at page 200 is different from the story at page 300. Et cetera. Miyazaki keeps the reader off-balance, constantly renegotiating what his story is actually about. In the hands of a lesser author, *Nausicaä* would seem a confused jumble of ideas, an evolving puzzle its own author could not solve. Fortunately, and I think most of the world probably knows this by now, Miyazaki is among the best storytellers of our age. It shows in *Nausicaä*. The sureness of his authorial footing in this book is never at doubt. From beginning to end, we are on his ground and it's a good place to be.

Nausicaä tells the story of the post-cataclysmic Earth, a millennium after its destruction by the hands of a weaponized robotic army (presumably created by mankind herself). Humanity has barely survived the nuclear fires that tore civilization apart. The earth itself, polluted beyond its ability to heal in a normal manner, has given birth to a terrible new forest. Called the Sea of Corruption, this roiling swath of strange new flora means death to those that it engulfs, for its air is unbreathable. As land becomes more and more scarce due to this growing threat, wars break out and the future of humanity is threatened all the more. In the midst of this, Nausicaä, a princess of a small outlying tribe, seeks to unravel the mysteries of the Sea of Corruption while negotiating a dangerous path between two warring nations. The princess herself is a mystery to all those she encounters, part chaos, part mercy, and always navigating her own path.

This scene ends pretty much how you might guess.

For those familiar with Miyazaki's films, the art will seem a familiar prototype, an early version of what would become the Ghibli house style for the next thirty years. In tone, *Nausicaä* probably closest resembles the sometimes violent action and environmentalism of *Princess Mononoke* (though those that weary of that message shouldn't be overly put off by its expression here). The story is long and many panels are more text than imagery as Miyazaki attempts to sensibly exposit his narrative. The tale requires patience and perseverance, but it rewards its pursuers. There are a number of great adventures told through the comics medium, but *Nausicaä* is so far—and pretty easily—the best of show.

[review courtesy of Good Ok Bad]

Saori Fukuhata says

Stunning.

Michael says

Sublime.

Sparky says

By far the most beautifully-drawn, sweeping graphic novels I have ever had the privilege of reading. The books go much more in-depth than the movie (which is excellent on its own), and makes it a much more complex story that likely requires a few reads to fully grasp. It's hard to not be the slightest bit guilty while reading, since it concerns humanity's future in a world twisted with pollution, and the nature of human lust for war. On the other hand, Nausicaa is a grounded and lovable heroine. I can't get enough of her - she is trusted by many because there isn't a thought in her head of exploiting anything. She executes impetuous solutions where others see only problems. She makes mistakes, some that cost lives. Her reasoning is always very quick, and she doesn't back down. The forest and the insects welcome her alone.

There is an afterword by Miyazaki in the end of the first book that explains the origin of the name Nausicaa, as well as an adorable passage about how he is not a good enough artist to draw another manga series. Har har, HM.

Go read these books. They will make you think and feel a great many things.

Susan Wojtas says

Several years ago I saw the movie version of Nausicaa and loved it. I never knew it was based off of graphic novels until later. Apparently there are four of these so I'll have to read the rest for sure.

This is really different from the movie with a heck of a lot more going on! It took me a few days to read this because each page is jam packed lol. There are more battles and you learn more about this world they live in. I also understand Nausicaa's connection to the ohmu a bit more now.

I will have to rewatch the movie now that I've finished the first volume because it's been awhile since I've last seen it. I remember most of how things went down in there compared to here but would like to see it again and pay attention to the differences. I will definitely read the rest of these! Hayao Miyazaki truly is a wonderful artist and storyteller.

Raymond Wharton says

Personal favorite work of future fantasy. Has a nearly religious place in my heart.

Ryan says

(My review of the whole series)

An incredibly imaginative and (mostly) coherent manga. The setting is a far future Earth where man has almost been overrun by a toxic jungle filled with giant insects, but continues to subsist in a few fuedal kingdoms that wage war on each other with the last remaining bits of technology. The characters, outlandish creatures, mix of technological and primitive, and quasi-Buddhist spiritual themes reminded me a lot of Star Wars. However, where George Lucas is clunky and heavy-handed, Miyazaki draws with a much finer pen (so to speak), creating a saga that eclipses Star Wars in depth and scale and approaches a work like the Iliad.

Nausicaa's world is one you can get lost in. It's epic, tragic, heroic, and beautiful. There are noble heroes, scheming villains, wise mentors, amusing comic relief sidekicks, and a lot of characters who are neither good nor bad, but caught up in existing circumstances. There are scenes of wonder, and scenes of horror. While the story is full of violence, Miyazaki doesn't revel in it. He searches for nobility in his characters, but steeps it in a mourning for the loss of humanity inflicted by greed, lack of respect for nature, and power-hungry leaders. The artwork is stunning in its detail, expression, and total realization of a world -- all the more impressive for being the labor of one guy. And unlike with other decade-spanning mangas, which seem to degenerate into incoherence after a while, this one gradually draws its plot and thematic threads together into a meaningful conclusion.

This is a work for the ages and the world: entertaining, epic, poignant, and something that could have only come out of Japan. I'm not even a particularly avid consumer of graphic novels, but I'd recommend the whole seven volume set to anyone who remotely enjoys them. Don't bother with the animated movie of the same title -- it doesn't come close.

Matt Richter says

Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind is one of my favourite films and I've wanted to read the original manga for awhile. Much of the film is taken from the content in this first volume. For the most part I really enjoyed it! I wouldn't say the artwork is staggering, but Miyazaki manages to convey an extremely strong characterisation for Nausicaä that really made me care about her and her world and plight. Sometimes I found the action sequences a bit chaotic (from my limited experience, this has been a common thing in manga) and towards the end of this volume the plot started to feel a bit convoluted with all the factions in play... nevertheless it seems like a very strong work and I look forward to reading the following 3 volumes.

BellaGBear says

I think my mobile phone was not the best medium to read this on. The drawings had so much detail that it was difficult to see what exactly was happening.

The story was good. A lot of fantasy elements completely different from anything I've seen before. And also as a major in climate studies (more or less) I loved the environmental angle. However the storytelling itself was not that original. It stays in fantasy archetypes. So definitely a book for people who are looking for an epic fantasy epos with a lot of cool and new ideas, but who care less about originally of the storyline. This is only volume 1 and it has already 250+ -so definitely not a series you have to be afraid to finish to quickly.

I will probably also check this one out if I can read it on a bigger screen or preferably on paper.

Erika Maruo says

1. VIZ GRAPHIC NOVEL

2. 7/2 = 15 minutes, 7/5 = 20 minutes, 7/7 = 35minutes

3. 7 words summary: Nausicaa - forest - voice - ohme - calm - friend - rescue

4. Q. Do you like animals? What animals do you like?

A. I really like animals. Especially I like baby animals such as puppy and kitty.

5. Honestly, I have watched this movie on TV in Japanese. I am happy to read this work in English! My biology teacher in high school said to us in her class, she was Nausicaa of Heisei era. That was so funny, but I really think so. She really love animals like Nausicaa. Actually, I also admired Nausicaa when I was a junior high school student :)

2. 7/15 = 30 minutes, 7/16 = 40 minutes

3. 7 words summary: atack - princes - ship - fight - tree - limb - burn

4. Q. Have you ever fought with somebody with your anger?(I don't know this expression is correct or not.)
When did you do that?

A. Actually I have. When I was a fourth grader in elementary school, my friend teased me. Then I punched my friend.

5. Nausicaa is very clever and kind girl. She tries not to kill worms as possible. It is very difficult thing for me because I often try to kill mosquitoes when I find them, especially summer.

2.7/20 = 35 minutes, 7/22 = 40 minutes

3.7 words suumary: enemy - prepare - war - warrior - cut - hair - present

4.Q. When do you cut your hair? Why do you cut your hair?

A. I do not decide when I cut my hair. I usually cut my hair when I think I want cut my hair. However, actually I do not have time to go and cut my hair...

5.I thought that when I think about "peace", I have to think about "nature" such as warm, tree or animals. It is very important, I found.

Carles says

Not a definitive rating. It may be changed after reading the whole series.

Rachel says

one of my favourite miyazaki movies, but the manga doesn't translate well for me - i think i find it a bit confusing visually. the art is gotgeous but tends to distract from the text and there's a lot going on on each page - especially during action sequences. but the story is compelling and it does have a very nostalgic quality for me.

Andrew says

This was a slight letdown for me, and it might be one of the rare cases of "The Movie Was Better Than The Book." Miyazaki's designs are of course a marvel, and I love the spiritual and ecological themes, but I found much of the action, particularly the dogfights, difficult to follow. It would also be easier to keep up with the complex political maneuvering (I count at least 6 competing factions here) if everybody's armor didn't look exactly the same. By the end of this volume (which is actually 2 TPBs in one), the frantic pace slowed down a bit and the visual storytelling became clearer (or maybe I just became acclimated).

Michael Loder says

This book, and its further volumes, has had a profound influence on my own writing and on my perception of this world and the role of heroes. The art work is detailed and complex, never rushed or incomplete. The story explores an enormous number of themes, from the role of humanity in this world, the destruction of life and even how and why military units operate and hold together.

It is a sad story with so many wonderful characters dying, or turning evil. Yet many others gain insight into their own weaknesses, rising above that petty desires to become better persons. As for Nausicaä, she is like a straight beam of light, moving through a dark world, changing, growing and becoming stronger in courage and understanding as she seeks out the ultimate selfish plans and creation of a godless being. If you read all the volumes, you are into a long read, but well-worth the satisfying ending.

Damon says

This is just about as good as it gets. I love me some manga, but the only thing that maybe comes close to this in epic storytelling is Akira, and I think I like Nausicaa a little better.

I originally read these in the single-issues version from the 80s. I like reading it in this more compact "Perfect Collection" version, but I don't know if it really benefits from the reduction of the page size. There are definitely places where the panels get a bit small for the amount of action in them, and it can make details of what's happening a bit unclear.

Story-wise, things get kicked off pretty well in this volume. I can see how a first-time reader might think that the storyline will follow a pretty standard and predictable route, but it's no spoiler to say it definitely doesn't. Even having read this before doesn't dampen my excitement for what's coming up.

I'd seen the Nausicaa anime before reading these and wasn't too impressed - even though Miyazaki is one of the greatest living filmmakers, I generally love his more whimsical stuff more than his heavier-handed environmental stuff (though Nausicaa DOES have airships, AND one of my favorite scenes in any movie ever). But, again like Akira, the manga wasn't done when the movie was made, and that seems to be where the film falls short. The scope of the manga is so much more vast, and the story is much more involved. The charm of Miyazaki's films translates well to the page (or maybe it's the other way around), and you get a lot of the same emotional impact.

I don't know if this is currently in print or not (if not, it's a shame) but this is well worth seeking out.
