



Recursion

Marion G. Harmon

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It's been just weeks since the state funeral for the Sentinels, Atlas, Ajax, and Nimbus, lost in the Whittier Base Attack. Astra, Hope, is recovered from her own injuries. At least physically. Mentally . . . not so much, but she feels ready to actively wear the cape again. Which is good since, between the revelation of her short-lived relationship with Atlas (nine years her senior) and her virally pungent public comments on the current political debate over breakthrough registration (the National Public Safety Act), she needs to raise her profile. But she's better now, steady, ready for anything.

Or is she? First her quantum-ghost BF Shell reveals that something's off. Hope's CHANGED. Unaccountably and impossibly changed, she's not the Hope she was even just last week. Confronted with Shell's evidence, Hope recovers an impossible memory and follows it to the realization that she's really not the Hope of last week. She remembers three years of memories of a life she hasn't lived yet. She remembers the fight with Villains Inc., the addition of the Young Sentinels, her adventures in Littleton, Japan, and across a dozen extrarealities. The one thing she doesn't remember is how she got here.

How did she get here? WHERE is here?

Worse, things here are already starting to happen differently. Is her presence here messing things up? Or is she supposed to fix something already messed up? And what does Kitsune have to do with everything?

Recursion Details

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From Reader Review Recursion for online ebook

Gilbert Stack says

Marion Harmon is one of the two or three best superhero novelists out there, and his Wearing the Cape series is at the top of the genre. Recursion is the sort of book that can only be written with several books in the series to back it up. Astra, Harmon's heroine, finds herself back in time inhabiting her body one month after the end of the first novel with no idea why she's there. What follows is a great mystery with the reappearance of Astra's greatest foes—one after the other. This one is a ton of fun.

Larry says

Book 7 of the Wearing the Cape series finds our heroine Astra apparently traveling back in time to fight the forces of evil. Overall, as with the rest of the series, this was a good well written story. As with many long running series ***cough...wheel of time...cough....cough*** there are now so many characters and so many plots that when one hasn't been in the story universe for a while it is really easy to get hopelessly confused, which I definitely did. So, while the story was mostly engaging, I kind of felt that some readers might get a bit lost at times. None-the-less, the last third wraps everything up well and any lingering suspension of disbelief issues arbitrated by confusion are mostly dealt with. I did feel like we'd missed some of the genesis of the protagonist as the Astra from book 6 seemed a bit different from book 7, though I do think this has been the direction this series was going to go for some time. While Astra's adventures are interesting, I'm kind of hoping Harmon does more side story novels like he did for Artemis. Personally my strongest vote goes for an Ozma novel, though there are obviously many of great options as this is now a huge cast.

Paul Wilcox says

Here in book 7, the story picks up right after book 1. Or does it? A few of the details are subtly off, and the world we readers have come to know isn't quite right. Will our viewpoint hero Astra notice? Has she time traveled to the past, or is something else going on? How will she learn that things aren't quite what they're supposed to be?

This storytelling meme is well-trodden in scifi and superhero stories, but it's the author's execution of this trope that makes this such an enjoyable entry into the series. It's especially fun to contrast the confident Astra we've come to know with the newbie hero she was back at this time, and watch how the author uses that contrast in relation to his macguffin for this move back to an earlier point in the timeline.

As a bonus, this book has some of the series' most exciting and kinetic action sequences. Come on, it's a superhero story so we're all here for the action, right? Well Recursion delivers in spades.

After book 6, which in my opinion is the quality low point in the series to date, book 7 was a refreshing return to what makes this series so enjoyable: watching Astra develop as a person and a hero, and diving even deeper into the increasingly complex setting.

Ryan Mangrum says

This installment seemed to be phoned-in. There was very little in the way of new content and much of what was there was confusing. Many of the story elements are things we've already seen from the other books. It reminded me of when TV shows would have montage episodes.

Hope is unknowingly reliving events from three years in her past until her memory is suddenly restored. The bulk of the story is her trying to stop a plot that never occurred in her past to trigger a massive destructive false-flag event to help push anti-breakthrough legislation through Congress to help kick start a civil war. I rather enjoyed that part of the plot as it closely mirrors current events in respect to gun control.

All in all, not a bad read, but I was rather peeved that I had to pay \$8 to read themes that have largely been tackled in other books.

C.T. Phipps says

I'm a huge fan of Marion G. Harmon's *WEARING THE CAPE*. I have loved the adventures of Hope Astra since she first appeared on the scene and have followed the series ever since. It's probably my favorite superhero series after Jim Bernheimer's *Confessions of a D-List Supervillain* and Darius Brasher's *the Omega Superhero*. Speaking as a superhero writer myself, I also think the books benefit from being one of the few ones out there with a clearly unambiguous good guy as the protagonist.

The premise for *Recursion* is Hope has found herself sent back into time to the beginning of her career after the first book. While her memories of the future are a bit vague, she immediately starts trying to set right what went wrong the first time. Sadly, we don't get to see what Hope's life with Atlas would have been like as I was really invested with that relationship. Strangely, despite this being the basis of the *Teatime Anarchists'* plots, Hope insists she can't "really" change the past.

I like the self-awareness Hope has about how much she's changed since the events of the first book. The original Hope was nothing more than a social debutante and kind of a spoiled sweet character who was a little too good to be true. Since that time, she's suffered loss and tragedy after tragedy so that it's hardened her to become a really dangerous young woman. The new costume, which is a bit too much on the "stereotypical comic book costume" side is also a sign of empowerment as she wants to show off how much she'd worked on becoming a well-muscled badass.

Hey, if you've got it, flaunt it.

I also liked seeing Hope deal with Blackstone and other older heroes again. I always liked when the books dealt with the "old guard" of events. The conflict between Hope and those supporting Breakthrough Registration is also more clearly articulated and would have given the series a better overarching plot than the sometimes meandering (however fun) nature of the series.

So, why four stars instead of five? Eh, I'm going to sound petty here but I'm not a fan of Kitsune. The Fox Spirit just rubs me the wrong way. He/she has no personal boundaries, is very manipulative, and is always lying to Hope. I just never warmed to them the way I did her other love interest (or even highly unlikely wish-ships like her and Artemis). I also feel like Kitsune keeps Artemis and Hope from their girl posse as the latter were some of my favorite duos in superhero prose. As long as we're seeing Kitsune, we aren't seeing much of Artemis and that's a shame.

Despite this, I overall enjoyed the book and hope Marion G. Harmon continues writing them for the indefinite future. I think Recursion is a good reminder of what made the original books great and giving hope an actual plot to fight (the still-looming apocalypse) is good to provide those books direction.

8.5/10

Mary Catelli says

The seventh book in the *Wearing the Cape* series. I REALLY recommend the other books first, and there will be spoilers ahead.

It opens with Astra get recertified for duty after the Whittier Base Attack. And a meeting where the new members get introduced. It's nice to actually see it rather than have it happen between books -- even though Kitsune shows up as a member, and then.

Superhero life continues with crime scenes and hostage situations until finally our good friend AI Shell confronts Astra with all the evidence that things are off. (She hasn't twigged to Kitsune, but she knows Astra is.)

And it involves Astra's efforts to cut off someone from joining the Ascendancy, a curiously placed bomb, a complex operation to get someone out of the hospital, improving here and there on the past, and more

Timothy says

Not what I was expecting with the title, 'Recursion', this series continues very strongly on the detailed world of supers and their interactions. Although it feels like a few things I'd like to have seen happen in a prelude, or detailed out before the "shocking," surprise, it is still one of the better super-heroic series out there, and all the better for its brilliant avoidance of all the problems the title suggested.

The weariness of recursive, ret-continuity stories in comics set up some pretty high demands for this book; and it managed to weave a fantastic story and create numerous surprises without knocking the dominoes over until they were all in line to create a beautiful woven image.

I recommend it, and the series highly.

Ryan says

A really fun adventure if you have read the previous books. I had trouble remember some of the names from the earlier books. I wished I had noticed the glossary/list of names at the back of the book before I finished the novel - one drawback of kindle is that it's hard to notice these sorts of things. A note at the beginning pointing it out would have been helpful. Also, there were many minor typos in the book, although they were more distracting than confusing. Still, for those who have enjoyed this series, it is a lot of fun. I was a little disappointed in the previous one (featuring both other writers and the worlds/properties of other writers), although it was very creative. This one was a return to what I've enjoyed from Harmon. I'm looking forward

to the next one.

Brendan Coffey says

A Good new addition to Wearing the Cape

So, a good new chapter to the Wearing th Cape Series. Great action, a good story, and only one thing that really stuck in my craw, which I'll address below.

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So, the thing I hate most about comics, and eventually led to me no longer reading them is Retcons. With books going back decades they're pretty much inevitable, but they're tricky as hell go do well, and inevitably some portion of the fan base gets burned out. Recursion is Harmon's take on the old trope. He handles it well; ur grytencuf gur "vg jnf nyy n qernz" raqvaf cerggl rneyl, znxvat guvf npghnyyl zber bs n Jung-Vs fgbel. V cersre fgbeurf va frg va gur znva gvzryvar, nqinapvat gur birenyy fgbel-nep. Jr tbq nygreangr gvzryvarf naq ernyvgurf va gur ynfg obbx; V'q yvyr gb fir gur fgbel zbir sbejneq. Juvyr Erphefvba qbrf guvf, vg cerggl zhpu nyy tnzrf cynpr va gur ynfg srj puncgref va na vasb-qhzc/qroevrs. Qvqa'g fir gur Irevgnf gjvfg pbzvat, gubhtu.

My second beef is purely personal, and absolutely petty. A large amount of the supporting cast here are characters created by backers of the Wearing the Cape RPG; My sour grapes are due to the fact that mine is not among them. Which is only my own fault for basing her on another continent, where she has little chance of interacting with the book series. Ah, well. Maybe next book! :)

Anyway, as I said a good new chapter. 4 stars not 5 because

G33z3r says

Another weird comic-bookish storyline that jumps in time to just after the first book (Wearing the Cape) as Astra's future self gets put in her place from 3 years earlier, where things play out quite differently. The story does double-duty: what are the antagonists from book 2 up to this time? Why is Astra in this now alternate timeline? And, is this a reset of future story's trajectory, or is this just some blip in reality?

Wordsmith says

While a lot of this book was brilliant, the author has committed a major mistake. I understand that these are his characters, and he knows them best, but; if he's going to present us with a character, then he needs to be consistent, and there is no way in hell that the Astra he has presented to us for six books would make a life choice that she made in this book.

I'm largely done with this series, simply because he isn't professional enough to understand that one basic fact.

When you have your main character act OUT of character *as you have established that character,* well, that's a serious problem for me.

Ian Miller says

After last years sadly Astra-less schedule (because of the excellent RPG kickstarter campaign), this year Astra returns with a vengeance - in more ways than one! Caught in a strange "recursion" of her past, Astra tries to avoid the tragedies she witnessed in the second and third books of the series, and finally reaches the prominence she's been destined for all along. Though Astra rejects the idea of fate, it's been clear to all her fans from the beginning that she is a born leader, and seeing her finally have that greatness thrust upon her is immensely satisfying.

Additionally, after the tragic romance that dominated the first two books, and the series of abortive crushes that sort of limped along in the last four, it's nice to see all of her romantic trials culminate in a very interesting relationship and resolution.

Lastly, the cover art, though a bit more aggressive and "sexy" than we're used to from Astra, is really nice, and this reader hopes that Kasia Slupecka has become the new "face" of Astra and Wearing the Cape. The warm but bright coloring, polish of the facial features, and strong pose really call back to Viktoria Gavrilenko, who did such excellent work for the first three books.

Johan says

Well Shit. This was a roller coaster of a ride and I am so glad for it

It really puts into the perspective of what our reality is in the wider scheme of things

Hope (Astra as well) really defines what lost means and what hope as whole also means. That we should always strive to do better and be more kind to each other but to also know the limits of said kindness and when force is required alongside your moral principles

Peace out

Brandt Anderson says

An enjoyable read, but I do not think it really pushes the story forward that much. Well, in a few ways it does but it is kinda rushed namely Astra's relationship with Kitsune. Still a little sad that Grendel was pushed aside for Kitsune. Also, the situation that Astra was in . . . I've read another superhero book, Ex-Purgatory by Peter Clines, and that book did it better. In my opinion. Not going to spoil it but lets just say that what Astra goes through in the book we only go through one part of it. In Ex-Purgatory, similar situation but we get to go through all of it.

Joshua Gluck says

So, I liked this book. It was a bit of a unique take, and the execution was fairly well done.

However, the reason this one only gets 4 stars is that it's the second book in a row that we haven't gotten any real character development for our main characters. Capes and Crossovers was almost a set of short-stories in most ways, and didn't really advance anyone's character, since we were mostly seeing Hope interact with other author's characters.

In this one, without spoiling details, we don't really get any character development (see the blurb) for most of the characters, as most of the activity happens in the 'past'. I guess my point is, anyone could have skipped the last two books and basically known exactly the same amount about all of the characters we know now (with 2-3 veritable (haha) exceptions).

Does that make this a bad book? No, but not a 5 star.
