



The Black Vortex

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The Black Vortex, an ancient artifact of immeasurable power, is now in Mr. Knife's hands! With billions of lives at stake, Star-Lord must steal it back — with the help of both the Guardians and the X-Men! But as a schism forms between the heroes, Knife's Slaughter Squad closes in! Beast and Kitty must decipher the Vortex Book as Ronan, Nova and the Brood get involved, and Spartax falls! The Vortex grants near-infinite power to Knife's forces; to counter them, the heroes will have to submit to its power themselves! Will the X-Men and Guardians lose their humanity forever?

Collecting: *Guardians of the Galaxy & X-Men: The Black Vortex: Alpha, Omega; Guardians of the Galaxy* 24-25; *Legendary Star-Lord* 9-11; *All-New X-Men* 38-39; *Guardians Team-Up* 3; *Nova* 28; *Cyclops* 12; & *Captain Marvel* 14

The Black Vortex Details

Date : Published July 14th 2015 by Marvel Comics (first published June 24th 2015)

ISBN : 9780785197706

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Format : Hardcover 312 pages

Genre : Sequential Art, Comics, Graphic Novels, Superheroes, Marvel, X Men

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From Reader Review The Black Vortex for online ebook

Aaron says

I mean, what even is this? I've been reading most of the series involved in this massive, cosmic crossover (All-New X-Men, Guardians of the Galaxy, Captain Marvel, some others I don't read), and none of them built up to this event AT ALL. It comes completely out of nowhere. Additionally, this event ended just two months before Secret Wars started, and therefore feels totally shoehorned into the Marvel timeline. Plus, at one point Beast is granted cosmic powers he DEFINITELY does not have in the other myriad of Marvel titles he appears in concurrently, so this event feels extra disconnected from the Marvel Universe.

OK, so here's the completely out of nowhere setup: a billion years ago, an advanced civilization was given a big, scary mirror called The Black Vortex that grants all who "submit" to it cosmic power. It, of course, corrupted them all and tore their civilization to shreds.

Cut to now, where J'Son of Spartax (Peter Quill AKA Star-Lord's dad) has gotten his hands on The Black Vortex and used it to power up some of his cronies. He wants to use it to power up himself and a bunch more of his cronies, but luckily he just stands around TALKING about how he wants to use it, rather than using it, so Star-Lord and Kitty Pryde show up and steal it from him.

Here begins the parade of nonsense. Every issue in this 13-part story deals with one or more of our heroes (and there are about 90 of our heroes) debating whether or not they should harness the power of something called THE BLACK VORTEX. What do you think you should do, dummies?! It's called THE BLACK VORTEX! It's not called the Gentle Embrace of Peace! Obviously it's going to corrupt you!

And yet, we get to watch these idiots (which include most of the X-Men, all of the Guardians, Nova, some Kree, Captain Marvel, God knows how many more people) constantly hem and haw about whether or not to use it. It's so dumb and, furthermore, so *boring*. How is every issue about this in a 13-part series?! There are some fights and some explosions and some cosmic insanity, but genuinely every single issue involves, at least at some point, a character debating whether or not The Black Vortex should be utilized for good.

Then, once some of them do start using it, the rules of The Black Vortex aren't even clear! It instantly corrupts some people. It doesn't corrupt others. Several characters end up "submitting" to it (which, to me, is another thing that REEKS of badness; you never "submit" to something cool and fun), with mixed results. By the end, so many people have submitted to it that, when one character offers to submit to it as some sort of sacrifice, I was like "Yeah, join the club." It's not much of a sacrifice if EVERYONE ELSE DID IT. But, I guess the story had to end somehow.

This story really makes no sense. It's repetitive, hacky, ill-defined, and unnecessary. With all of these series just a month or so from ending due to Secret Wars, I don't even understand what Marvel hoped to gain from it. It's not like it was going to draw new readers to series that were basically done anyway. And as an added bonus, since this story is told sequentially, good luck reading the little bits and pieces of it that are spread around the various collections of All-New X-Men, Captain Marvel, etc. Those issues will make absolutely no sense without the context of the full crossover event.

I don't get any of it! Ahhh!

Craig says

As crossovers go, this one wasn't all that bad...

Jesse A says

A good crossover event. Cosmic Kitty Pride may be a new favorite!

Sud666 says

Once, billions of years ago, there was a Celestial that had landed on Viscardi. It gave the people a "gift" of an object known as the Black Vortex. If you stared into this mirror and pledged to submit to the Black Vortex- then that person gets cosmic level powers.

Fast forward to our present time and a pirate named Mr. Knife is trying to sell it to the son of Thanos-Thane (Thanos has a kid? seriously?). But- enter Peter Quill who steals it. That starts this epic fracas. I want to be clear I did enjoy the fights- but the Black Vortex's ability to give anyone Cosmic powers means this story is one big game of "tag" with the Black Vortex as "it". So many of the people who come into contact with the Black Vortex choose to accept and gain their cosmic powers-who then battle others with similar cosmic powers. It becomes a run on fight.

That is not a bad thing-but it makes for a plot that isn't too hard to follow. A lot of bashing each other. But, hidden among all the fighting is a good tale. It also says a lot about the characters who do choose the Black Vortex and those who do not. It is also telling how their powers seem to magnify and their image becomes something closer to that individual's ideal self image.

The artwork was really good for most of the volume. The writing is funny and the humor (as there ought to be in a Guardians book) works well. We not only have the Guardians and the X-men, we also get to see visits from a host of other cosmic types. The fights were rather nice and some of the "shocking" plot twists-well they were rather shocking. I don't know if they plan to keep everything that happened as is..if so..Ronan deserves to be PISSED. But that's all I'm saying about that. I will not mess up this plot with spoilers.

So if you're a fan of any of the groups like Guardians or X-men-then I think you will enjoy this volume. The Guardians and the X-men work well (in terms of writing and humor). I will admit this was really just an excuse to say "Oh look X has Y powers and will fight against Z" scenarios. But, it is what it is and what it is it does well enough. Does that sound like a ringing endorsement? No it isn't. This is a 3 star rating after all. Nothing bad here..better than average, good art, decent plot and funny dialog all makes this a fun book to read. But it is nothing amazing or ground breaking. Since it has a hodgepodge of writers (collecting different issues) the writing varies in quality-shame Bendis couldn't have done the whole story.

So if you're a fan of cosmic stories (I am) and like the Guardian of the Galaxy or the X-Men then you will absolutely enjoy this book. While this isn't the end all or be all-this is a damn fun story.

Paul E. Morph says

I'm a little torn trying to rate this one.... These are my thoughts (for what they're worth):

Cons:

1. Look, kids! It's another bloated crossover event! That's right; it IS derailing a bunch of the titles you read! It IS another grasping, mercenary attempt to make you buy stuff you wouldn't ordinarily buy just so you can work out what the krutark is going on in your regular books! Excited yet? Me neither.
2. Watch in awe as your favourite heroes (plus some guys you don't give a crap about) play an intergalactic game of tag with the Maguffin Of The Month! Is it largely pointless and repetitive? YOU BETCHA!
3. Scratch your head as characters you've been reading about for years suddenly start acting almost entirely out of character! Come to the realisation that virtually all of the speech bubbles could be assigned to almost ANY character and it wouldn't make a bit of difference!

Pros:

1. Goddamnit! I'm going to have to break down, be a hypocrite, and begrudgingly admit that... I actually enjoyed the ride for the most part DESPITE its many flaws (see above)!
2. The last chapter gave me a serious case of what I believe the hip kids these days are calling 'the feels'. (view spoiler)

Sean Gibson says

Flaming bag of poo (noun): An object often left on the doorstep of a cantankerous neighbor in an effort to induce the old bastard into stepping on it in an attempt to put out the fire, resulting in a shoe covered with feces; see also The Black Vortex.

I'm an upbeat guy. As a general rule, I try to find the good in everything and everyone (well, except maybe for Donald Trump). I even give the benefit of the doubt to vegetables (well, no, that's a lie—I've tried to give them all blight, but, thus far, results have been minimally successful, sadly). But, enough is enough.

Marvel—I love you. You know that, right? If I could unspend every dollar I've spent on your products, I wouldn't need to set up 529s for my kids. But, I'd never want to do that, because comics, especially your comics = awesome.

But...

We've gotta do something about these "epic" event crossovers. Seriously. We won't get into the whole magilla, but it wasn't too long ago that you inflicted Axis on us (had some things to say about that one, too, didn't I?)—you know, the series where a bunch of good guys turned bad. Then, you give us The Black Vortex, where a few good guys do something of a heel turn as well, only this time they're cosmically powered, and you drop the poor Guardians of the Galaxy and X-Men into the midst of this tomfoolery so that

you can run this train wreck of a story across multiple team books AND solo books.

So, let me get this straight: we have a big shiny mirror that, if people “submit” to it, grants power beyond imagining, potentially corrupting the submitter and causing him/her to pursue power for selfish ends or her/his mind to break because it can’t handle the cosmic knowledge overload. And no one’s ever heard of this thing before? That’s like someone hanging out on the southern tip of Manhattan every day for 50 years and then, one day, going, “Holy sh@t--there’s a giant freaking statue holding a torch in the middle of the water!”

Enough. Enough with the contrived ways to make good characters do bad or out-of-character things. Enough with the twisting of reality. Enough with the need to suck every character from every book into every wacky story. Enough with the faux moralizing as we spend pages and pages watching talking heads debate the rightness or wrongness of embracing the Vortex’s power in an hour of need, which was not unlike watching a debate on immigration reform, where everyone either sounds holier-than-thou or like an idiot. Enough with insisting that vegetables are good for you, for crying out in the night! (Editor’s note: the veggie thing isn’t really the fault of those responsible for perpetrating The Black Vortex on the world...sometimes the author just gets carried away.)

I will note that there were at least a couple of meritorious points in the story, which notched it a 2-star review instead of a 1-star lambasting: reuniting Cyclops with his young X-Men counterparts was fun, much of the art was solid, and there was a lot of Kitty Pryde, and Kitty Pryde is a badass (it is known).

There’s even some major revelatory news at the conclusion of the series involving Kitty and Starlord, news that will have a major effect on stories as we—wait, what’s that? This thing ends right as Secret Wars begins? So, you’re saying that all of the supposedly massive ramifications of events in this series—the cosmic powers retained by various characters, Kitty/Pete’s major news, Groot’s new look, etc.—are now null, void, and meaningless because every single aspect of Marvel continuity seems to be about to be rebooted?

Huh. Well, that was time well spent reading, then.

Guess I’ll go back to doing equally important and entertaining things, like using pliers to pry off my toenails, imbibing muskrat urine, and watching U.S. presidential primary debates (because there’s nothing more important than hearing what the 8th-most likely person to get the nomination for a given political party has to say about gun control).

You get the feeling that I’m just going to love Secret Wars, don’t you? I’ll look forward to reviewing it as I shoo small neighbor children off my lawn.

Sonic says

What five-year-old wrote this? Oh, it was Sam Humphries. (Ha ha ha ha)

Took a weak-ass premise,
some interesting characters,
(some fairly cool art near the beginning)

and just flushed it down the crapper!

Chad says

Decent all over art, not much story. Just a bunch of flying around the universe and punching stuff for the most part.

Lynda says

Less said about this one the better.

Relstuart says

A crossover/cosmic event starring the Guardians of the Galaxy, Captain Marvel, kid Nova, and the X-Men. Mainly the time traveled crew with a few of the old guard (Hank, Storm, X-23, and Magic mainly). There are huge things that happen in this story (no spoilers) one with the Kree and Ronan. I think there would be a lot more exposition and exploration of these events if the universe wasn't coming to an end in Secret Wars. It's still a bit surprising what all happens. Interesting premise and decent story telling.

Terence says

Twelve billion years ago a celestial provided a civilization with the Black Vortex.

By submitting to it's power the user is granted cosmic power. The Black Vortex has been found by Mr. Knife aka J'Son of Spartax who intends to use it for his profit and the universe's sorrow.

So of course Peter Quill along with his girlfriend Kitty Pryde steal the vortex and they are now hunted by Peter's father, his minions, and Thane son of Thanos.

I have to admit Black Vortex surprised me. I've grown leery of massive crossover events because they are generally all flash and no substance, but I can't honestly say that about this one. Submitting to the magic mirror can provide any individual with the same power that Galactus bestows upon his heralds with no obvious consequences like eternal servitude. That kind of power is a challenging thing to pass up and many of the heroes submit to it.

The Black Vortex is absolutely a crossover that feels not just appropriate, but well thought out. I really enjoyed it and I'm excited to read about the consequences of this event.

Megu says

Actually 2.5 stars. Was this arc really necessary? Like...really? Was what the purpose here apart from the lovely-dovely Shadowcat x StarLord scene at the end? Come on Marvel, pull yourself together!

Sesana says

This is a pretty big crossover. It covers half a dozen ongoing series, plus a few one-shots. And it plays out in a single, cohesive story. You really do need to read all the issues involved in the correct order to get the most out of this story. Or even anything at all. I had tried to read the two All-New X-Men issues in that trade, and I got nothing out of it. Much better to skip those issues in their individual trade and just read the full thing here.

But do you really want to? Eh... As a story, it isn't bad, but it isn't great, either. You won't really be missing much if you skip it, except that there are some changes made to characters and the universe as a whole that, if they stick around after Secret Wars, are kind of big deals. I think the biggest failing of the story is that it actually felt kind of repetitive. The arguments about whether or not the heroes should use the power of the Black Vortex go around in circles. It's a bad idea, until it's not, and then it's a bad idea again. Or something.

There is some really good art in here. The All New X-Men issues, in particular, are incredibly stunning. The one-shot issues are by far the weakest, both in writing and in art, but even they aren't terrible. I know it isn't a ringing endorsement for the story, but you really could do worse.

Gianfranco Mancini says

Not best Marvel crossover ever at all.

And the winner of Prometheus-prize-for-stupid-scientists-touching-alien-things goooeeessss tooo... Beast.

Anne says

As far as crossovers and *events* go, this particular volume went down pretty easily for me.

I'm not always a huge fan of these things anymore, mainly because the collected volumes don't seem to have the complete story, and then you end up with this nagging feeling that you need to go search out random issues (from other titles) to fill in the blanks.

Surprisingly, I didn't feel that way *at all* when I closed this book.

slow clap for Marvel

The basic (and I mean *very basic*) story is that there's this cosmic mirror (<--Black Vortex) floating around with the power to change whoever will let it into super-beings. Now, if you already happen to be a superpower? You get extra amped up!

The story centers around boyfriend/girlfriend duo, Kitty and Peter, whose relationship hits a rocky point due to their differing beliefs in how to deal with this thing.

Is it a tool that can be used to save the universe, or is this something that's just simply too powerful to mess around with?

According to one alien named Gara, it's the latter...

Ok, so the best part of this one (to me) is the sheer amount of issues collected here. Like I mentioned before, it doesn't feel like you need to search for missing stuff to understand what's happening in this story. There are characters like Nova & (baby All-New) Cyclops that show up, and you *don't* have to hunt down their titles to find out how they play into the overall story.

It's all right here! What a genius idea!

Plus...I'm a sucker for a good love story.

Daaaaaaw!

Overall, I quite enjoyed reading this. I thought it was a pretty fun event, and would definitely recommend this particular volume to someone who likes cosmic Marvel!
