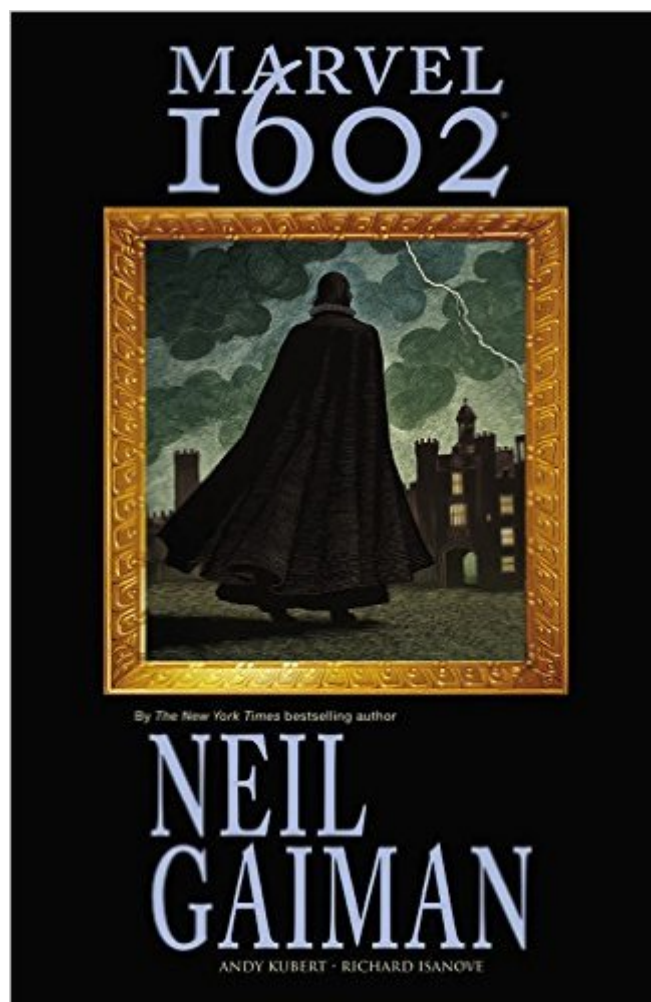


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Marvel 1602



Synopsis

Spider-Man, the X-Men, Nick Fury, Dr. Strange, Daredevil, Dr. Doom, Black Widow, Captain America and more appear in the waning days of Queen Elizabeth. As the world begins to change and enter into a new age, the question remains - how and why are these Marvel stars appearing nearly 400 years before they're suppose to?

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (260 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

First, let me say that Neil Gaiman is easily one of the best writers working today in any prose-based medium. His novels are incredible, his screenplays similar, and his comics are outstanding. There is no current writer today who straddles the fence between reality and fantasy better than Neil Gaiman. And the fact that he works in so many different mediums adds to his "remarkable-ness." That caveat aside, let's talk about his Marvel miniseries, 1602. Gaiman does a wonderful job of translating the heroes of the Marvel Universe to an historic setting. And he makes the necessary adjustments: Matt Murdock doesn't become a blind barrister, but rather a blind minstrel/guide, which allows Daredevil the freedom of movement a hero needs in Gaiman's reimagined 1602. Similar adjustments are made for a wide range of Marvel characters. The story is affecting, and wonderfully rendered in muted tones by the art team, and Gaiman deserves credit for finding room for a lot of the Marvel Universe, and also for not trying to shoehorn every modern hero into the framework of the story. The story is intellectual and exciting (conspiracy stuff), and the artwork is among the best I've seen in a graphic novel. The reason for subtracting a star? Simply

because, although Gaiman structured his story and introduced his characters so a first-timer can enjoy the story, it's best appreciated through the prism that only a Marvel Universe reader has handy. But more than worth your time, regardless.

As stated in other reviews I've posted on , I am a big fan of Marvel's WHAT IF concept, as well as other alternate reality stories, provided that events are presented in a logical fashion. More often than not, however, they aren't, leaving the reader to deal with too many assumptions and unanswered questions. When 1602 was first announced by Marvel, I was under the impression that Neil Gaiman was simply going to take the easy way out: "re-imagining" the heroes and villains of the Silver Age Marvel Universe as existing in England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. After reading the recently-released hardcover collection, however, I can say that this is definitely not a re-imagining, nor even a "what if" story, but more of a very original mystery with an excellent twist that makes sense. Surprisingly, 1602 can comfortably exist within normal Marvel continuity. As a result, I enjoyed it immensely. In order to not spoil the plot, I'll be as basic as possible: the Marvel Universe has arisen 360 years early, triggering the possible destruction of the universe. Of course, it's up to the heroes, and a few villains, to try to set things right. You'll see many familiar faces here, especially if you're moderately familiar with Marvel's Silver Age characters. Even if not, it's not too difficult to determine who is who. Gaiman writes a very tight story that moves quickly, and Adam Kubert's art is exceptional, especially when paired with the skilled coloring of Richard Isanove. Scott McKown provides beautiful woodcut covers for the series and the collection. All contributors to this story complement each other quite well, making 1602 an essential part of any comic library.

When I read this it felt like Marvel had a tryst with a History Book and they had a little kid, and this kid was the perfect blend of "what was" and "what could have been if superpowers were around." Here we have the universe set 400 years in the past, with all sorts of people getting play. X-Men, Spider Man, Daredevil and The Fantastic Four are the ones who get the billing, but Nick Fury, Quicksilver, Dr. Strange and a lot of others come along for the ride. What a trip Neil Gaiman puts you on. I had watched Elizabeth not too long before, and parts of it felt like Gaiman's take on the who timeframe. He had countries taking advantage of the powers they had and he had players taking the place of whatever persona you could imagine. Could you see a person borne with wings during the inquisition? Could you imagine the value of a man that can run faster than anything on Earth? Again and again the powers were wrapped into interesting areas, and then placed - carefully - into a superb storyline. It was beautiful. The art was also something that deserves a lot of acclaim. you

have so much told in the period of the dress and the form, and you have people who need to either blend into the shadows or work like rulers and this shows. From the heroes to the people and the settings themselves, this is done grand. I think a 5/5 is fair here. If you find a hero you want here or just a story, get it. I cannot believe I ever doubted or delayed.

...the book jacket and the other reviews tell you everything you need to know before going into this book. Too much, actually. The less you know, the better on this one. Just buy it. Instead of rehashing the plot and pointlessly singing Gaiman's well deserved praises, I'm going to defend him on another front: A lot of people have bashed this book for not being *The Sandman* or one of Neil's even more lofty projects, and for daring to feature conventional superheroes, if in a rather unconventional manner. Folks, get over it. Gaiman clearly **LIKES** superheroes (his occasional use of them in *The Sandman* and his glowing account of his youth with Marvel's characters in the afterword of this book makes that clear). He likes writing about them and is very good at it. He also likes writing drama, horror, fantasy, science fiction and dabbling into other realms of storytelling that are too hard to pigeonhole, and he's very good at all of it. Don't pillory the man because he wants to work in more than one genre, and because he occasionally condescends to dabble in a genre that most of the rest of the world has written off as juvenile crap. Gaiman has proven that almost any premise--even a premise involving grown men running around in longjohns saving the world--can produce good, moving, thought provoking tales if handled the right way. Lighten up, order this book, and enjoy it for what it is--a damn fine story, superheroes or no.

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