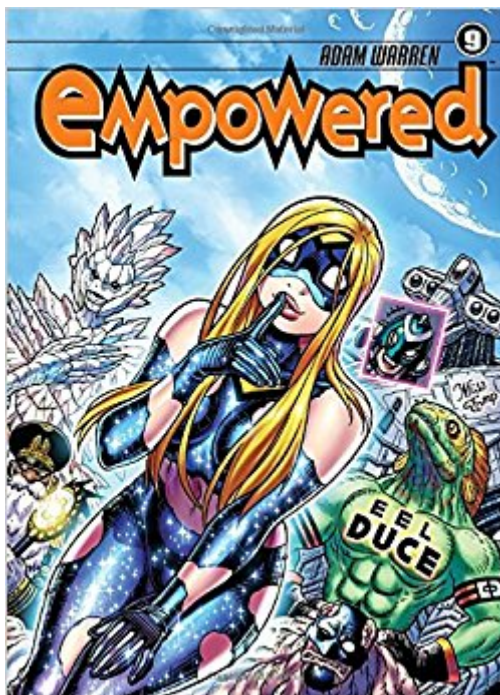


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Empowered Volume 9



Synopsis

Already under official suspicion and suspended from her superteam, costumed crimefighter Empowered finds herself the bewildered target of every major supervillain in the capes-and-tights field for her supposed access to alien technology. With a trick or two up her tattered supersuit's sleeve, can our tirelessly plucky but sadly underestimated heroine outwit her army of tormentors--and escape the long-simmering revenge of the sinister Fleshmaster?"This is a fantastically rendered book on every conceivable level, and much like Empowered herself, has to work even harder to get the respect it deserves. Luckily they're both way more powerful than most people ever expected them to be." --comicbookresources.com

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Adam Warren was one of the first writer/ artists in American comics to strongly integrate the artistic and storytelling techniques of manga into his own work, debuting in 1988 with an original, English-language comic based on the Japanese SF characters The Dirty Pair. Later, he worked on a wide array of comics projects including Gen13 and Titans: Scissors, Paper, Stone for DC Comics, Iron Man: Hypervelocity and Livewires for Marvel Comics, and even a miniseries inspired by the "old-school" anime Bubblegum Crisis--plus occasional dabbling in magazine, videogame, and RPG illustration work. Presently, he writes and draws the creator-owned comic series Empowered, a "sexy superhero comedy"--except when it isn't--about the trials, tribulations, and body-image issues

of a struggling young "C-List" superheroine.

To say that vol. 9 is a step down from 7 and 8 might sound harsh, but it is only because vols 7 and 8 reached such heights of emotional content and characterization that so few books ever even come close to managing. Volume 9, while having many excellent points in its favor, simply fails to have the same deep emotional impact and mood whiplash, though not for lack of trying in places. The artwork is still lavish and beautiful. Warren is a master of his visual craft. Story-wise, the book also manages to continue tie up a few loose ends. We learn the fate of the Lil'est Supervillain, Manny, and Fleshmaster. Sadly, all of Fleshmaster's characterization and story occurred in vol 4, so his appearance in here, despite dominating much of the climax, is more boring and one-note than many of the villains who only get a few panels of page-time. It feels as if Warren simply didn't know where to go with the characters, and chose to end things as quickly and loudly as possible. One highlight in the story, and it is a significant one, is the growth of Emp both as a superhero and as a character. She is now clowning villains so at such a rate that she makes it look easy, and she is no longer content to let these victories be private ones, which ends up being the true climax of the book. One slight low point for me was the appearance of several political and societal strawmen. Warren is at his best when he uses the humanity and nuance of his characters to explore issues in depth. The stomach-turning, cynical look at the entertainment industry through Ghost Writer, and how women are so often given the choice of making money off their own objectification, or keeping some shred of personal dignity and being objectified anyway, is a very good example (even if his presence is so sickening and unsavory that it could almost count as a low point). In a few places however, nuance is glossed over by cartoonish caricatures of political views instead of actual characters. The exception might be the sad farewell we get for one, but it seems more like the entire sequence was more Warren explaining why this character never had a future to really have the tragic impact that caused other deaths to well and truly hurt. One of the things that made vol 7 and 8 so impressive were how human and alive the cast could be, but here it seems a lot of them were for lack of a better term, flat and two-dimensional by comparison.

While Empowered is a fantastic series overall, I feel that the last few volumes have begun to suffer from pacing issues. In fairness, the series is very continuity heavy, and Warren can't devote all his time to working on the series and getting the next volume out. But it's easy to feel like some plot threads are getting neglected. I preferred the series when the books were made up of several shorter stories, instead of being almost entirely focused on one story the way the last few have

been. It allowed Warren to better juggle the various plotlines and characters. It's not that I'm expecting a huge revelation about every subplot each volume, but it would be nice if most of them had at least a little advancement. Speaking as someone who doesn't care about about bondage, the bondage sections sometimes do drag on for too long. And while Emp's insecurities are a key part of the series, sometimes it feels like Warren's just repeating things we already know, instead of truly expanding on the characters. As for the volume itself, Emp finally being forced to answer for the various scandals she's been involved in was great. The Suprahuman culture is one of my favorite things about the series, and I always love watching Emp try to navigate her way through the various politics and secrets of her Superhomeys. But most of the book focuses on Emp having to dodge various villains who want to take advantage of her suit's ability to access an alien stockpile of superweapons. While it's usually fun to see the kind of quirky bad guys and good guys Warren comes up with, most of the book is completely devoid of the usual supporting cast. One shot characters might funny, but they aren't what make a story interesting. The book finally resolves the long simmering plot of Manny and Emp's teammate-turned-traitor dWARF/Fleshmaster. Unfortunately, for a story that was put on the backburner for so long, it ends up feeling anticlimactic. Empowered. A series that's funny, touching and action packed. But man, at one volume a year, it takes its time to get anywhere.

Oliver's "Very Good, But a Step Down" review pretty much took the words out of my mouth and I completely agree with everything he says in his review... having said that I can't help but give volume 9 five stars since I love the series so much and have read volumes 1 through eight and enjoyed each one thoroughly :) ... (with all due respect to Oliver of course! .. that is, not disagreeing with his 4 star rating at all in that each of us is more than entitled to rate a product however many stars we want to that goes without saying!) Yes, volume 9 definitely doesn't have the same emotional impact as previous volumes as Oliver (in my opinion anyways :)) correctly pointed out.... and one might even find oneself becoming slightly irritated with exactly how Emp overpowers the bad guys in this volume in terms of the solution being too "convenient" for lack of a better phrase... on the other hand the method by which she wins is not only tongue in cheek, it very much fits with the humorous, over-the-top-parody-of-existing-superhero-comics atmosphere Adam Warren has established in previous volumes... I'd still consider this to be a worthwhile addition to your Empowered collection though I would definitely NOT recommend it as the first book in Empowered you should start out with - definitely purchase volume one first (which you can probably get pretty cheap used as this point to "dip your toe in the pool" so to speak and see if Empowered is for you).

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