



## Essential Ghost Rider, Vol. 1

*Roy Thomas , Jim Mooney , Gary Friedrich (Text) , Gerry Conway (Text) , Mike Ploog (Illustrations) , Thomas Sutton (Illustrations) , Herb Trimpe (Illustrations) , John Byrne (Illustrations)*

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When orphaned stunt-show star Johnny Blaze discovers his adoptive father Crash Simpson is dying of a rare blood disease, he barter his immortal soul for a miracle cure. The trade-off ultimately leaves him bound to the demon Zarathos, and their melding of spirits would manifest itself every night in the form of Ghost Rider, the most supernatural super-hero of all Collects Marvel Spotlight #5-12, Ghost Rider #1-20 and Daredevil #138.

## Essential Ghost Rider, Vol. 1 Details

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Roy Thomas , Jim Mooney , Gary Friedrich (Text) , Gerry Conway (Text) , Mike Ploog (Illustrations) , Thomas Sutton (Illustrations) , Herb Trimpe (Illustrations) , John Byrne (Illustrations)

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# **From Reader Review Essential Ghost Rider, Vol. 1 for online ebook**

## **Fizzgig76 says**

Reprints Marvel Spotlight #5-12, Ghost Rider #1-20, and Daredevil #138. Johnny Blaze sells his soul to Satan to save his step-father but becomes Ghost Rider when the transaction is left incomplete. Ghost Rider is typical 1970s Marvel Comics. It isn't bad, it isn't good. It is bloated and pretty self-righteous at points (Jesus actually shows up to show Johnny the errors of his ways...maybe). Marvel had an interesting idea for a character that built off the gimmicks of Evel Knievel but beyond having a possessed motorcyclist, they didn't seem to have much of an idea of what to do.

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## **Tvrtko Bali? says**

Great concept that is poorly executed. But it's nice to read these old comics, I enjoyed them very much.

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## **M.P. Johnson says**

### **Ghost Rider And His Old Buddy Jesus Christ**

These early Ghost Rider comics are a mixed bag. His powers are still being defined, as are his relationships with supporting characters. But some of this stuff gets really out there and fun, like when Ghost Rider is befriended by an unnamed character who is clearly Jesus Christ. Talk about an odd pair.

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## **Christophe Murdock says**

I love Ghost Rider, and all the old Marvel Horror comics from the 70's! A few issues of this have one of my favorite artists as well, Mike Ploog. The great thing about essentials is that it cheaply combines a lot of comics, so you can get the whole story. The down side is they are all reprinted in black and white, not the color I remember them in. This volume collects Marvel Spotlight #5-12, Ghost Rider #1-20 & Daredevil #138. For continuity purposes this is pretty much the whole deal except for a couple side stories from Marvel Team-Up and The Champions.

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## **Philip says**

The 70s were a different time. When else could you find a new superhero who got his powers by selling his soul to the devil? And have that story approved by the Comics Code Authority, no less?

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## **Todd says**

I was underwhelmed. The writing is really uneven. The art also leaves some to be desired but that could be because there isn't color, always a risk with these Essential titles.

It started to pick up at the end. So I might pick up the next volume in a bit but I'm definitely taking a break first.

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## **Todd Glaeser says**

When he was created and drawn by Mike Ploog, the Ghost Rider was atmospheric, spooky. When he was drawn by everyone else in this collection that flaming skull just looks dumb. Given the number of writers in this book (Six) and the way the artists struggled with the concept, with the exception of Frank Robbins and John Byrne, it is amazing that the character lasted like he did.

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## **Professor says**

*Ghost Rider* was one of those comics that was on its way out when I was just getting old enough to notice comics. My older brother collected them, and the look of the character fascinated me. They sort-of revived the character with a typical late 80s/early 90s "extreme" version, with a "cooler" looking cycle and powers, etc., but I never really had any interest. This Essential TPB puts together the character's initial appearances in *Marvel Spotlight* along with his own series, and it is a very interesting book-starts off as being one of the many early 1970s monster books, complete with regular appearances by Satan and another one of these monster characters, the Son of Satan, before beginning to integrate Ghost Rider into the larger Marvel universe. The book is a fun, quick read, but it is not a classic series, by any means, with mixed art, somewhat repetitive story lines, and some dull parts to the run, though seeing the writers trying to fit in as many rip-offs of popular horror films (we get *Jaws* and *The Exorcist* in rapid succession at one point) and early 70s fascination with the supernatural into the Marvel setting is very amusing at times. My love of second string loser characters has me eating up The Stuntmaster, and making me want to dig up his *Daredevil* appearances.

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## **Mike says**

The very first issue of Ghost Rider is bizarretastic. Love it. "I accidentally killed my adopted mom and my adopted dad is very sick. I guess i'll just have to start worshipping Satan!"

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## **Timothy Boyd says**

Very nice 1970s Horror/supernatural comic. Great main character. Recommended

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## **J.M. Hushour says**

There's no denying that Ghost Rider is one of the best superheroes of all time. C'mon, people. He's a motorcycle stuntman who at night and in the presence of evil turns into a flaming-skulled vigilante with all the powers of Hell at his command who has panels like this:

It doesn't really get much better than this. Ghost Rider emerged in the early 70s in one of those curious times when hippies were on the way out and disco had yet to rear its ugly head. Marvel, in an attempt to appeal to the youth of the time decided to create a new supernatural superhero steeped in Satanism and satanic rituals, but who was a good guy. You'd be surprised at the occult undertones. Nearly every issue features some sort of scantily clad sorority girl Satanist or hideous demonic force fuckin' wit the GR. The sexual and satanic themes really stand out, but I guess that's hardly surprising given the companion comic, "Son of Satan", that Marvel was publishing around the same time.

Johnny Blaze's character develops bumpily (half the time he's portrayed as a kind of Dante-esque redneck) but it always stays interesting. Being GR is a curse until he figures out he can actually be a superhero. Everyone thinks his GR transformation is shtick for the stunt-show and they kind of laugh him off a lot. A lot of the action takes place in out-of-the-way places for comics at the time, maybe even now. Much of the first several story-arcs takes place in the Arizona desert and Las Vegas, where he battles a scantily-clad Native American satanic college student under Satan's sway.

GR even teams up with The Thing, Hercules, and Spider-Man. Daredevil, too, which is where the volume ends.

His rogue's gallery is typical 70s shlock and awesome: Satan (of course), Snakedance, The Orb (a giant eyeball), Trapster, a great white shark, and Inferno, among others.

A priceless collection, even if it's not in color.

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## **Zack! Empire says**

I hadn't read any Ghost Rider before I picked up this collection but he always seemed like an interesting character. I like supernatural stories and I like superheroes, so this seems like a natural fit. I'm sorry to say this wasn't the case for this book, as I found it to be rather boring and uninteresting. There just wasn't anything in particular that grabbed my attention, and many of the early stories seem to be telling the same story over and over again. I really try my best not to skip parts when I'm reading a book but I must admit that I did skip around in this book quite a bit.

My biggest problem with the book is the writing. It just isn't very good. The narration reads horribly. It feels to me like someone was trying to imitate Chris Claremont, but they did a very poor job. There is no spark to the words; it's just this empty black hole that takes shape in the form of words.

Many of the things in the book I didn't care for either. Johnny Blaze is a famous stunt person and many people know who he is. When nightfall comes and he turns into Ghost Rider he is still wearing his stuntman uniform so everyone knows that Ghost Rider is really him. Everyone thinks that's part of the act of course, but then Johnny starts throwing fireballs around and no one thinks that strange? If that was to happen now

everyone would catch it on film with their phone and it would be all over the internet. There was no internet, or cell phones, when this story was written, but come on! People have always been desperate to end up on TV and would tell that story to a news crew in a second! There are times though when Johnny is worried about using his flame powers because he doesn't want people to know he made a deal with the devil. Forgetting the obvious fact that people wouldn't immediately jump to the idea that having flame powers means you're in bed with the devil (Everyone knows about the Human Torch and nobody's ever accused him of being a Satanist) why would that even matter when a bunch of people have seen you use it in the previous issue? It just jumps around like that through the whole book and after a while you're not really sure what is going on at all.

The one saving grace for this book is the artist Frank Robbins, who I had not heard about until I saw his work in this collection. This guy's stuff is amazing! I've seen stories where they talk about how Marvel was trying to make everyone draw like Jack Kirby, and this guy must have really taken that to heart. It's just powerful figures and bold lines: Really cool and really interesting. The only reason I would consider getting another Essential Ghost Rider would be if this guy's art was in it, but I would just look at the pictures and not read a single word.

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### **Christopher Ryan says**

One of the weirder titles from my childhood but great morality throughout. Fun read.

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### **Jdetrick says**

It's amazing, from these comics, to consider how popular Ghost Rider became, because these comics are not great. The art is horribly uneven, although the writing does improve once Tony Isabella comes on board.

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### **Malum says**

Ghost Rider is so cool, isn't he? Criminals fear him as he lashes them with his chains or stares into their very souls.

Well, unfortunately you will find none of that here. Instead, we get to read 500 pages of Ghost Rider being a total doofus.

So Johnny Blaze's adopted father gets a terminal illness. How does Johnny help him? Why, a Satanic ritual of course! That's no so unusual in the world of Ghost Rider, however, because apparently almost everyone is a Satanist. Go figure.

So Satan curses Blaze to spend the nights as Ghost Rider and the days in hell. Before he can finish the curse, however, Blaze's girlfriend Rocky interrupts the curse, so only half took effect. Also, Rocky is totally pure and can protect Ghost Rider from Satan (even though she whines, complains, calls Johnny a coward, and breaks up with him every five seconds for the smallest reasons. Yeah, she's a real angel...).

So anyway, badass flaming skull headed Ghost Rider spends the first few issues running away from any and

all threats (which comprise mainly gang members). Every time he runs away from people he also constantly finds himself either at a dead-end or having to jump over a chasm.

Also, his powers consist of being able to shoot fire out of his finger and being a really good motorcyclist. That's it. His skull head doesn't scare anyone because everyone thinks he is wearing a dumb costume. He also takes a taxi and drives around in a pickup truck on occasion.

Besides all of that silliness, this book might have the single most ridiculous panel I have seen in comics in a long time. It is the middle of the night and Ghost Rider lays down behind some small rocks to hide from some police that are chasing him. Think about it: It is pitch black and he has a flaming skull head and they can't see him? Sheesh.

Also be prepared to have Ghost Rider's powers and story retconned and modified from issue to issue. He can't create a flaming motorcycle. Then he can (and it can stall out for some reason. Great power, huh?). Then he can't again. Then he can again.

Satan wants to kill him and Rocky. Then he saves him and Rocky for some reason. Then he wants to kill them again.

He uses his flame powers constantly but then, suddenly (and only one time) he doesn't want to because witnesses might find out he is a supernatural being (the only witnesses being a biker gang in the middle of the desert that is about to spit roast his girlfriend).

Then he meets Jesus. But then maybe it wasn't Jesus.

He turns into Ghost Rider at night. suddenly that's thrown out the window and he only turns when he is in danger for some reason.

Also, around issue 20 he gets a really thick southern twang that he didn't have before.

Reading Marvel comics from the 70's makes me wonder if Marvel Comics was just a couple of guys making up stories in their garage. There is no consistency and no quality control.

In conclusion, I would recommend these early stories for Ghost Rider completionists only.

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