



The Dark

Mike Raicht (Story by) , Brian Smith (Story by) , Charles Paul Wilson III (Illustrated by) , Jon Conkling (Design & Color by) , Michael DeVito (Design & Color by)

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The year is 1944. As Allied forces fight the enemy on Europe's war-torn beaches, another battle begins in a child's bedroom in Brooklyn. When the nightmarish Boogeyman snatches a boy and takes him to the realm of the Dark, the child's playthings, led by the toy soldier known as the Colonel, band together to stage a daring rescue. On their perilous mission they will confront the boy's bitter and forgotten toys, as well as betrayal in their own ranks. Can they save the boy from the forces of evil, or will they all perish in the process? *The Stuff of Legend* is a haunting and ultimately redemptive tale of loyalty, camaraderie, and perseverance

This edition includes a brand-new story featuring the Colonel's war journal, maps, sketches, and other original material!

The Dark Details

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From Reader Review The Dark for online ebook

Kirsten says

When a young boy is dragged into his closet by the Bogeyman, it's up to his faithful toys and his dog, Scout, to venture into the closet after him. There they find themselves in The Dark, and are surprised to discover that there, they are real. Percy the piggybank is a real pig and no longer needs to worry about breaking. Maxwell the teddy bear is a real, ferocious bear. And all of the others (with the exception of Scout, who's still a normal puppy) have new bodies and new abilities.

The artwork is GORGEOUS! I haven't seen anything this beautiful in a long time. The storytelling is occasionally a wee bit heavy-handed, but for the most part the writing is good, and I am really enjoying the story and can't wait to find out what happens next.

It's worth noting that while this appears to be a children's story, it's actually quite realistically violent. I probably wouldn't recommend it for a kid younger than 12, and parents who are considering it for their child should probably read it first.

Todd says

I read about this book awhile ago and was immediately intrigued by the premise of toys not merely coming to life, but engaging in a battle among themselves. While this is a major oversimplification of the events of volume one of this graphic novel, it's a reasonably close summary. The storyline is somewhat complex, and even as one volume of a series goes, there's little satisfaction in the conclusion. So why five stars? The art is absolutely astoundingly beautiful, and comes close to Shaun Tan's landmark book "The Arrival". The use of sepia tone is ideal to tell this story, and fits not only the 1940s era in which it takes place, but the nostalgia of toys and playthings from youth. The toys' transformation from their static beings while in the bedroom, to their animated, amazingly evocative expressions when within "The Dark", in the closet is incredible. There are moments of poignancy, tragic elements, and some of the most heartbreaking explorations of the end of childhood, and the battle between loyalty to friends and self-preservation. I truly cannot wait to read the next volume, and pore over the illustrations.

Jamie says

It starts as such a gentle story but don't let that fool you. Or young boy "lead" is soon scarily kidnapped by the boogeyman, and they toys team up to save him.

I CANNOT STOP THINKING ABOUT THE PIG! Or the bear for that matter. Or puppy discrimination. So much more here than might first meet the eye.

Kate says

This is a graphic novel that depicts the story of a little boy who gets taken in the middle of the night by the bogeyman who lives in his closet. His toys all band together to try to save him.

The storyline didn't really grip me, but the drawings were well done

Rebecca says

This is one I picked up off the shelf with no prior familiarity at all, solely because it looked like a solid creepy read, definitely delivered. It's a bit of a mix somewhere between Toy Story and Sandman. Lovecraftian, black tentacles reach out of the closet at night, dragging away The Boy. The toys all rally and form a party to enter into The Dark, in order to find and rescue The Boy. Upon entering The Dark, the toys are no longer toys, the teddy bear for example is now a grim grizzly towering over everything with horrifying jaws, the tentacles turn out to be The Boogeyman who is very similarly depicted to Sandman once in his human form in The Dark.

This is quite a grim one, some toys don't make it through, and at the close of the first volume things are not looking terribly hopeful.

Dan says

One word: "amazing." This is quite possibly the best graphic novel I've read all year. Mike Raicht and Brian Smith spin a fantastic story that's equal parts Toy Story and Through the Looking Glass. Charles Paul Wilson III's illustrations are simply beautiful. Reading this recalls the giddiness of my youth when I found myself in possession of a new stack of comics or a new book. Excellent, excellent stuff.

JoeB says

I really found this book interesting, it is about a kid who is taken by the darkness and how his toys go on a voyage to find him, it tells of battles, betrayals, and beasts. I would highly recommend this book if you appreciate a good graphic novel. As a highly ambitious reader I loved this book as a challenge as this is one of my first graphic novels. The drawings in this book are fabulous and really convey the story from a different kind of view. Again I highly recommend this book.

Jessica says

Appeal Characteristics: Visual Art, Historical, Blurred Genres, Adventure

WHAT AN ENDEARING STORY! The art is fantastic! A boy gets kidnapped by the Boogeyman and his loyal toys go on an adventure to save him. Join the brave Colonel, Max the Bear, Percy the pig, Jester, the Dog, and others. Do not think this is some childish fluffy story. It's gritty, dark, and has so many gothic elements to it. This story will bring tears to your eyes as these toys take on the biggest baddest nightmarish fiend illustrated. The themes that portrayed in this book are almost like an adult-like toy story. It parallels with history with World War I. I'm definitely hooked, rooting for the toys, and am on the edge of my seat with anticipation for their journey.

Cindy says

I loved this book! The Stuff of Legend: Book 1 The Dark is a Graphic Novel, it stands at 112 pages. It was released by Del Rey on April 27, 2010.

Analysis: When I first heard about the idea of toys fighting amongst themselves to free their owner from the claws of the Boogeyman, I immediately knew this was a book that I needed to look into. In a heart warming, sometimes scary at times way, The Stuff of Legend: The Dark is a wonderful novel with some amazing illustrations.

As this is a first novel the storyline and characters are all introduced to readers. There are various characters that really stick with readers and others that have yet to truly shine but this is definitely a great start to all of the characters. Another area that is really developed is that of the land and world of The Dark. The combination of the description/storyline and the beautifully drawn pictures the world really is mapped out for the reader.

Although I don't want to compare it to Toy Story, it really is a bit of a wicked toy story feel to it. Imagine Toy Story for adults. This novel has an innocence to it, but at the same time has a few scary parts, and the characters are all facing tough decisions regarding loyalty to each other and their owner, and what they should do when it comes to fighting other toys.

Those readers that like a full resolution to plots won't find it in this novel. This is very much a first installment and the story is definitely deeper than what is presented. While this makes the next installment a must read, if it isn't expected it could leave readers a bit disappointed. However, when all these graphic novels can be read back to back it will be a real treat.

The strongest aspect of The Stuff of Legend is truly the illustrations that are present. While some graphic novels choose to go with the vibrant colors, this one goes with sepia and brownish tones. This choice of colors fits with the setting and the whole novel. The time period of the novel is 1940s, and the representation of the toys coming to battle in the Dark really stands out with this color choice. Beyond the color choice is the details of the illustrations, every time I read this novel I found something else outstanding about the illustrations.

While the illustrations are amazing, don't think that it will overshadow the story because it doesn't. The story and writing is just as lovely and will really pull at the strings of readers hearts while they start on this journey.

In the end, I loved this graphic novel. I cannot wait to get my hands on the next installment to see what will happen. It's a wonderful start of what looks like a great series. The Stuff of Legend: The Dark is truly a story that is heartwarming with a powerful message. It's sure to be one of my favorite novels/graphic novels of 2010!

Nick Kives says

3 1/2

This is a first part of a three part story, so maybe as a whole it will feel like something more complete, but this was still good none the less.

A boy is kidnapped by the boogeyman and taken into "The Dark", a world through your closet where toys are alive. After witnessing the boy being kidnapped, a few of this toys decide to go after him, and in entering the world they become real, like the stuffed teddy bear is now a real bear etc. My only problem is they don't go into enough detail, for me at least, about things. Like a whole part that could be interesting are skipped, and when they come across a board game turned into a city but not much else than that you get a sky view of the city.

David Edmonds says

What a fantastic find this was! Sarah, Brad and I were out having our usual Friday night, and we stopped at one of our local bookstores, and there, sitting on the shelf in the graphic novel section, was The Stuff of Legend, and one look at the cover told me this was something I needed to take home, and I'm not sorry at all that I bought it.

The writers waste no time in getting into the story, as the boy (who I think remained nameless throughout the book) is kidnapped by the Boogeyman within the first 4 pages of the story. Eight of his toys decide to rescue him, as they feel this is their duty to him. The boy's dog, Scout, accompanies them into the Dark, where the toys undergo an amazing transformation, becoming the real, 'living' counterparts to their toy selves (for instance, the boy's teddy bear Max because a fierce grizzly bear). The toys are victorious against the Boogeyman's army in their first battle, but suffer a grave loss afterward in the form of a possible traitor in their midst.

The story does move along a little quickly, but it doesn't detract from the actual storytelling at all. There is real emotion in this book. It is a dark tale, but ultimately one that has a redemptive value that I think is rarely seen in this type of story. The only unfortunate aspect of the story is that it is being published in periodical form (this is a collected edition of the first two issues of the comic books), so there is going to be some wait until the next edition is released.

The art is beautiful as well, rendered in duotone pencil illustrations and presented to look like the pages of an old scrapbook or photo album. the transformation of the toys into their new selves is impressive, and I loved how the Boogeyman is drawn. He's both beautiful and horrible, all at the same time. It is simply an overall gorgeous presentation, and I am quite delighted that I stumbled on this in the bookstore. Now, just to wait for the next volume to be released so we can find out what happens next!

Highly recommended.

John Wiswell says

A fabulous work of imagination. *The Stuff of Legend* owes its debt to Pixar's *Toy Story*, but swiftly accomplishes its own fiction. Here "The Boy" is kidnapped by the Boogeyman, physically dragged into his closet and held in a fantasy world called The Dark. His toys and pet dog descend into this Dark, where they change from little lumps of plastic into highly stylized images of themselves, fighting through the Boogeyman's army of corrupt toys in pursuit of their owner. We visit a city built on top of a board game, with laws derived from the old game's rules and is getting people jailed and executed. These things could easily be goofy, but played as earnest make a valid interpretation on the "world of toys" trope. In the first chapter we watch one of our heroes betrayed and ripped in half, dying and leaving the surviving toys with an emotional burden they mourn.

Much of this works because of the team's excellent artwork. Illustrated by Charles Paul Wilson the 3rd, and designed and colored by Jon Conkling and Michael DeVito, the book uses a sepia color scheme that leaves *The Dark* feeling like the shadowier and uncomfortable parts of Walt Disney's worlds. Everything is competent, for conveying action, or suggesting emotion through a face that has few features, but the book excels in its subtler details. The Colonel, one of the green army man toys, ends a scene by striding off to search for a safe place to hunker down. The next panel begins a flashback to The Boy's room, where we realize the pose The Colonel had assumed during his search is actually the one he was molded into as a static toy. Touches like this are both funny and tease the brain as to the nature of this series' fiction.

The Stuff of Legend is a solid adventure story, but the most fun is found in puzzling out the real nature of the fantasy. Is this all one of The Boy's games, and he's pitting his entire toy chest against each other in his room? It's never mentioned, and character-specific flashbacks to his treatment of them go against the theory. But if it isn't, why is The Dark in his closet magical, and what determines the idealized nature of the toys? And why aren't more children abducted like this? Did his fantasy-projections from years of playing with help establish their personalities? Under what theory does it make sense that a baseball-player toy lost interest in sports and now lives as a violent goon? If you're like me, you'll pick up the next book foremost hoping this gets explained.

Kate says

The dark side of "Toy Story"... There is a boogeyman in the closet, and he has taken the Boy. Now it is up to a band of the Boy's toys and his dog Scout to find him. In our world they are a toy soldier, a teddy bear, a wooden duck, and a piggy bank. But through the closet, in The Dark, they become real. Max, the teddy bear, turns into a giant angry bear. They are fierce in battle, making their way through the unfamiliar world where different rules apply, and the pig's cowardice might not be what it seems.

The illustrations were sepia-toned pencils, evoking the time period of the story (end of World War II). I loved the transformation of the toys and their personalities and relationships to each other, and how they adhere to the laws of toys (must protect the Boy!). I am interested to see where the metaphor of the toys' war and WWII is going. While this sounds a bit like a child's story, it is clearly meant for an older audience. Light horror, mostly it's creepy.

Donald Armfield says

After reading a preview of Stuff The Legend on comixology. I had to check out the whole story. Great artwork from Charles Paul Wilson III.

After the boogeyman drags a little boy into the dark realms the boys toys take on the mission to bring their friend back to the real world.

Can't wait to read book 2 to see if the boy is rescued.

Felipe says

Read it. Just go do that. Right now please.

What are toys to do when their owner is dragged away into the dark? They band together and set out to rescue him.

A great premise that is aided by gorgeous art, and some fantastic character designs.
