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The Flash, Vol. 1: Move Forward (The New 52)



Synopsis

Struck by a bolt of lightning and doused in chemicals, Central City Police scientist Barry Allen was transformed into the fastest man alive. Tapping into the energy field called The Speed Force, he applies a tenacious sense of justice to protect and serve the world as The Flash! The Fastest Man Alive returns to his own monthly series as part of the DC Comics' The New 52 event with the writer/artist team of Francis Manapul and Brian Buccellato. The Flash knows he can't be everywhere at once, but he has seemingly met his match when he faces DC Comic's hottest new Super Villain, Mob Rule, who really can be everywhere at once! As Mob Rule wages a campaign of crime across Central City, including an electromagnetic blast that plunges the city into darkness, The Flash learns the only way he can capture Mob Rule and save Central City is to learn how to make his brain function even faster than before—but as much as it helps him, it also comes with a steep price. This volume collects issues 1-8 of the monthly series.

Book Information

Series: The New 52 (Book 1)

Paperback: 168 pages

Publisher: DC Comics; 52nd ed. edition (August 20, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1401235549

ISBN-13: 978-1401235543

Product Dimensions: 6.7 x 0.3 x 10.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 223 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #30,048 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #16 in Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Comic Books #37 in Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Graphic Novels > Mystery #69 in Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Publishers > DC

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A Look Inside The Flash [Click here for a larger image](#) [Click here for a larger image](#) [Click here for a larger image](#) Q&A with Francis Manapul and Brian Buccellato Q. What's it like working on a huge initiative like The New 52? A. FRANCIS MANAPUL: It's a dream come true! I've been clamoring to work on this book for years, so to be able to take the driver side seat is a huge honor. To steer The Flash's adventures for this new era in the DC Universe has been daunting and exciting all at the same time. A. BRIAN BUCCELLATO: It's been a huge thrill! Taking the reigns of

an iconic character like the Flash and reintroducing him to the revamped DC Universe was a rare opportunity that we didn't take lightly. Francis and I were honored to be able to put our stamp on the character. Q. How are you balancing making these stories and characters feel fresh and new while still respecting what came before? A. BRIAN BUCCELLATO: The Flash is a character that has endured for over seventy years, so there was ample source material to draw upon as we designed our take on the Scarlet Speedster. We did a ton of research and tried to stay as true to him as we could when choosing how best to bring him into the New 52. Understanding the character is paramount to being able to respect what came before. We know who Barry is and that colors all of our decisions as we mapped out new directions for the book and lessons he has to learn. A. FRANCIS MANAPUL: As a long time fan of the Flash, I do feel a sense of responsibility to strike a balance. However like Brian said, having done the research, we understand the essence of the Barry Allen. This allows us to put him in a modern setting and add our own voice to the character, but at the same time remaining true to the heart of the character. Q. What would you say defines The Flash? A. BRIAN BUCCELLATO: Barry has a strong sense of honor and a classic hero's moral compass. He is not motivated by guilt or a personal agenda. Barry believes that he was "chosen" to have this amazing gift and that being Flash is what he is "meant to do." A. FRANCIS MANAPUL: Barry has a very black and white sense of justice, and this world full of gray areas constantly challenge his ideals. Q. What have you thought about the response so far for The New 52 and The Flash as a whole? A. BRIAN BUCCELLATO: We couldn't be more thrilled with the reception of Flash and the New 52 as a whole. In the dozens of conventions and signings we have done this past year, there has been palpable excitement and enthusiasm for our book and for DC's courageous re-launching of the universe. It was a much needed shot in the arm that has clearly re-invigorated the industry. On a selfish level, it is an incredible feeling to have so many die-hard Flash fans embrace our take on the book, while at the same time bring new Flash fans into the fold. Q. The Flash really pushes the boundaries of art and storytelling. Can you talk a little about how, or if you see yourselves doing so? A. FRANCIS MANAPUL: The marriage of art and words is what comics are about. With such a small creative team, what you're seeing in The Flash is much more raw and unfiltered. Being a co-writer on the book allows me the opportunity to really push how we tell the story visually. Knowing what our intent is lets me do things in and outside of the panel that tell a story within a story. We definitely reward those who read our book more than once. A. BRIAN BUCCELLATO: I think this is a natural outcome because there are only two of us working on the book. Since we co-write it, Francis does the art, and I do the colors, we are able to fold all of the steps into our

creative process. We are both visual storytellers, so it's not like there is even a decision to push any boundaries. The finished product is a COMPLETE visual representation of what the writers wanted because there is no loss of translation. Q. You two work in two different cities in two different countries. How do you guys work together creatively? A. BRIAN BUCCELLATO: SKYPE, and lots of it. We take advantage of all the modern means of communication. Skype, email, text, and even the phone. We discuss the stories in great length before retreating to our workstations to do our parts. We also pass the baton back and forth, creatively building upon what we have talked about. There is also a ten-year friendship and a mutual understanding of each other, that gives us a shorthand that makes the process go smoother. For my part, there is no one I would rather be making comics with. A. FRANCIS MANAPUL: The key is communication. Like Brian said, we use every available tool in order to keep our geographical location a non-issue. I feel like we're sculptors. When we write we pass the files back and forth like a piece of clay we are molding. What you get is a finished piece with both of our fingerprints all over it, without having to be in the same room. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"Showcases the Flash's likability and almost a hint of goofiness ... a lot of potential for greatness." •USA Today"A visual treat.... Any reader can easily jump on board." •The New York Times"The Flash will be one of the runaway hits of this reboot--and could eventually become one of the great runs of American superhero comics." •Time Out Chicago"Flash fans should breathe a sigh of relief that the character is 100% definitely in the right hands." •MTV Geek"An accessible, charming superhero tale." •io9

Overall, this was a very fun and entertaining read for me. I've been a fan of The Flash television show which plays on the CW so I was pretty excited to get into some of the source material for where the show's writers get their wacky ideas. I obviously did not have the expectation that this would at all be the same thing as the show, but I definitely wanted it to be just as good. My feelings after reading are certainly a little mixed. On one hand, this was an action packed collection of issues which are lovingly rendered by some immensely gifted artists. On another hand, it's a narrative that isn't quite flat, but also isn't as approachable as DC Comics would lead you to believe. See although this is Volume 1 of this version of the character, it's not necessarily the beginning of the story. The Flash has already established himself as a hero, loved by many, but not trusted by others. All of the characters certainly get a proper introduction, from Barry Allen's (The Flash's) cute police girlfriend, Patty Spivot, to the icy Captain Cold. Despite everything being presented as fresh and new, I

definitely got the sense that DC was trying extremely hard not to alienate or bore their current fan base. Some characters, like Patty Spivot, definitely feel like they are worked into the story in a seamless manner, but entrances for characters like Captain Cold are a bit more forced. This largely comes from the fact that some of these characters have history with the Flash by this point - a history that I as a reader am well informed of, but this is a case where they tell me rather than show me that Flash and Cold are old rivals. Now, yes I know who Captain Cold is from the show, but I wanted to get to know him in THIS world and have him (as well as others like Iris West) feel a bit more fleshed out. Ultimately I just felt like I was trying to catch up with the story even though this is technically the beginning. I liked that there wasn't a tedious origin story, but there is definitely a way that they could have introduced things with a bit more grace. I mentioned before that this is an action-packed storyline and I don't throw that term around lightly. The events in this story are much larger than life and the writers waste no time in tossing The Flash into a city-wide catastrophe. At first, it feels rather hectic, but the strong visuals make it all much easier to swallow and as the issues progress, things start to connect in a way that feels way less random. In fact, by the end of this volume, the story glides along at a much smoother pace and I found myself enjoying things a lot more once I had built up a bit more context from earlier issues. There are also some very cool antagonists who I have never heard of before. I'm not sure if they are new to The New 52 or just new to me, but they are pretty great in any case. One shows up at the end, so I won't mention them, but Mob Rule is featured in the majority of the volume and is a very compelling antagonist indeed. I felt like "his" arc was much more gracefully handled than any of the other villains in that his history with The Flash is shown to readers in the form of flashbacks. When everything felt chaotic and confusing, it was this character's development that held my attention through the first half of the issue. By the end of this, I definitely warmed up to The Flash in his New 52 iteration. I wasn't really sold on any of it until much later in the volume, but really do think this holds some promise despite my lower rating. I was even a bit torn in giving it a 3 because by the end I felt like it was more of a 4, but since I did have some trouble with it at the onset and think that things can get a lot better I'm leaving this as sort of a fat 3 (not to be mistaken for a 3.5). One other gripe I had with this had to do with the formatting for the digital edition. There were a bunch of two-page spreads that just look goofy on Kindle (not that I'm a huge fan of them in print either) and not all of the pop-up pannels were particularly well done. There were numerous times where text was cut off or part of the image was cut out and was just a bit of a choppy and unprofessional experience overall. It's not awful, but the publisher CERTAINLY could have put a bit more effort into digitizing this volume. I'm certainly tempted to move onto the next volume which will hopefully continue in the direction that Volume 1

left off in.

I like the content of the book. The artwork is impressive and the story is interesting, although it's also a little difficult to follow at times. With that said, I need to say something about the Kindle version of this book. If you're thinking about buying this book, do yourself a favor and buy a hard copy. The kindle version has many issues that make it difficult to read. One issue is that the feature that lets you double click on a single comic frame to zoom in wasn't done well. There are several pages that were skipped, making it impossible to zoom in unless you're reading it on the iPhone version of the Kindle app. On pages where you can zoom in on specific frames, the text in speech and thought bubbles is cut off, usually at the bottom, so you have to zoom out in order to read the entire bubble. Attached is a screen shot of the problem I'm describing. Maybe will read my review and correct these issues. It should be possible, and I don't see how I can be the only person to notice them or complain about them. If they do fix these problems, I will happily update my review to reflect that.

Francis Manapul's artwork in his stint with The Flash is amazing. This is what good quality comics should look like. I can't sing enough praise for how beautiful he's made all these panels and how adept he is at conveying a story through pictures. I highly recommend this for the artwork alone. Pair that with Brian Buccellato's writing and this book is a real winner. Admittedly, for The Flash purist this book may be a little hard to take as it is a reinventing of the character, and while many of the classic characters are present their relationships to one another are different. Personally, I don't have any issue with this as I enjoy seeing new writer/artist put their own spin on the mythos of classic characters such as The Flash. When executed well, as it's done here, it keeps the characters fresh and relevant. Incidentally, if you've never read or heard of The Flash before or are new to his comics this is an excellent jumping on point and I would encourage you to pick this up. It won't disappoint.

It's not that the plot isn't interesting or emotionally investing, my problem with it is that it isn't a beginning. Rather than a reboot, Vol 1. assumes that you know a fair amount about Barry Allen. Other than that, it's a fine addition to a great mythos.

I grew up with Wally West being more the Flash than Barry Allen, so I was a little skeptical that I would like Barry becoming the Flash again. After reading The Flash Vol. 1, I'm also a Barry fan now. The first volume of The Flash has two stories. The first deals with Manuel, an old friend of Barry's

who he thought died years ago. Manuel now has the ability to create more versions of himself by chopping off limbs, and those limbs grow into clones of himself. After the clones realize they have a short life expectancy, they hunt for Manuel figuring he is the key to keeping them alive since he is the original version of them all. Barry has to help his friend, while keeping his identity a secret from him, and his partner/girlfriend Patty Spivot. The second story in this volume deals with Captain Cold, who blames the Flash for the possible death of his sister, who can't be operated on because of a citywide blackout caused by The Flash. Captain Cold can now generate his cold blast through his hands, and doesn't need his cold guns anymore. That is a big change from the original character from before, making him now some sort of super powered human instead of a regular villain like before. I'm ok with the change, but would like a reason as to why, which this book didn't seem to give. Overall, i'm liking Barry coming back as The Flash, but I hope Wally West gets to come back at some point and isn't just forgotten. There's room for more than one speedster in the DC Universe. I recommend this volume of The Flash to anyone who is a fan of the character, even if they didn't grow up with Barry being in the costume.

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