

*March: Book Three* by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell

The trilogy of *March* graphic novels by the late Rep. John Lewis are powerful testaments to the Civil Rights Movement and the legacy of those who marched for freedom. I read the first for an undergraduate level history class on the 1960s, the second immediately after it came out, but I didn't read the third until after news broke that John Lewis had passed away. I wanted to finally finish the journey that I started with him.

The final book in the nonfiction trilogy details the period of the Civil Rights Movement between the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama and the signing of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. John Lewis was the chairman of SNCC, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, one of the many groups of activists seeking voting rights for African Americans in the 1960s. He was right in the thick of the nonviolent protests, where he was arrested countless times, brutally beaten by police, and yet he never raised his fists.

All of this is recounted in the graphic novel, with Nate Powell's detailed black and white art being an effective way to show what John Lewis and his fellow activists went through. I feel like I learned more about the Civil Rights Movement by reading these graphic novels than I did by reading a chapter and seeing a few photos in various history textbooks over the years. The fear and determination in the eyes of the protesters, the hatred seething from those who opposed the protests, the violence with which the Black community was subjected to during peaceful protests, the underlying anguish of Fannie Lou Hamer as she spoke about the brutality she endured simply because she wanted to register to vote, it's all palpable.

This is an intense book. There is violence, there is hate, there are activists murdered by white supremacists. It's honestly quite painful to read about. That being said, the *March* trilogy is one of the best graphic novel series I have ever read, with the graphic novel format being a really compelling way to learn about the Civil Rights Movement. The parallels between what the protesters went through during the Civil Rights Movement and what Black Lives Matter protesters are going through right now is clear and it makes your heart ache for everyone involved. It's hard to realize that, while we have come a long way in some regards since the 1965 Voting Rights Act was signed into law, there is still a long road ahead.

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