



Stormwatch, Volume 2: Enemies of Earth

Peter Milligan (Writer) , Sean Parsons (Inker) , Julio Ferreira (Inker) , Pete Pantazid (Colourist) , Rob Leigh (Letterer) , Daniel HDR (Penciler) , Dave Sharpe (Letterer) , Miguel Sepúlveda (Artist) , more... Alex Sinclair (Colourist) , Mark Irwin (Inker) , Andrew Pepoy (Inker) , Sal Regla (Inker) , Walden Wong (Inker) , Guy Major (Colourist, Inker) , Eduardo Pansica (Penciler) , Eber Ferreira (Inker) , Rob Hunter (Inker) , Nathan Eyring (Colourist) , Will Conrad (Penciler) , Paul Jenkins (Writer) , Ignacio Calero (Penciler) ...less

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Jack Hawksmoor, Midnighter, Apollo, The Engineer and Martian Manhunter comprise a dangerous super human police force Stormwatch, whose existence is kept secret from the world.

In this second volume, part of the critically acclaimed DC - The New 52 event, a scientific experiment tears a hole in the barrier between dimensions allowing gravity miners from a forbidden universe to invade our universe. Stormwatch must scramble to unravel the mystery of the unstoppable gravity miners, creatures so alien they defy the laws of science! Stormwatch must put their faith in Martian Manhunter, whose past may hold the answer to stopping the invasion.

Collecting: *Stormwatch* 7-12, *Red Lanterns* 10

Stormwatch, Volume 2: Enemies of Earth Details

Date : Published February 19th 2013 by DC Comics

ISBN : 9781401238483

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Format : Paperback 160 pages

Genre : Sequential Art, Comics, Graphic Novels, Superheroes, Dc Comics, Science Fiction

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From Reader Review Stormwatch, Volume 2: Enemies of Earth for online ebook

Jared says

Not too shabby. I like what Peter Milligan brings to the book, and how in this volume it integrated itself more into the DC continuity.

Mark says

I'm reviewing both Stormwatch, Vol. 1: The Dark Side and Stormwatch, Vol. 2: Enemies of Earth. I will keep it all spoiler-free.

Before there was Superman, Batman, Green Lantern, and the rest of the Justice League, who was around to protect Earth from all of the interstellar, extradimensional, and metaphysical threats to its existence? The answer to that question, according to this graphic novel, is an ultra-secret organization called Stormwatch. Like the Justice League, they are headquartered in a space station. But unlike Justice League, this station sits in "hyperspace" where its existence is safely hidden from not just the people of Earth but even from the other "regular" costumed superheroes of Earth. Also unlike the Justice League, Stormwatch has protected Earth for many centuries.

Stormwatch was originally published by WildStorm Publications and many of its characters were created by the famed Warren Ellis. The superhero team was acquired by DC Comics in 1999 and this book is DC's latest New 52 incarnation of Stormwatch (2011). I picked up the book because it featured Martian Manhunter, who was one of my favorite characters from the JLA days. However, I was unfamiliar with the rest of the characters (the ones acquired from WildStorm), such as Apollo, Engineer, Midnighter, Jenny Quantum, and others. Nevertheless, I was excited for this book because of its far-out sci-fi setting and art, and because it featured Martian Manhunter.

I have mixed feelings about these books. I'll start with the pros. As mentioned, I really like the sci-fi setting, and this is helped immensely by the artwork. Volume 1 was penciled by Miguel Sepulveda, and his other-worldly artwork was very cool (special mention goes to the cover of issue 2, which looks like an homage to the classic Starro cover of the first Justice League team-up). And even Sepulveda's fantastic art is eclipsed by the work of Ignacio Calero, the penciler of volume 2. Calero's art has so much texture and detail and, combined with excellent work by the colorists, I felt the art just jumped off the page. The art alone in volume 2 makes the book worth a read, even if you skip the dialog bubbles and just enjoy the artwork.

So the sci-fi setting and art were great, but the sci-fi plot (written by Paul Cornell, who was a writer for the Doctor Who TV series) was less stellar, even though it did have its moments. Volume 1 is largely about setting up the Stormwatch team and also creating a villain that's powerful, sinister, and somewhat interesting (I can't say the who, what, and how without spoilers). And there are a few nice touches along the way, my favorite being a vengeful spirit that's entrapped in the space station's computer system as a computerized servant; imagine the voice of the computer on the Starship Enterprise except, instead of a soothing female voice, replace it with an angry voice that constantly spits insults at you before duly complying with your request. It's like the opposite of the annoyingly cheery ship's computer from The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.

Eventually, in volume 2, Paul Jenkins and later Peter Milligan take over as writers and I think the writing

improves in volume 2. Jenkins's story about "gravity thieves" was rather dull, but then Milligan's stories pick up a bit. I'm interested to see where the plot goes following the conclusion of volume 2.

Lastly on the pros, I'll mention that this is the first superhero comic I've read that has two non-stereotyped, gay male main characters in a relationship, which was an interesting change of pace from the usual superhero fare.

Now let's talk about some of the cons. First and foremost, since I was drawn in by the presence of Martian Manhunter, I have to say I am disappointed because there were no creative or interesting ways that the character was used, except maybe in the very last story arc of volume 2. Furthermore, with all of these formerly-WildStorm characters, I would've liked to know a bit more about each of the new (to me) characters. After reading two volumes, I still can't specifically describe the superpowers of some of these characters (such as Midnighter, Engineer, Apollo, and Adam One), and that seems like a major flaw. Midnighter is described and portrayed as someone that's really good at killing, but is that a super power, or is he just a well-trained assassin, or what? Adam One has been around since medieval times, so (like Vandal Savage) is his superpower the fact that he doesn't age, or is it something else? Engineer seems like an android, or maybe a cyborg, but again it's never made clear (I later learned through Google that Engineer is a human that's been implanted with nanotechnology).

Also on the topic of superpowers, I found some of the superpowers were executed in way that was a little awkward. A new character called Projectionist is introduced and she can control all of the news and internet media on Earth. That's a pretty boring power, but I do accept its place as a useful function for a secret team that must erase all knowledge of its existence.

As another example, the character of Hawksmoor can talk to the "spirit" of a city, whatever that means. There are occasional interesting scenes involving this power (for example: each city has an avatar in some spirit world that Hawksmoor can access, and at one point he speaks to the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; their avatars are twin Japanese girls, each deformed by radiation poisoning). But in addition to talking to cities, Hawksmoor also can't survive outside of a city. So, how does he survive on their hyperspace station? This is addressed in a single frame where they show that the station contains a church, and that makes the station count as a city. This begs the obvious question... what exactly constitutes a city? The writers may have been better off just ignoring the issue altogether, rather than introducing one frame of explanation that just opens up more questions than it answers.

And as a third example of a superpower that doesn't quite make sense to me, consider Jenny Quantum. She is a 12-year-old girl whose "powers are based on 21st century physics, whatever those turn out to be." That's a direct quote, and now I'm totally confused. So her powers are what the laws of physics *might* be, or what they currently are *believed* to be, or what they currently *actually are*, or some combination of those? This isn't made clear, but she does seem to have the ability to manipulate reality, so I'll just leave it at that.

The topic of Jenny Quantum's superpower brings me to my final point. As a physicist, I have to comment on the pseudoscience used in this book. I've seen this in other books too (Detective Comics vol 2 comes to mind) as well as most sci-fi movies and TV shows: the author uses physics vocabulary to make the "science" part of the "science fiction" sound plausible. I don't have a problem with that as an end goal, however the execution leaves much to be desired because the use of the vocabulary is invariably nonsensical. And I don't say that it's nonsensical because it brings up something that "could happen but we have no knowledge of its potential existence" (I would instead call that "speculative"). Rather, I mean it's nonsensical in that it contains contradictions or it is otherwise incomprehensible. Here's an (admittedly contrived) example to try to illustrate: imagine someone says "zero is less than all positive numbers, therefore zero is a negative number". You might say "that sounds like an interesting idea" but only if you don't know what "negative" means. It just doesn't make sense — it's inherently contradictory, by definition, since negative means "less than zero" — so all it accomplishes is to highlight that the author is ignorant of the definition of "negative". I

have the same reaction when I see physics words used in strange ways, words like “polarity”, “charge”, “antimatter”, “fluctuation”, “quantum”, “photon”, and on and on. These words all have clear definitions that are clearly unknown by the author based on the way that the author has used them. As another example: sometimes the words are strung together, one after another, and it’s just as jarring as reading a sentence like “The feathered love swims in the colorful blackness”. It may sound like bad poetry, but it’s not speculative, it’s not about “what might be possible”... it’s just pure nonsense.

My examples are contrived, I know, but I hope they suffice to make my point. And my point is simple in its essence: words can’t be combined any way you like and still make sense. And, just because you are ignorant of what the words mean doesn’t mean your readers will be equally ignorant.

If I may, I’d like to make two suggestions to any authors that wish to use speculative science in their stories. Option 1: Make it truly speculative. Don’t use known physics. Prevent the possibility of contradictory nonsense by just avoiding those words altogether. Instead, come up with something truly unique. Don’t mash together existing things that probably weren’t meant to be mashed together (any more than “zero” and “negative” go together, or “colorful” and “blackness”). Option 2: I know there is always someone out there that will know more than the author on any given topic. That makes the author's job of satisfying everyone seem insurmountable. And maybe it is. But there's an easy way to mitigate the situation: Find a consultant. There are thousands of people with a PhD in physics that would be happy to respond to an email with comments and suggestions. And I don’t mean hiring somebody. I, for instance, would do it and have done it for free. Just send me an email (seriously, I love talking about physics!).

In summary, I enjoyed these books for their setting and artwork. However, the writing left a lot to be desired. I give it 4 stars for the artwork and 2 stars for the writing, for an average of 3 stars.

furious says

meh. this is not up to the level of quality i hope for from Peter Milligan. although, he is pretty hot & cold these days, so i’m not surprised. anyways. this is the 2nd collection of the New 52 Stormwatch. i have a soft spot for the Authority, despite the fact that (like a lot of ground-breaking comics) it spawned a host of shitty imitations that infected the comics landscape for years. this version of Stormwatch is basically the Authority characters, spiked with elements of Hickman's S.H.I.E.L.D. (an ancient secret society that has been protecting the Earth from extraterrestrial threats for thousands of years). i want to like this book. i SHOULD like this book, as i generally like Milligan, i generally like the Authority, i'm into secret societies & conspiracies, and i love the Martian Manhunter. so why do i find it boring & stupid? it probably has a lot to do with the fact that this volume features a crossover with Milligan's other New 52 book, Red Lanterns. i think the Red Lanterns title is an asinine concept & i hate all the characters. so, yeah. huge turnoff. i found nothing in this volume to compel me to read any more Stormwatch.

Duncan says

Sad. Just SAD. If you're a fan of the original Stormwatch, give this a MISS. If you're thinking of giving Stormwatch a try, GIVE THIS A MISS. Pale imitation done in the Didio DC "Kill 'em all" style, too dark for kids, teenagers, and most 20, 30, 40, and 50-year-olds.

Joseph says

Not quite as good as the first volume, but still an enjoyable read. There is a lot going on here, with a secret tribe of Neanderthals who are determined to bring Homo Sapiens to its knees and restore the Neanderthals to evolutionary prominence, to the Martian Manhunter creeping out the rest of the team, to the burgeoning relationship with Apollo and Midnighter, and even the subplot of traitor Harry Tanner. This make the book feel a bit rushed in some places, and it doesn't help that the artistic team, as well as the writing chores, are all over the place.

Unlike my other Shallow Comic Readers, I didn't mind the appearance of the Red Lanterns. Peter Milligan was writing both series, so it makes sense to have a bit of a crossover to expose both teams to new readers. I think the Red Lanterns are a bit of a one trick pony, like the rest of the Rainbow Lantern brigade, but there were some interesting moments nonetheless.

Seeing Jack Hawksmoor explore various cities and dealing with their avatars is always interesting. Here, the avatars of Hiroshima and Nagasaki show up to comfort the village near Chernobyl, and help the city of Chernobyl defeat a foe.

I'll be picking up the next volume in a couple of days.

William Thomas says

You know why this book never worked out, right? Too many damned Wildstorm characters that everyone forgot about, and not enough DC characters for anyone's liking. I mean, all that had to be done was take some of the JSA guys from Johns' run, and insert them here. Like Thom Kallor, The Starman, or Magog, and you'd have had a few more readers and more to play around with. But Jim Lee is a supreme narcissist and as head of DC, thought he knew better than everyone else. I mean, what other a-hole would think to redesign EVERY SINGLE FREAKING CHARACTER'S COSTUME single-handedly? Ego.

So instead of changing it up a bit, we only get Mattian Manhunter (my favorite DC character, actually) and the entire Authority as it stood. Don't get me wrong, I love these characters and the team pre-DC days. Superb. Wildstorm had a boatload of talent back in the day with Morrison and Millar and Ellis. And they got away with making R-rated books and it was great. Fast forward to today and it's a little underwhelming.

Volume 1 did a great job setting things up and it's actually the best Cornell has ever been, aside from Demon Knights. Now we get Peter Milligan, and it's fair to say he's in over his head and the appearance of the Red Lanterns is being dictated from on high by his editors. Which is where we get all the NU 52 problems. The editors are doing all the writing for everyone, and it's the biggest problem the company has. Used to be the writers would sit around an office and toss out a years worth of ideas with one another, now it's the brass mandating things without regard for the reader. What they've forgotten is that good writing sells the books. Just look at all the creator-owned stuff Image pumps out. It sells. Why? Quality of the writing.

But whatever. Seriously. This could have been a hell of a lot more fun than it was, and as it stands, is only mildly entertaining in the second volume. Milligan has a sense of where the book should be centered, but just doesn't have a grip on each character the way Cornell did. I'll get to V3 soon. Playing catch up again. Drowning in a backlog.

As for the art, I mean, my god it's all over the place. There's zero consistency from this new artist, Ignacio Calero. His lines are too thick, it's all extremely hurried, he has little to no knowledge of composition or paneling. Page to page, you'd think it was a different artist each time. Terrible work. Until the issues/pages where Sepulveda comes back. Then it's fine.

Writing: C-
Art: D

Sam Quixote says

Pretty goddamn terrible superhero comics! Full review here!

Mike says

Othello: The Musical, a presentation of the local junior high school Drama Club.

Sorry, folks, but this was once a thriving (I guess?) creator-owned social and comic-lit commentary in the guise of a superhero comic. Then DC thought that buying the rights would buy the creativity, I guess, because this volume has good art and decent writing but no chemistry. Another superhero team circling, looking for a way into our pockets.

Anne says

I loved Stormwatch, Vol. 1: The Dark Side, but this just isn't as good.
The biggest mistake, in my humble opinion, was doing a crossover story with the Red Lanterns. Without any context for what's happening to the Lanterns, the story seems random and patchy. I mean, who's going to know what the hell any of that is even about?!

*Well, except for pathetic dorks like me, who've already read that Red Lantern title.
In my defense, whoever orders graphic novels for my library has a raging hard-on for Green Lanterns and all their little friends.
Don't want to miss out on an introspective title about Larfleeze, now do we?
They can't be bothered to order any Marvel title published after 2010, but God Forbid we miss out on some lame event happening on Oa!
So. Yeah. I'd read the Red Lantern story before.
Thank you for ordering that for us, ~~you fucking moron~~ whoever you are!*

The other parts of the story weren't all that great, either.
Random alien life form from another dimension attacks!

No way!

Midnighter is kinda unhinged, but Apollo still thinks he has pretty eyes.

Awwwww.

Shadow Leaders (*or whatever they're called*) are evilish and controlling!

Shocking!

Jenny wants a puppy.

Awwww.

Manhunter is gettin' the fuck off this team!

Mindwipe, bitches!

Angie misses her ex-boyfriend, who is pretty much a totally cracked psycho.

Awwww.

*And my **personal** favorite...*

A secret sect of Neanderthals, who have managed to stay hidden for thousands of years, are back to try to wipe out mankind!

By using a device that makes humans dumb.

Like, *poo flinging* dumb.

Meet the Flinstones, mother fucker!

Thing is, I don't think this is going to make fans of the original Wildstorm characters happy.

And now that Martian Manhunter has bailed off the team (*good call, by the way, J'onn!*), I don't see many DC fans going crazy over this one, either.

It's not horrible, but there's nothing yummy to sink your teeth into.

I've got the next volume already, so I'm going to see how that one goes before I give up.

Shannon Appelcline says

Damn! I thought that Paul Cornell continued for a few more issues. Ah well. I was apparently fooled by the Jenkins issues.

Paul Jenkins (7-8). And the Jenkins issues are sadly mediocre. He tries to tell the big-scale action adventures of classic Authority, but there's no excitement to them. There's also, unfortunately, a bevy of worthless technobabble. The only things good about the first two issues are the confrontation between Midnighter and Jenny (which nicely subverts their previous relationship) and Jack's interactions with the cities. It's not enough to make the rest interesting [4/10].

The Red Lanterns (9, RL10). Fortunately, Milligan seems to have a better handle on the series. He goes back to Stormwatch's ancient past, which is part of the joy of the reboot. The interactions with the Red Lanterns are also good, particularly as it affects Stormwatch's opinion of the Green Lanterns (though I have a hard time believing they didn't previously know about Red Lanterns, given Blackest Night) [7/10].

Digging Up the Past (10). More nice focus on history, some interesting relations between Stormwatch and the rest of the hero community (though it's again hard to believe that SW doesn't know more about them when heroes have existed for at least 5 years), and a good coda for Midnighter and Apollo. Oh, and someone finally remembers that Harry and the Projectionist exist. This might have been a great issue (and so nicely self-contained) if not for all the silly fighting [7/10].

Devolver (11). Yet more nice history, which seems to be Milligan's thing in this run, while the concept of the Hidden People is great, but the actual plot is a bit simplistic [6/10].

Nefertiti's Bust (12). A nice conclusion to the volume with change, strangeness, and the advancement of the metaplot [7/10].

Overall, bad material from Jenkins and good material from Milligan, which averages out to slightly better than a wash but offers good promise for the next volume. However, I think I've decided to give up on the series given that it gets its *4th* author in the near future and yet another reboot. I also expect I'm going to sell off these earlier volumes, as getting two parts of a longer story just doesn't make much sense.

Tone says

This book reflects how I feel about the rest of the DCU after the New 52. Like an outsider, keeping watch on all the superheroes from afar and I'm not crazy about what I see.

Rick Hunter says

This isn't one of my favorite series from DC's New 52, but it's free to read on a friend's Comixology account. As I stated in my review for volume 1 of this series, I really loved the original characters of Stormwatch back when they were first created at Wildstorm comics in the 1990's. I wish that they had used so of those characters for this book since DC now owns them all. Instead they used the characters from the Ellis run on the series at Image, Martian Manhunter, and some either new characters or just ones I'd never seen before.

Paul Jenkins starts off this volume as the writer, but is soon replaced by Peter Milligan. I'm not gonna break down each writer's work separately because they are both about equal in quality. I actually enjoyed this story more than I did the story in volume 1 even though I still hate Apollo & Midnighter. I could do without their gayness too. Hate Hawkmoor too. The only character I truly like is Martian Manhunter, but the Engineer & Jenny are growing on me. I really like the direction the last three characters were headed towards the end of the book. Unfortunately, Manhunter left at the end. Hopefully the story of volume 3 is good enough to keep me interested since my favorite character in the series is gone. Writing gets 3.5 stars.

Miguel Sepulveda draws an issue during the middle of the book, but the rest is drawn by Ignacio Calero. In my review for the 1st volume of this series, I talked about Sepulveda's work being neither great nor terrible. Nothing about his art has changed since then. It is still rather mediocre. He does draw some decent looking aliens though. Calero's art is just a tad better than Sepulveda's. The things that actually stands out the most to me about his art are the effects around the characters when they are using their powers. A lot of artists might draw a little bit of electricity around the hands of a person with lightning powers. Calero goes all out and puts a bunch of it on the page. The colorist on this book does a nice job too and really draws one's eye to the effects. Some of his people could look better. In one panel, he went way over the top with the amount of veins he drew standing out on Apollo. Other than that the art is pretty solid from him. Art gets 3.5 stars.

Since both scores are 3.5 stars, that makes averaging the total score easy. 3.5 stars overall rating for this book. It's just a little better than volume 1, but I'd still have a hard time recommending this to anyone that is not a huge fan of one or more of these characters. I said I'd stick this series out until the end because it's only 30 issues long. 12 of those are now read & I can't wait to be done with the other 18 so this will be over.

Kyle says

I didn't hate this, but I didn't love it either. The characterization for this team is getting weak, except for, surprisingly, the relationship between Midnighter and Apollo. It is likely their relationship that kept me

reading it, because the actual storylines are just plain silly. The action is choppy and jumps all over the place; events happen too quickly with virtually no lead-up or discussion to what happens. I think this series would be better if they would slow down the action, take time to explain the importance of what is going on without a bunch of techno-pseudoscience-babble, and spend A LOT more time developing relationships between teammates.

3/5

Connor says

This is one of the D.C. Comics that I actually want to learn more about the characters themselves as opposed to just looking forward to the battles and/or villains.

Robert says

Huge plot jumps, unexplained and incomplete crossovers, 'surprise' back-story revelations, all the typical b-team crap, all found in Stormwatch.
