



Essential X-Men, Vol. 1

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Wolverine! Nightcrawler! Storm! Colossus! Endowed with unique abilities, these mutants were summoned by Professor X to rescue the original X-Men, an underground organization sworn to protect those that fear and hate them. Relive their original adventures; discover the human within the hero and the truth behind the legend.

Essential X-Men, Vol. 1 Details

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From Reader Review Essential X-Men, Vol. 1 for online ebook

Dan Schwent says

Essential X-Men, Vol. 1 contains Giant Size X-Men #1 and X-Men #94-119.

The X-Men battle Krakoa, Count Nefaria, Kierrok the Damned, Eric the Red, The Sentinels, Black Tom Cassidy, The Juggernaut, Magneto, Firelord, The Shi'ar Royal Guard, Alpha Flight, Sauron, Warhawk, Mesmero, and Moses Magnum. Thunderbird dies. The Phoenix Force is awakened.

Uncanny X-Men was all reprints of earlier X-Men comics when Giant Size X-Men came out featuring a new team of X-Men, led by Cyclops, to rescue the old X-Men. The next thing you know, The X-Men suddenly become Marvel's A-List players. The multi-national roster of X-Men, penned by Chris Claremont and drawn by John Byrne, was THE comic of its day.

While I wouldn't say it stands the test of time as well as some books, it's easy to see why this book was the dog's bollocks back in the day. So much crazy shit happens! After Len Wein and Dave Cockrum got the ball rolling, Claremont and Byrne took the ball and kicked it into the stratosphere.

Essential X-Men lays the groundwork for the X-Men being Marvel's top franchise for a couple decades afterwards. Jean Grey becomes the Phoenix. Wolverine, Colossus, Storm, and Nightcrawler join the team. We'll just gloss over Banshee at the moment. Magneto re-establishes himself as the top villain. The Juggernaut and Sauron are brought back into the fold. Muir Island is established. Professor X and Lilandra of the Shi'Ar begin their relationship.

For an iconic X-Men read, this is it. This is where the X-Men join the A-list, where they break out of the pack and become Marvel's meal ticket for decades to come. Four out of five stars.

Alex Firer says

Near perfect superhero comics dragged down by an incomprehensible plot here and there, but hardly. Everything that nerds love in modern comics, weirdly stark superhero drama, personal issues, and a sense of pure progress carrying us along into the glorious future, is crystalized here.

Mark Schlatter says

Comfort comics reading. I own a lot (but not all) of the original run of the series, so I supplemented my missing issues with the book. Some observations:

1) #111 (the carnival story) and #113 (a battle with Magneto) are probably in my top fifty superhero issues ever. Amazing Byrne art with Claremont at the top of his game in terms of plotting.

2) During this reread, I was kinda staggered by how a reboot of the X-Men title with almost all new

characters resulted in a lasting legacy of decades of stories. Sure, Lee and Kirby made it happen regularly, but it's incredibly rare these days to get new characters off the ground.

3) Claremont is of course famous for powering up Marvel Girl into Phoenix, but I was struck how powerfully he wrote Storm, to the extent that her claustrophobia was called on again and again as her kryptonite.

4) I consider Lee, Kirby, and Ditko responsible for turning superheroes two-dimensional (in the sense that characters had actual motivations and conflicts). Claremont and Byrne increased that to 2.5-dimensional. In these issues, Claremont increased the amount of soap opera in a more relatable fashion with the result that readers in the letters column would complain about the character's emotional reactions. (E.g., "Shouldn't Scott be more upset about Jean's death?"). A step forward for superhero comics.

Zack says

Classic next gen X-men, reminded me of the old cartoon from the 1990s

Rick says

There's a lot of nostalgia wrapped in these pages for me, and it can be very difficult to separate that nostalgia from what is actually on the page. Giant-Size X-Men #1 hit the stands at a point that I was almost waiting for it. I had been reading the re-print issues that the X-Men title had been at that point for about a year and while enjoyed the stories and the characters it was difficult to really get into it because it was just a reprint title, like Marvel's Greatest Comics, Marvel Tales, Marvel Spectacular, Marvel Double-Feature and Marvel Triple Action (which were also titles I picked up when funds were available that features reprint stories of the Fantastic Four, Spider-Man, Thor, Captain America & Iron Man and the Avengers) but there was no new title for X-Men, only see reprints. So when Giant-Size X-Men showed up I was really excited. Here was a new appearance of Wolverine, a Canadian super-hero who had previously appeared only as an opponent for the Hulk, the return of Cyclops, Professor X, Banshee and Sunfire with awhile bunch of new characters in their first appearances. Storm, Colossus, Nightcrawler and, my personal favorite, Thunderbird, all added something to make me sit up and take note. Most importantly was that for the first time since the creation of the Black Panther, it seemed that Marvel was acknowledging that there were Marvels out there in the world other than just in the US. And that was cool! The departure of the old guard members (Angel, Iceman, Marvel Girl, Havok and Polaris) and Sunfire only added a level of realism to my young sensibilities that seemed realistic and the came the death of Thunderbird which shattered my mind. Here was my favorite member of the new team, sacrificing himself for really no reason at all. For me this was s poignant as Gwen Stacy dying in the pages of Amazing Spider-Man. And from then on I was hooked. I have to admit that the every other month publishing schedule was disappointing and the contents of issue #106 and #110 almost drove me away, but the arrival of John Byrne as regular penciled (yes, I've been a Byrne-victim since his work on Iron Fist and, dare I admit it, Space: 1999) made me a committed reader of issue after issue. Needless to say, these issues have been among my prize possessions from those years and they were read and re-read every summer for years (until my collection grew so large that reading them every summer was impossible).

Ok, that's the nostalgia. Having said that- most of these stories are rather typical of some of the best stuff Marvel put out in the mid and late seventies. They do hold up, but I also admit that much of that is the familiarity I have with these issues and how beloved they were for me for so many years. Stil, there is some groundbreaking story-telling go on here and Claremont, Cockrum and Byrne are laying the foundation of

what would become Marvel's most lucrative franchise for the next 40 years.

Ben Belcher says

Some of the golden years of X-men. Issue 100 was very magical. The art, writing, even the cultural appropriation all belongs in the library of congress. A must-read (despite some of the cringier moments) if only for the stylized art and Claremont's perfectly matched writing style.

Greta is Erikasbuddy says

I read this knowing that I am in no way a Geek

A Nerd

or a person with a good memory.

NOR AM I HOT ENOUGH TO BE CONSIDERED A GEEK OR A NERD!! Uhhh.... seriously... why is that sexy now? This just makes me feel a bit more stupid and a whole lot more plain. I guess I just don't get how a superhero shirt and thick glasses make you a nerd or a geek. I always thought intelligence was required. But this shows what I know :P

With that being said, now that you know that I am in no way a geek or a nerd, I read this book because I enjoyed the cartoon from the 90s and all of the movies.

And you know what?

I really enjoyed it and was pleasantly surprised.

This starts out in 1975 where the old team of the X-men is leaving because Professor X found a new team. Well, not really, he found more mutants and the old team was like "Ok... we're done. They can handle things from here."

The only one who stayed was Cyclops.

I really really enjoyed Storm and Nightcrawler in this book. Storm is smokin' hawt and Nightcrawler was just plain cool.

Jean Grey popped in from time to time only to join the X-men again once she became the Phoenix. They really didn't go deep into her story but I know that will be coming up soon.

I'm happy that I read these and while I feel a bit more educated I must remind everyone that I am not a geek, I am not a nerd, and if you quiz me about these lolz... I'm probably not going to remember everyone's name. But this was a lot of fun. I'm ready to read the next one :)

Ma'Belle says

This was definitely better than I'd expected. I was wary of reading old, black and white issues of the X-Men for a variety of reasons, and some of my fears proved true. Most of the team members are highlighted based on whatever token cultural discrimination they represent: "the Russkie," "Irish," "the black woman," "elf" (referring to Wolverine for his stature rather than Nightcrawler, who surprisingly receives almost no grief or verbal abuse) and on and on. I cringed every time one of the male team members refers to any woman - super-powered or not - as "frails," a noun employed frequently. And of course they're all referring to the wisdom of their white, male boss, Cyclops, who has never ceased to frustrate me.

So despite all the sexism and racism that was totally commonplace at the time (in merely more visible and obvious ways than the commonplace racism and sexism of today), Chris Claremont's storytelling kept me interested throughout. I was even able to be less bothered than usual by the constant reintroductions and the cross references to other issues or titles. A lot of the details and back-stories of the characters which are now well-known canon seem to have not been fleshed out at this point. For example, Wolverine doesn't seem to know that his entire skeleton is coated in adamantium - just that he has adamantium claws, that he heals fast, and that "not an animal has been born that could break [his] bones."

Another sign of the times in comics that I'm not fond of but which didn't detract too much from the story is how the action pacing seems to dictate that in every issue the villains reveal themselves almost right away and have an evil vendetta against the X-Men and the world without needing a motive. I much prefer more recent films and books that have portrayed characters such as Magneto as worthy of sympathy or even as anti-heroes more dignified and effective than some of the protagonists.

James says

Had most of my favorites in this collection of Xmen comics. very good.

Adam Walker says

It was a lot of fun revisiting the beginnings of the X-Men I remember from childhood.

Emma Lindhagen says

I've never read any of the old X-men stuff before but I was always a bit fan of the 90s cartoon, so it was fun to get a glimpse at the original stories. Some of the stuff in this volume is quite cringey or downright WTF,

but there's some good stories in there too and I was pleased to find that most of my fave chars were more or less the same as in later iterations.

Richard Medina says

excellent collection.

if you can get past the mid seventies comic book tropes and cringey dialogue in the first few issues it settles into being a very good reading experience, the individuals on the team are sticky and Chris Claremont has a very addictive writing style that draws you in and keeps you interested and invested. It's a good start to one of the wildest rides in comic history.

Mark Short says

Possibly the most enjoyable of the Marvel essential series. Very good stories.

Nadine says

Skakow! Brak! Fthom!

Learned three important things:

1. There are old X-men and new X-men. This book is about the beginnings of the new team, consisting of Wolverine, Storm, Cyclops, Colossus, Nightcrawler, Banshee, some guy that dies in the second issue in this book and then the Phoenix who joins later. The old X-men are Marvel Girl (Jean Grey's old name), Cyclops, Iceman, and a bunch of others that weren't in the movies so I had no idea who they were anyway. I had actually wanted to read the first graphic novels in the X-men series, but that's actually the Essential *Uncanny* X-men Vol. 1 and, being a graphic novel n00b, I had no idea these books were different. But, apparently this one is better for me anyway, since I am more familiar with these characters from the movie, and being called the Phoenix is way better than being called Marvel Girl IMHO.
2. Wolverine is short and hairy. Hugh Jackman is probably way too hot to play him, but I find I don't care.
3. Cyclops sucks way less on the page than he does on the screen.

Overall I'd say I liked it. Watching the X-men movies is kind of what made me want to get into graphic novels. I was kind of disappointed that this was in black and white. Also, the issue from my library was missing the last half of issue #119, and when I went and looked up what happens it didn't really make a lot of sense. The medium is the message, I guess! Magneto is still my favourite character, but now Storm is my favourite X-Man.

jeremiah says

This is a great collection of X-Men comics detailing the start of the team as most people my age know it:

Cyclops, Storm, Wolverine, Nightcrawler, Colossus, and Banshee (and sometimes Jean Grey). The comics are old, they're in black-and-white, and they're basically a pulpy soap opera for super hero fans. I love it.

The stories have a heavy amount of theme placed on the X-Men being "different" due to their mutant abilities. Professor X makes it clear from the very first origin story (Nightcrawler being chased through the streets by an angry mob) that even though regular humans might want to kill mutants due to their super abilities or the way they look, it is the mutant's responsibility to use their powers for the good of human kind.

Because this is a rather large collection of a monthly series (over two years worth), it was really interesting to see the changes in tone the story took over time. The story is gradually getting a little darker and I'm looking forward to reading some of the future issues I remember reading as a kid... Nightcrawler and Wolverine meeting the reality twisting "Mutant X" was one of my favorite issues when I was a kid.
