



The Authority, Vol. 1: Relentless

Warren Ellis, Bryan Hitch (Pencils), Paul Neary (Inks), Laura Martin

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The Authority, the powerful team that rose from the ashes of StormWatch, stars in this world-shaking collection of their first adventures. Led by hot-tempered, electrically powered Jenny Sparks and headquartered in a fifty-mile-wide spaceship that exists outside space and time, the Authority explodes into action, first against a global attack of genetically engineered super-human clones, and then against an invasion from another reality.

The Authority, Vol. 1: Relentless Details

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Author : Warren Ellis , Bryan Hitch (Pencils) , Paul Neary (Inks) , Laura Martin

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From Reader Review The Authority, Vol. 1: Relentless for online ebook

Daniel Sevitt says

Kinda missed out on these the first time around. I remember sampling the WildStorm thing when Jim Lee was involved right at the beginning, but I soon lost interest so that when these titles and characters were evolving, I wasn't really paying attention. Came to The Authority through Garth Ennis and Kev and found the first two volumes going relatively cheap. This was good enough, I suppose, apart from the weirdly racist villain of the first arc. Refreshingly violent and mildly fascist in a way that I guess was meant satirically but which may have flown over people's heads. I can't say this was essential, but it was fun.

Eric Davis says

Goddamn awesome comic, and stays good through the next two volumes (though with a variety of creative teams, and diminishing returns).

The Authority is a team of badasses, protecting earth from all the assholes who would do it harm.

True to form, Warren Ellis breathes life into some pretty unique characters, including Jenny Sparks (a century baby who is the spirit of the 20th century - imagine what she's seen: she was Hitler's muse!?), The Doctor (who is, at his core, junkie, who just happens to be the living embodiment of all the past and future mystical shamans), The Engineer (a scientist who is now more machine than woman), Jack Hawksmoor (the spirit of cities, who can talk to cities and is empowered by them - wait to see what he does in Mexico City), Swift (a bird-girl, yeah, not much to say there, except the nazi's tried to get ahold of her while she was still in an egg), and then you have Midnighter and Apollo (a more sadistic version of the Batman and Superman duo, who just happen to be gay lovers).

And the art is just blindingly brilliant. There's one scene, a two page panel, with an invading army descending on Los Angeles. You can't help but feel completely overwhelmed by it, and that is exactly the point.

It's just amazing the stuff that Hitch and Ellis create together...

Stewart Tame says

One of the best superhero team books ever. Yes, this carries over from Ellis' run on Storm Watch, but it's not essential to have read that series to appreciate this one. Ellis is a past master of tossing off mind-blowing concepts as casual asides. He may not have read every single journal on the bleeding edge of technology and science, but he certainly gives that impression. If this book doesn't make you a Warren Ellis fan for life, then nothing ... well, I guess it couldn't hurt to try Planetary or Global Frequency, just in case.

Trin says

Not as impressed by this as I had hoped to be. It doesn't seem *that* different from other superhero comics, and thus far, at least, I felt the characters were less well-developed than in many other titles. And the villains—*painfully* clichéd, including a ridiculous Fu Manchu knockoff. Though actually, none of that bugged me as much as the fact that whoever drew this (I've already given my copy to Wychwood) has obviously never looked at a photograph of L.A., much less visited. There are several major fight scenes that take place in the City of Angels, and I honestly wouldn't have known it was Los Angeles if the text hadn't said. Hello, we have a strict earthquake code, we don't have row after row of tall buildings that make the city look like a cut-rate New York. Go rent something in which L.A. gets blown up before you attempt to draw it, kthx.

So, yeah...I found that much more distracting than most readers would, probably, but this comic still didn't exactly have full command of my attention. If I can find the next volume, I'll keep reading for the Apollo/Midnighter, but I'm not cooking up desperate plots to get it or anything. Mostly I'm wondering if it must get a whole lot better or if I am just missing something.

Stephen says

3.0 stars. I liked this first volume of The Authority but I must admit I was hoping to like it a bit more than I did. I really like the "attitude" of the story and Midnighter is on my list of favorite comic characters so when he is on the page, it is always interesting. I just thought the overall story-lines were a bit disjointed and didn't flow as well as I thought they should. That said, I will certainly pick up the next volume in the series as I think the good aspects of the title far outweigh the gripes.

Jesse says

I hadn't read this material in a while and was worried that it might not be as enjoyable 13 years later. I was wrong. I still loved this stuff. Ellis is in there with his controlled chaotic take on things and his effortlessly fun and smart character dialogue and Bryan Hitch does a fantastic job bringing the characters to visual life with the coloring help of Paul Neary.

We get massively powerful supers dashing around the globe to put down evil megalomaniacs, stopping extradimensional invasions, and then they deal with some kind of elder god. All while saying things like "I've been waiting to punch someone in the brains all goddam day". This was the first deconstruction of the classic Justice League/Avengers team I'd ever read aside from "Watchmen" and this was just more fun and hopeful on many levels while still being gritty and very dark at times.

I recommend this to fans of super heroes and comics, and especially to fans of Warren Ellis. This is the ultimately positive outcome of what for me was a largely barren decade of comics (pay close attention to the "largely" not that is not "completely" there were still a few great and good things to come out of the 90's just not as much as I'd like and they mostly came at the end). Run out to your local comic shop and pick this up, or to your nearest bookstore. Support brick & mortar bookstores!

Quentin Wallace says

If you enjoy hard sci-fi in your superhero stories, then the Authority is the book for you. It's a darker, more proactive version of the JLA at its core, but to simply write them off as yet another superhero team isn't fair.

This book has deep science fiction roots. For example, their base is a giant spaceship that exists in the same "space" as Earth, just in another dimension. Therefore, they simply step through a door and can be anywhere on Earth in seconds. Also the characters are a little more science based as well. You have your Superman in Apollo, and your Batman in Midnighiter (who are a gay couple btw), but after that the characters get harder to define.

If you like huge, epic, superteam stories with heroes that aren't afraid to get their hands dirty, then this is the book for you. If the review sounds a little unclear, it's because it's hard to truly describe this book in the space and time I have available. Overall, I think anyone who's a comic fan should try out this first volume and make their own judgment.

Callum Shephard says

Chances are if you've ever read a Wildstorm comic it was this one.

Created back in the late 90s by Warren Ellis, The Authority was an attempt to follow up an idea introduced in Stormwatch: Superheroes actively trying to actively improve the entire world. While Superman might take down Lex Luthor every week and Captain America might rail against unjust governmental acts (thanks for that Tony) they're rarely displayed as characters attempting to actively reshape the world. They'll preserve it, try to keep it from falling into anarchy, but when was the last time either attempted to enact drastic political change or take out a dictator? World War II? The Cold war? The last time Doctor Doom was mentioned before the status quo came into effect?

The Authority was an attempt to change that somewhat and show a new approach for superheroing. A good if unfortunately flawed one.

Taking place directly after the events of WildC.A.T.s/Aliens, the world is in turmoil. With Stormwatch having been disbanded following the events and almost all its members dead or M.I.A. the United Nations is left without a metahuman force to help defend it. Many are seeking to take advantage of this with no way to actively stop them. At least until Jenny Sparks and Stormwatch Black re-emerge acting on their own, fighting for the world but not those who run it.

This first volume, Relentless, is divided separately into two stories and both establish the themes of the series. While they do feature the team combating enemies and reacting to threats much like a traditional superhero team would, they display different methods and motivations than you would ever expect. Ellis himself described them as a group who tries to deal with every threat by "punching it and/or dropping something on it" and that's fairly clear very early on. This isn't to say that those they fight don't deserve such treatment or require so much force to be finished, but it's what helps to clearly distance the team from both others within Wildstorm and the big two of Marvel and DC. Half the time they're written as villains simply fighting much bigger, much uglier, villains.

None of this is to say that the protagonists themselves are unlikable and defined only by acts of violence. It would have been a very easy thing to have the whole thing backslide into the grimacing, emotionally bland characters who dominated the Dark Age. Thankfully they instead come across as being very human. For every time they're shown to be forced to kill hundreds in the defence of Earth they're never shown to be actively enjoying it (okay, except Midnighter) and treat it more as being their day job. Every time they're forced to go all out to help halt some hugely destructive force from taking down civilisation as we know it, there are at least a couple of quiet scenes to try and help break up the action and give development on a more personal level. It's this latter aspect especially which helps to make it far more enjoyable than a lot of modern big titles and more than a few of the New 52's ongoing series.

It's almost enough to help you forget that, for all the backstory and characterisation we're given there's no real origin for these characters.

Yeah, this is the big flaw within this comic. While it's great to see the first arc not be completely caught up in an origin story there's no denying that a great deal of the time it was relying upon people having read Stormwatch. A lot of what was shown in that comic such as Sparks' background is attempted to be shown again here, but almost everyone either lacks a definitive origin or if one is given it's explained in a brief throwaway scene. The Engineer details how she got the nanomachines which feels more like an excuse more than anything else and the Doctor has even less of an introduction, and both of these are effectively brand new characters. Oh you get their personalities fast enough and understand how they think and act but you it lacks the fine details. The same argument might be made of the villain of the first story Kaizen Gamorra, again previously introduced in another comic, but at least in his case we're given an atmospherically detailed background. Still, when you can get past it the characters are easily some of the most naturally feeling interactions in almost any comic. Balancing out the fantastical with attitudes and conversations which feel like they would come from real people taking on the Authority's role in the world.

Bryan Hitch's art seriously helps to further bring the world to life with his usual high levels of detail and shows why he was exactly the right artist for this. His highly detailed refined style helps emphasise upon the scale of the threats and destruction, but unlike Miguel Sepulveda he has no problems drawing expressive human figures or facial features.

You might have noticed that unlike a lot of the comics I've reviewed, much of the plot and actual events have not been commented upon. There's a reason for that, as even going into it in my usual spoiler-free style would ruin moments far better handled in the actual comic itself. Yet if you've not guessed it from what you've seen here The Authority: Relentless is an exceptionally good trade collection, and a prime example of how comics can display true innovation without betraying their basic aspects. With paperbacks going for around £11-12.00 on Amazon.co.uk, this is definitely a must buy for anyone looking for something different with superheroes. It's not for everyone and you'll find yourself being bugged by fine details which have been left to other issues, but there's no denying the quality behind the work. Definitely take a look if you're interested.

Patrick says

This is one of those rare superhero comics that you can pick up and enjoy without knowing anything at all about 70 year long convoluted soap-opera history of superheros.

That's just what I did about a decade ago. Didn't read superhero comics. Picked this one up and loved it.

Years later, after I'd read a lot more comics and knew a lot more about the standard Marvel and DC sets of heroes, I read these again and saw the subtle (and the not-so-subtle) satire running through the series.

That's the mark of a truly wonderful story in my opinion. That you can enjoy it on multiple levels, depending on how much you know about the genre. That's something I strive for in my own writing.

Joe S says

I'm willing to forgive quite a bit in a first trade paperback, just because of the necessary set-up drudgery and the way most writers seem to need an issue or eight before they feel comfortable with their characters. *The Authority* has the added advantages of a manic colorist (I think this title would be sweet on acid) and two queer characters who aren't (gasp) villains beaten to bloody pulps and pissed on every third issue by a hairy-chested blonde wearing an Amerikan flag. And I'll admit -- seeing a queer relationship treated (when it's treated at all) as a resounding non-issue is enough for me to put Volume 2 on my wish list. But there are a couple major problems I'll expect to see addressed before I bother with Volume 3.

First, and most importantly, I want someone to follow through on Grant Morrison's promise in the foreword that "*The Authority* has endowed the tired superhero archetypes with vigorous new meaning." Cuz it seems like the same tired shit to me, only minus the patriotic oo-rah. An evil man tries to take over the world, with no motive beyond the absolute joy he takes in being evil. He has a sight-n-sound spectacular. It is countered by an even greater sight-n-sound spectacular, akin to the 300-mile thick wall of solid Green Lantern will-power. (*Dude, no shit? Maaan.*) An occasional graphically violent panel is evidently meant to convince the reader that this is "adult" and thus not, as she may have previously been thinking, utterly sophomoric. And it isn't until the second storyline, in which an evil alien wants to perpetuate his bloodline (slightly more plausible motive) by turning China into a "rape camp" (*sigh*...so close), that we finally start to get something resembling *characters*, let alone brand spankin new meaning. So step it up, boys.

Also, soliloquies in the midst of dodging an un-dodgeable city block thrown directly at your head -- that pisses me off. Just so we're clear. Maybe if the writer would spend less time trying to explain how, exactly, an army of 200 cloned super-things appeared in the middle of L.A. (or even wrote a story *without* an army of 200 cloned super-things), he'd have more room in the issue for the characters to deliver their soliloquies while sitting on a couch. Why does "action" always have to involve big walls of solid will-power that save China from being a rape camp? Doesn't anyone read Henry James anymore?

China is always already a rape camp in his novels.

Brendan M. says

Pretty good! I think I prefer Planetary but I enjoyed this. My one complaint is that at four issues a piece of 20 pages, the two arcs in this were not long enough. I really wanted more with Sliding Albion!

Julian says

This was, frankly, a disappointment. The premise is excellent: a bunch of individuals with superhuman powers led by an English lunatic acquire an orbital fortress and inform the world that they are now in charge, and they will prevent bad things from happening. What they decide are bad things anyway . . .

You can see the promise. The whole idea of a small group taking it on themselves to legislate for everyone else what is good and bad without being answerable to anyone is the stuff of nightmare and dystopia. Plato envisaged it in *The Republic*, Orwell wrote about it in 1984, Clarke almost did it in *Childhood's End*, but wimped out and made the aliens *nice*, Alan Moore did in unforgettably in *Watchmen*, and here Warren Ellis had the opportunity to go one stage further and show just how horrifying the rule of a philosopher king might be.

So, I was hoping that Jenny Sparks would go even more bonkers and start (oh, I don't know) sterilising entire nations because someone somewhere said something she didn't like. But, after a terribly impressive set-up (the gang are cool, their orbital fortress very much more so, and the ideas around the structure of the multiverse are neat) we run into a huge, fundamental problem. *All the people that 'The Authority' take on are indubitably bad*. You know, crime lords who wipe out cities for fun, invading alien monsters from another dimension, that sort of thing. So, apart from the odd snarky comment from Jenny, 'The Authority' come out looking, well, actually as if they're the solution, whereas in fact they're as much part of the problem as the people they battle. But then, it's easy to support fascist overlords in times of threat; Ellis should have shown us 'The Authority' dispensing peace and justice.

Aside from that, the graphics are good, indeed excellent. There are some neat jokes (like one based on the iconic shot from 'Independence Day' which you'll know when you see it). As simple stories of superhero derring do, they're not bad, except: the good guys win just too easily. They seem, between them, to be more or less omnipotent and indestructible. So there's not much in the way of tension (this gets even worse in the sequel *The Authority Vol. 2: Under New Management*).

So, in summary, it's not a bad book, but I had expected much more.

Riku Sayuj says

Mildly disappointed as I was expecting something much better than an alternate (albeit darker) Justice League from this. But, it was good fun nevertheless and wildly imaginative in short bursts.

Carlos Eguren says

"The Authority es el primer cómic de superhéroes del siglo XXI. Seamos honestos. A su lado, todo parece rancio, descolorido, repetitivo".

Grant Morrison escribió la cita con la que se abre este comentario en la introducción del primer volumen de *The Authority*. No sabemos bien si fue todo lo que señala el guionista escocés, pero sí tuvo que suponer una ruptura para su época.

The Authority de Warren Ellis mira el género de los superhéroes no desde su propia perspectiva, sino desde el punto de vista de la ciencia ficción y el cinismo de aquellos que saben que la realidad no siempre se reduce al blanco y negro (es más, aquí hay mucho rojo... rojo sangre).

En una etapa en que se comenzaba a notar cierta fatiga en el género de superhéroes, Warren Ellis escribió The Authority para Wildstorm. Sería un cómic que marcaría muchas obras que vendrían a continuación gracias a un enfoque más adulto, donde no se dudaba en plasmar de forma plástica la violencia, la sangre y la destrucción.

Al igual que una superproducción que no temiese ser para mayores de dieciocho, los personajes de The Authority tienden a una violencia radical, tanto como su forma de ver el mundo. No nos encontramos con superhéroes que quieren bajar a gatitos de un árbol, sino con metahumanos dispuestos a masacrar al enemigo.

my link text">Seguir leyendo

Nadine Jones says

Volume 1, "Relentless," contains two (seemingly unrelated) story arcs: "The Circle" and "Shiftships."

The story (stories?) was interesting, very weird, a little bit confusing, and definitely different. This is volume 1, but the action picks up where another series, Stormwatch, left off. There is enough exposition for me to keep up, however.

It was overall kind of meh, because whatever evil was thrown at The Authority, they countered it quickly and with apparent ease (although with extremely high civilian casualties, which they don't seem too concerned about) so there wasn't all that much actual plot tension. All Powerful beings are boring.

Extra points to Ellis for spelling "all right" correctly.

I wasn't thrilled with the art. The characters' faces and body types are fine, except for the Big Bad, Kaizen Gamorra, who is drawn as a stereotypical Asian bad guy, right down to slants eyes, buck teeth, and a long stringy mustache - like, seriously, guys?? You couldn't do better than that??? And Midnighter looks like Batman, which was confusing - why was he drawn to look like Batman?? The color palette chosen by Laura Depuy was awfully dark, made it hard for me to see what was going on a lot of pages. And Brian Hitch made some odd choices for facial expressions - often the characters are shown with huge beaming smiles, while saying non-happy things like: "I'm still alive, so I did okay." It makes them seem insane. (Or was that the point?)
