



Ultimate Comics Ultimates, Volume 2: Two Cities. Two Worlds.

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The Ultimates deal with the fallout of the new world! An old friend returns! Can Nick Fury pick up the pieces of his broken team?

Collecting: *Ultimate Comics: Ultimates 7-12*

Ultimate Comics Ultimates, Volume 2: Two Cities. Two Worlds. Details

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From Reader Review Ultimate Comics Ultimates, Volume 2: Two Cities. Two Worlds. for online ebook

Mario says

This review originally appeared on my blog, Shared Universe Reviews.

The second half of the story that began in Ultimate Comics: The Ultimates volume 1 continues in this volume but only until about half way. As of issue #10 the creative team begins to shift and begins to lead the story into a slightly new direction. More importantly, it announces the end of what was easily one of the more interesting Marvel comics of 2012.

Hickman continues to add more conflict in his story by introducing characters and events from previous Ultimate Universe stories. The big addition here being primarily adding Hulk to the mix. I really like the Ultimate Universe Hulk and the main reasons are that he continues to be intelligent when in Hulk form and he rarely reverts back to Bruce Banner. Hickman also further develops certain elements that were introduced in the first six issues such as Tian, the Heavenly Cities, floating cities populated by newly evolved super humans governed and protected by star headed brothers (quite literally).

As expected, Nick Fury and his Ultimates attempt to stop the growing threat of the Maker and his City. Also as expected, Hickman continues to add new elements to the escalating conflict which surprises the readers as well as the story's heroes. This is the kind of conflict that makes us wonder what drives these people to continuously put their lives on the line to defend a planet that doesn't appreciate the difficulties of protecting them. You really have to wonder. The Ultimates go through a physical and emotional hell on a regular basis. They've lost members from emotional and physical breakdowns and some have even been killed. I'm not sure how to absorb certain aspects of their behaviour. Thor, Iron Man and Fury's main superpower seems to be stubbornness. They refuse to give up despite the fact that they're up against something they barely understand and clearly won't be able to defeat without more loss than gain. Hickman excels at writing a story set in a world of incredibly unique and powerful beings co-exist and what happens when they're all participating in a global conflict. I seem to have answered my own question regarding the Ultimates motivation. With a threat so large as the Maker and the City, survival is as much of a reason to fight as any other.

The biggest disappointment of this volume is on the art side of things. Ribic's last issue on art is #9. After his departure he's followed by five other artists led by Luke Ross. Ross's art is unpleasant after reading nine issues of Ribic. There is a heavy and obvious use of photo reference that serves only to make everything, especially the characters, look uncomfortably stiff. Some pages are much better than others and he draws certain characters better than others as well but overall it's too dependent on photo references for my tastes. By issue #10, White has also left. He is replaced for one issue by Matt Wilson and, for the last two issues in this collection, Matt Milla. Wilson and Milla's colouring styles are similar to one another but very, very different from White's. The new colouring no longer fits the tone of the story that began in the first issue. Things, including people, are too bright. Instead of helping the comic's narrative, the colouring distracts and forces me out of the story. Faces are overly coloured, different shades and hues are added to further demonstrate expressions and to put it simply the storytelling suffers as a result of the new colourists.

I don't think I'll be picking up the next volume. After the decreasing quality of the art and Hickman's departure after the conclusion of this story in issue #12, I have no reason to return for the third volume. I have nothing against Sam Humphries in particular. He collaborated with Hickman for the last three issues

and I would assume he was primarily responsible for the scripting and the dialogue and Hickman mostly took care of the plot. It's difficult to say for sure, of course, but that's the feeling I got while reading it. The main difference in scripting was that there were more jokes included in the dialogue and that demonstrated once more how the new creative team didn't understand the tone of the story being told. From the bright colours to the stiff character poses and the unnecessary attempts at humour, Humphries and Ross will be continuing their work on The Ultimates without me. I'm just glad I took the time to read the first 12 issues of the series which are excellent, despite some of its flaws. If you enjoyed volume you'll no doubt be reading this volume as well and I hope the changes in the creative team don't bother you as much as I bothered me. Either way, it's nice to know that daring stories, such as this one, can still exist in the modern comics industry even if they are short lived.

Holden Attradies says

Really enjoying the re-launch of the Ultimate line. This was SOOOOO close to a five star review, but what I felt it really came down to is too much was going on for one comic. Too many characters and plot lines pulling in too many directions making it feel like the plot was badly paced. And there were a few things that I wasn't sure if I just missed them in the Ultimate lines history or if they were just sloppily eluded to here. Good example: She Hulk! Was this the first mention of her? I also felt they put zero effort into explaining how Sue captured Reed and was going to keep him captured. I'm REALLY hoping it is covered ASAP in the next volume.

As for Tony's Tumor son, I Loved it! I thought it was great and hope the kid sticks around as a character and as his son.

James DeSantis says

This was a meh followup to a great start.

So Evil Reed is about to make his move but shield decides to use their ace up their sleeve. They throw in the Hulk to take down Reed and his City. So what happens? Well, Reed convinces Hulk to join him and get back at the people who tricked him. Then Tony and Thor work together to take down Reed and his army and...well that's what happens because Hickman hops off this book to write main Avengers and Sam takes over so they had to wrap up.

Good: The art is still good. The fights are small but Hulk's rampage is pretty great. The idea of Hulk being reasoned with by one of the smartest man in the world is great. Also, last but not least, Tony going a bit crazy cause of the tumor is pretty interesting.

Bad: The wrap up to the story is kind of weak. Just a simple "Victory" after ALL that great build up. You could tell the story was supposed to be way longer. I also thought the dialog would alter between great and okay.

Overall a okay ending. Still entertaining but not nearly as great as the first part. A 3 out of 5.

Nathan says

The Ultimates have been through some really rough patches as of late with the deplorable Ultimates 3 and the mediocre and very comic book-like Ultimates brought to us by the return of Mark Millar here we are introduced to yet another rendition of the Ultimates by Jonathan Hickman. And it's pretty bad.

The first thing that's wrong about this series is that it suffers from inconsistent artwork you can't have three or more artists on a book the shift in drawing style is as bad as shifting tone in writing. The story basically revolves around an evolving city created by an insane Reed Richards which is a great character to go insane - an evil genius is something truly to be terrified of but unfortunately the city is used as a catch-all hero deterrent. Reed's goals are also pretty stupendous too and how they defeat is also very stupid too. The other thing is that apparently The Ultimates are returning to reality at least to borrow Barack Obama from the Oval Office...and murder him.

Yes that's right the current POTUS is killed after he makes a decision that marks him as a clown in the comics world and my reaction to this is summed up in 3 words: WTF. Why would you suddenly bring a real life person into a book only to make him look really stupid. We've seen Bush and Cheney in Ultimates before but they only serve to remind us the story is supposed to be taking place in reality. This was the moment I truly detested this story not only for wasting my time but for brazenly doing something so stupid to be considered "edgy" and "real."

Anthony says

This turned out to be better than I thought it would. Also, I like evil Reed. With his misshaped head and sprawling elasticity. He's so brilliantly comic book cliché villain.

Arun Divakar says

So after much dilly-dallying I finally finished the second volume of Jonathan Hickman's run of the Ultimates. Most of the loose ends are tied together in this volume and yes eventually our heroes do manage to win the battle. The specifics of the battle are quite immaterial as far as the review goes but overall this volume is a big let-down. While I was not aware of it initially, there were two writers who worked on this volume and there is a jarring discontinuity during the plot which is a complete dampener. As a reader I have not done enough research to understand which writer wrote which volume but somewhere along the course of the journey, the whole thing gets flung out of the window.

The final battle between Reed Richards and what is left of the Ultimates finally arrives and it is disastrous to say the least. Richards, his city and its inhabitants are set up as an unstoppable force during 75% of the series and all of a sudden in the space of about ten or so panels they are all vanquished. Rewinding the whole series in my mind was like watching someone paint themselves into a corner or more like watching a movie which suddenly jumps to the conclusion offering paper thin explanations. Here is my take on how the key characters play their roles out :

- The Hulk and Reed Richards : The arrival of the Hulk to Richards's fortress is like watching a hammer fall and it all deflates as suddenly as it started. The way that the Hulk is used for the rest of the story is rather frivolous and ridiculous. It was an absolute waste of the character and his motivations. There is also a short revelation scene between Tony and Susan Storm which had zero value add to the overall plot.
- Nick Fury, Black Widow and Hawkeye : After a series of fits and starts, Fury and the two Ultimates go rogue and then finally...disappear. As the tale reaches the end they are nowhere to be seen even as they had been driving the plot onward initially.
- Tony Stark, Thor and the United States Government : It is rather preposterous that Tony does not suit up even once during this volume. It is fun and games to watch Tony Stark the man but what brings me to a book is Iron Man and not Stark himself when there is an Ultimates storyline in the offing. This surprisingly is an unfulfilled wish and there is no armoured avenger in the series. Over the course of the two volumes, Thor gets much more of screen time than any of the others but that is saying a lot too. The less I say about the storyline featuring the US Government the better for the whole administration is made to look like sock puppets.
- The children of tomorrow and The People : This is the funniest bit of story. We are told of the awesomeness of power with both of them and they both head for an apocalyptic showdown and poof ! The entire plot disappears and there is no more mention of this anymore.

Why is it that most Avengers storylines are so dreadful ?

Aaron says

Woof. I've rarely read a series that started with so much promise and squandered it so suddenly. Volume 1 blasted out of the gate full throttle with action and tension, building to an amazing cliffhanger centered around an insurmountable enemy.

Then, Volume 2 completely shits the bed. The tension is held for about 2 issues, then for some reason Sam Humphries takes over as writer, and just keep up with Hickman. The story falls apart like a house of cards, and ultimately is resolved by one of the stupidest deus ex machina "twists" I've ever read in comics. It doesn't make a lick of sense, especially since Hickman went to great lengths to set up that there is absolutely no way to sneak up on Reed Richards or his City of Tomorrow. And yet, just to get out of the story, the Ultimates somehow do it anyway.

Add in the fact that The People, who Hickman meticulously established in the previous volume and his Ultimate Hawkeye storyline, just completely disappear from this volume with no explanation of where they went. The plot very clearly centered around a huge confrontation between The People and The Children of Tomorrow, but that stuff just vanishes. Instead we get a sub-par Avengers plotline that barely feels like it exists in the same universe as the previous volume.

Also, this comic kills off Barack Obama. It's not directly stated that it's Obama, but the art very much indicates that it's Obama. What an insane thing for a bad comic to do without ever really living in the consequences!

Skip this whole thing. The terrible payoff in this volume totally undermines everything Hickman was doing in Volume 1. I feel like Christmas was canceled.

Martin says

This book could've gotten 5 stars, but there were a number of things that bugged me about it, and that ended up lowering the "score" to 4 stars. Let's go over it, shall we?

1 Here we have the Celestials & the Eternals from Hickman's Ultimate Comics Hawkeye going head-to-head with Reed Richards' Children Of Tomorrow, as introduced in Ultimate Comics: Ultimates by Jonathan Hickman Volume 1. It's quite a battle, but unfortunately we don't *really* get to see a lot of it, and the outcome is sort of left open and there are no clear winners.

2 I really didn't like the whole 'getting rid of Fury & the Ultimates' plotline. Sure, they may have lost the initial battle with Reed Richards, but they were still, in my opinion, the world's best hope. The US government's solution? Why, sending in the Hulk to wreck pretty much everything, of course... only to have him talked down by Reed and turned into the latter's ally. *Whaaat?*

3 The US president *first* sends EVERY SINGLE nuclear missile at his disposal to destroy the City & the Dome, *then* tells the members of his government what he's done. Reed retaliates by obliterating Washington, DC with an anti-matter device. Boom. Big crater.

4 As if the "action" wasn't enough, the author(s?) [because at this point Hickman was co-writing with Humphries] decide to mix some "comedy" to the whole thing: Flumm, the incompetent replacement Director of S.H.I.E.L.D., and Tony Stark's sentient brain tumor (*again: whaaat?*)

5 Reed is taken down too easily, in my opinion, and we don't even have a clear idea what actually happens to him afterwards. This last point also applies to the Celestials, the Eternals, and the Children Of Tomorrow. Where are they now? What are they doing? Don't know...

6 Still no Captain America. And no, the 2-page cameo at the end of the book doesn't count.

7 What's up with all the different artists? Okay, maybe Ribic can't keep up with the shipping schedule and another artist steps in (like in Volume 1), but issues 11 & 12 had a ridiculous amount of different artists, and we're not even at a "milestone" issue (#25, #50, etc.) where Marvel likes to have a slew of artists "pay homage" or whatever. The Ultimate line is already at its second relaunch, can we keep the standards just *a bit* higher, please?

So yes, it was quite a ride. Thanks, Hickman. Earth in the Ultimate Universe is a *very* different place after this story arc, it'll be interesting to see where the next creative team(s) take it. How much more stuff can they blow up, anyway?

Sean Goh says

Fun watching Reed Richards get his comeuppance, who said cancer is always bad for you?

Matt says

Collects Ultimate Comics Ultimates #7-12

This story is a direct continuation of Volume 1, as opposed to the start of a new storyline. I loved what Jonathan Hickman did in this book.

Without any spoilers, I'll say that Hickman's 12-issue run on Ultimates is very close to being required reading before experiencing Marvel 2015 event, "Secret Wars."

As usual, because of the cinematic style of the Ultimate Universe, this comic was a quick read.

SPOILERS:

Reed Richards is such a good villain. I bet that Hickman enjoyed writing Reed as a great hero in the 616 Fantastic Four and as an evil villain in the Ultimate Universe. This character really works both ways because of his immense genius. You could see him going either direction.

Reed recruiting the Hulk was a great surprise, and the final battle was a lot of fun to read. I was really surprised by how Reed retaliated against the Americans after the President bombed The City. Events in this book set up the next story well, although Hickman doesn't write the next Ultimates' storyline, "Divided We Fall." It is instead written by the Ultimate Universe architect, Brian Michael Bendis.

Trevor Dailey says

The Maker is a devilishly wonderful villain and a great character. Good read.

Alex Sarll says

In a standard superhero universe, heroes go mad and/or evil from time to time, and cities (even countries) get destroyed - but there's an extratextual, editorial force making sure that nobody freaks out for too long, that everything gets sorted out and the overall resemblance to our own Earth is more-or-less maintained.

Some few comics have gone beyond that. Generally, the idea then is that the most powerful creature in the world is also (like that type's model - Superman) the best morally. After some difficulties on the way, a utopia of sorts is achieved.

Hickman's *Ultimates*, more even than the original Millar run, wonders what would really happen if you unleashed an escalating series of gods, monsters and superscience on the modern world, freed of the genre's two great comforting constraints. The result, as seen in this volume, is not pretty, but it's terribly plausible.

Mike says

Enjoyed this but was put off by some aspect of the storytelling that made it hard to really get into the story. Was the pacing off? Did the characters behave oddly? Or was it just the choppy plot threads?

It reminded me of the Authority: Revolution 12-issue series by Brubaker where the heroes were getting their asses handed to them issue after issue, and then almost out of nowhere in the last issue, they almost arbitrarily end up overcoming their foes. Here too - Reed and the Children seem to be unstoppable, except when they're finally not.

I still enjoyed this, and I'd like to see where Hickman takes this very broken universe next, but I can't say this was on the level of emotional engagement that I felt during other big plot lines in the Ultimate Marvel U.

Gavin says

Part 2 of the story of the City, and the Children of Tomorrow. The City is a fully evolved sentient construct city populated by advanced bred humans, genetically engineered for 1000 years in a much shorter time. (Yes that's right) The man who designed this Fantastic world, "The Maker" is someone you'll all recognize and it sort of makes sense, but I still think more background reading would have helped me. It also features the arrival of someone you wouldn't like when he's angry, and continuing efforts of Nick Fury and his Ultimates/SHIELD people: Thor, Iron Man, Black Widow, Falcon, Hawkeye. After being utterly spanked by the City, they turn to a possible ally in the People (mutants, led by Xorn and his twin Zorn). Washington DC is destroyed, all Congress and the President, dead; Nukes have destroyed sections of South America, Southeast Asia is destroyed after trying to get rid of the People, and the City has rooted itself in Europe and destroyed most of Germany, France, Belgium, etc.

With all this breaking loose, what will the 'good guys' do to get out of this one? How will they defeat the Maker and the City? Or will they have to bow down?

The ending to this book is in so many ways a brilliant idea, that it earns the extra star. Such an interesting premise I really enjoyed it, even if some of the rest of the story left some gaps.

Recommended, but start with Vol 1, it sets the stage for this.

Justin says

Jonathan Hickman and Esad Ribic's fantastic reboot of the Ultimates continues in this new collection. Asgard lies in ruins thanks to ultimate villain Reed Richards (that's still a shock) and his Children of Tomorrow, who have set up their City in Europe, killing thousands and repelling the Ultimates' initial assault. Now with additional superhuman unrest in Asia (see Ultimate Comics Hawkeye by Jonathan Hickman), the fight is about to explode.

This part of the story is almost all chaos and destruction. Richards attacks the US, SHIELD decides to imprison Nick Fury and the Ultimates, the Hulk changes sides and the Celestials and Eternals are drawn into the fight. It gets a bit confusing at times, probably more so if you haven't been following the Ultimate Hawkeye and Ultimate X-Men titles, but there is a satisfying resolution once the dust has settled.

As with the first volume, you never really get the full-on Ultimates experience, since the players are scattered across the various conflict points, but the story as a whole is very entertaining and is more than worthy of the Ultimates name. Thor and Iron man in particular shine here, and it's good to see Hawkeye take such a prominent role in the Ultimate Universe.

Esan Ribic (aided by Luke Ross), turns in another outstanding collection of pages. His approach is very stylized, very detailed, and while he doesn't have Bryan Hitch's cinematic style he does have a very memorable style of storytelling.

In the end I was very pleased with the closing half of this new Ultimates epic and with the larger Ultimates relaunch. It has enough of what made the first two Ultimates series such classics, and continues to keep the Ultimate Marvel Universe vibrant and edgy.
