

Exiles Ultimate Collection - Book 1 by Mike McKone,Jim Calafiore,Judd Winick



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Led by Blink, who hails from the wildly popular X-Men storyline "Age of Apocolypse," the Exiles consist of heroes pulled from alternate times and universes who are sent to correct problems in the multiverse. Their adventures span hundreds of different worlds, setting events and characters back on their proper course - or else risk having them "blink" out of existence! Collects Exiles #1-19.



Reviews of the Exiles Ultimate Collection - Book 1 by Mike McKone,Jim Calafiore,Judd Winick

Ricep

At first glance, Exiles seems like a silly way to tie in the old "What If?" series' in a fast-paced, action-packed format with a small cast to guide us from one messed up alternate universe to the next. At its core, though, Exiles is a moving human drama. The Exiles, so named because they are a band of

misplaced versions of X-Men characters we know and love (Morph, Blink, Warpath, Sunfire, Mimic, and Magnus, to name a few), are "stuck together" in a journey they don't control to fix the time streams in many different alternate realities. In one reality, Professor X is evil, driven to madness by the mutant-hating humans who rose to power. In another, Tony Stark is President of the United States. In a third, the Exiles must kill Jean Grey, possessed by the Dark Phoenix. The dilemmas they face are difficult, but they face them together, which cause them to grow close to one another. Some are lost along the way, adding tension for the reader -- no one is safe from being "killed off" in this series! If you like alternate dimensions, if you enjoy strong character development, and if you love the comedic and dramatic aspects the X-Men mythology has delivered over the past forty years, then this is for you.

Konetav

This is the first collection of this 2000s Marvel Comics series. Exiles follows a team of superheroes (most of whom are alternate takes on already-established characters) as they hop from alternate dimension to alternate dimension, righting wrongs and saving worlds, often finding themselves stuck in moral dilemmas and losing more than one teammate along the way. The team leader is Blink, one of the few survivors of the alternate reality Age of Apocalypse storyline, who carries on in Marvel's grand Kitty Pryde tradition of feisty and strong female superheroes. Blink makes for a great viewpoint character, since she is as unfamiliar with long-running continuity and storylines as many readers and needs a quick explanation from the other characters. Naturally this series would be more easily understood and perhaps better appreciated by longtime readers, but isn't so mired in continuity that it will be incomprehensible to casual or even new readers.

The first 19 issues contained in this volume are written by Judd Winick, who I've usually found to be a hit-or-miss writer, but he brings a strong sense of characterization to Exiles. Every member of the team has a clear and consistent voice (my personal favorite is shape shifting motormouth Morph). The team also never remains static; old members are constantly leaving and new members constantly joining the team. The worlds which the characters visit are alternate takes on the Marvel universe (i.e. a world in which the Lizard took over the planet, a world in which Professor X is evil, a world in which Wolverine leads the Canadian superteam Alpha Flight, and even a world where the Skrulls invaded in the 1800s and have turned all the familiar superheroes into gladiators). If you were a fan of shows like Quantum Leap and Sliders, you should enjoy Exiles. It's essentially a new version of Marvel's old What If...? comic, but with a regular cast visiting and having an impact on each world, rather than just the Watcher narrating like a bald Rod Serling. Mike McKone's art also establishes a strong visual identity for the book (I guess one could call it "detailed simplicity"). As for the book's tone, it remains light and enjoyable, despite the fact that there are often dire consequences for the characters. The two-part storyline where the character visit the Mojoverse is actually titled "So Lame", so that should give a reader an idea of what the book's like.

Vivara

Exiles: Ultimate Collection Book 1 collects Exiles, vol. 1, issues #1-19, originally published between 2001 and 2003 (and previously collected as Exiles 1 (Down the Rabbit Hole, Volume 1 number 1), Exiles Vol. 2: A World Apart (v. 2), and Exiles Vol. 3: Out of Time (X-Men) (v. 3)). Like other Marvel Ultimate editions, this is a hefty paperback graphic novel--480 pages--with decent but not great production values. There are no table of contents, page numbers, individual issue credits (the original credits have been scrubbed from the title pages), nor creator commentary. There is, however, some bonus content: a variant cover, an un-used cover, a pin-up, and the original script to Exiles #7 (which featured no dialogue).

There's a lot of story here, and--for the most part--it's pretty entertaining. Judd Winick's characters are interesting, likable superheroes with well-developed personalities that change as the series progresses. Indeed, despite its frequent "big battle" sequences and What If? stylings, Exiles is at its core a character drama, in which the real action takes place in the relationships that develop

between the team members. Indeed, the best individual stories, such as "Play Date," "Nocturne and Evensong," and the beautiful "A Chance to Dream" (told without dialogue) dispense with fight scenes altogether. For all that's good about its emphasis on character, however, Exiles unfortunately drags a bit during the actual superhero segments of the plot. No doubt this is partly a problem caused by the premise (why should the reader care what happens to a myriad of alternate realities?), but Winick exacerbates it by making the dimension-hopping rules so elastic that they often feel like a shallow (and sometimes nonsensical) gimmick. As for the art, Mike McKone and Jim Calafiore's pencils are often good and occasionally (as in issue #7) great.

Overall, this collection is a great value, and is well worth the purchase for fans of Winick or the Marvel Comics universe in general. Be warned, however, that Exiles is a series specifically aimed at long-time readers of Marvel's books. Readers lacking a general knowledge of Marvel's characters and history may find the bigger story lines confusing and difficult to care about. Casual comic book readers should thus probably pass on this one.

Zaryagan

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This series is great for "X" fans and non "X" fans alike. If you're familiar with X-Men, this is great as it plays on what you already know about the characters. If you're not X-Men familiar don't despair. This series is great and develops incredibly well. Winick is masterful at writing convincing and engaging sub-plots between characters. The artwork of McKone and Caliafiore is great. It suits the comic well.

You won't be disappointed in this series if you like interesting team stories and the realistic developments between characters.

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