



## Essential X-Men, Vol. 8

*Chris Claremont, Louise Simonson, Terry Austin, Walter Simonson (Text), Marc Silvestri (Illustrations), Rick Leonardi (Illustrations), Rob Liefeld (Illustrations), Arthur Adams (Illustrations)*

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The X-Men are dead to the world, and evildoers a-plenty are willing to make the hoax a reality! See the debuts of characters and concepts that sculpted the struggles and souls of the mightiest mutants for years to come - including the Reavers, Genosha and the Conover Crusade! The Brood barge in and the Marauders mix it up, topped off with a dose of demons who whip up an awe-inspiring Inferno! Guest-starring Magik and the Goblin Queen!

## Essential X-Men, Vol. 8 Details

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Chris Claremont , Louise Simonson , Terry Austin , Walter Simonson (Text) , Marc Silvestri  
Author : (Illustrations) , Rick Leonardi (Illustrations) , Rob Liefeld (Illustrations) , Arthur Adams (Illustrations)

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## From Reader Review Essential X-Men, Vol. 8 for online ebook

### Maurice Jr. says

This collection covers the period just after the X-Men "died" leading up to Inferno.

From driving out the Reavers and claiming their Australian headquarters to facing down the Brood and then the island country Genosha (and the mutants they keep in slavery) to facing a demonized New York and the threat of the Goblin Queen, Sy'm, Nastirh and Mr. Sinister, the merry mutants are pushed to their limits. They won't be the same when the dust settles; them or X-Factor, who steps in to help when the demon horde attacks.

Among other things, the mystery of Madeline Pryor is finally resolved. Who is she really? Where is the baby she and Scott had? Why are the Marauders trying to kill her? What does Mr. Sinister have to do with any of this?

Good reading.

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### The\_Mad\_Swede says

This eighth *Essential X-Men* volume collects *Uncanny X-Men* # 229-243, *Annual* # 12 and *X-Factor* # 36-39 and features the writing of Chris Claremont and Louise Simonson with artwork by Marc Silvestri, Rick Leonardi, Art Adams and Walter Simonson.

Following the events of "The Fall of the Mutants", the X-Men – now consisting of Storm, Wolverine, Colossus, Havoc, Rogue, Psylocke, Dazzler, Longshot and Madelyne Pryor (estranged wife of Scott Summers a.k.a. Cyclops) – battle the cyborg villains known as the Reavers, ending up with a new base of operations in the Australian outback (with the mysterious Aborigine teleporter known as Gateway as an ally of sorts) and in care of the mystical Siege Perilous.

Believed to be dead and invisible to all electronic equipment, the team take on old enemies like the Brood and new ones like the mutant slave state of Genosha with its magistrates and genegineer. All of it leading up to the "Inferno" crossover (the New Mutants parts of which are not reprinted in this volume).

High points in the volume are the opening issue (# 229) with the Reavers and the Genosha story arc (# 235-238), but all in all, another solid *Essential X-Men* volume.

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### Nadia says

I thought this was an improvement over the last one. Last book suffered a lot from massive changes of cast and tbh a lot of it was a chore to get through.

That said the new characters aren't working for me. Longshot and Dazzler, who I loved before, are just kind of there, Havok's irritating and while I like Psylocke I loved Rachel and I'm hella frustrated she's not around for what seems like no good reason.

As for the plots, it was way frustrating to bring up Genosha and talk about how you're going to change shit and then leave without actually doing it. That place is disturbing as hell on a level you don't get out of reading Days of Future Past where have no idea if it's a certain future or not but Genosha is very real and in the present and permanent. There were a lot of other frustrating things about that place and I'd rather not go there ever again but it doesn't look like that's going to happen.

I hated love triangles before and I hate Cyclops forever and Inferno piles triangles on top of triangles and wtf is nippleless Madelyne Pryor but all the same I appreciate that we finally get a reconciliation of I don't know how many storylines.

I still don't get what Sinister or the Marauders' deal is but overall this seems like an improvement. I'm tempted to bump this up to a four just cause of the Illyana\Colossus story. Whatever, Jubilee's up soon!

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## **Bradley says**

I am sensing a severe drop in quality.

Essential X-Men Vol. 8 was written by Chris Claremont. Chris Claremont wrote the X-Men for sixteen years. Chris Claremont wrote 186 issues of The Uncanny X-Men. It was not called Uncanny in the beginning. I don't know when they started calling it Uncanny.

Chris Claremont also wrote one Giant-Size X-Men, possibly more Giant-Size X-Mens, many annuals that I won't bother to look up, a graphic novel which may have been the first graphic novel ever, and maybe some X-Men Christmas Special, maybe not.

The greatest Giant-Sized title was Giant-Sized Man-Thing. I have one of them. The second issue, I think.

Chris Claremont also wrote three issues of a new X-Men title where they dropped the Uncanny before quitting after having a disagreement with the editors. Maybe he went on an editor killing spree? Maybe not, but if I wrote the same comic for sixteen years, I would go on an editor killing spree.

Chris Claremont is not a very good writer. His dialog/captioning is very clunky.

I had an urge yesterday. I could not fight off this urge. It was the urge to write this dialog in my friend's livejournal replies section:

Fools! You have not beaten me! Freezing has only made me stronger! Somehow, this infernal cold has lowered the electrical resistance within my living circuitry! I sense the term -- superconductivity -- enabling my system to work at near ultimate efficiency! I'm thinking with inconceivable speed! Spells, concepts, theorems--my mind is ablaze with knowledge and insight!

He has not responded. I do not care if it wasn't related to his journal entry. I am still very disappointed.

Chris Claremont is awesome. I will destroy anyone who defies Chris Claremont's awesomeness.

Chris Claremont has a few moments of brilliance, like the Dark Phoenix Saga, although John Byrne may be responsible for this brilliance, or the John Byrne-Chris Claremont symbiote (John Byrne drew the comic for a while and co-plotted it, I think)

I have been buying all of the Essential X-Men volumes as they come out. They are released about once a year. They are gigantic phone book-like monsters and are cheap. They are printed in black and white (even though they were originally in color) and on toilet paper. They look awful. They are kind of like the Cerebus collections, except Cerebus is on decent paper and was intended to be printed in black and white.

The art from the earlier volumes didn't look as bad as the newest one. It's like this artist's penciling just doesn't work in black and white, although the inking may be to blame. It would be nice if Marvel Comics actually altered the pages so they would look nice in black and white. They did not. Marvel Comics is not nice. With this newest volume, I often cannot distinguish one character from another.

I have been buying all the Essential X-Men volumes to fill in the holes in my childhood. I loved reading X-Men when I was younger. There were so many things that I did not understand. The thing about Chris Claremont's X-Men comics is that you really need to read all of them from the beginning to know what's going on. He sometimes develops plots from things that happened ten years ago.

During my childhood, these monster books did not exist, so the only way to understand the comic was to buy all the back issues and read them with tweezers. But I never bought all the back issues and read them with tweezers because I was not a kid gazillionaire. Now there's not much of a collector's market anymore, so I could probably get Claremont's entire run for ten grand or something.

I like these monster books.

I think that an issue of X-Men was the first comic that I ever read. It had a fight between Sabretooth and Wolverine (or maybe it was Psylocke?). I did not like the issue. It did not make any sense. I was confused. I did not read another X-Men comic for like five years.

I think I started reading the comic regularly around the time that Chris Claremont's descent into insanity was very noticeable.

There wasn't really an X-Men when I started reading. There wasn't a team. Most of the members died and shit and got resurrected as children or Japanese ninja babes with tremendous breasts. I don't think Wolverine died. I think he was crucified and hallucinated for a year's worth of issues.

So there was no team. The comics were more like solo stories with the members of the team with supporting characters. I think the X-Men thought that their team members were dead or something. I have no idea.

I keep reading these monster volumes, hoping to get up to the point where I started reading the comic. I think this will happen next year. Or maybe I am delusional and it will be many many many years.

I just want to know what the fuck it was all about, even if I am old and wizened when it happens.

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## Rick says

What happens when you have a burned out author still writing his best-selling comic and his plots get derailed by company wide crossovers? You get the mess known as *Inferno*. This was crossover event which attempted to "fix" the problems that had been developing in the various mutant themed titles over the last few years. Not only didn't it fix anything, like most half-assed retroactive continuity "fixes" it only added more layers of complications and absurdly complicated story elements. *X-Men* had devolved into a superhero soap opera in the previous years and this volume illustrates that beautifully.

There is still some beautiful art from Marc Silvestri, Rick Leonardi, Dan Green, Arthur Adams and others but the newly instituted twice a month publishing schedule shows a rushed job on some issues as well as seems in the narrative where the author, Chris Claremont, wasn't able to really sew all the loose ends together as well as he should have.

Also appearing in this volume are the *X-Men*'s new "digs" in the Australian Outback, their new status as "ghosts in the machine" and the first appearance of far too futuristic, and never before mentioned, island nation of Genosha. The effectiveness of Professor Xavier and his dream gets shot to hell with all the retconned mutants, plots and schemes that all happened right under his nose without him even realizing it. This effectively makes what had been Marvel most powerful telepathic retroactively the most easily manipulated and fooled tool every to lead a team. By making Professor X this much of an incompetent, the writers and editors have effectively made him and his dream a joke.

For me the *Inferno* stories were sadly disappointing and caused irreparable damage to the Marvel Mutant Mythos.

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## Sam Poole says

Damn. Alright. So Australia is great. The new team is great. The second brood saga I actually liked more than the first. The Genosha saga was jarring, dark and the most explicit and powerful use of the Mutant Metaphor since God loves man kills. Then there's inferno, including the X-factor issues. SO.

The art has a drop. It begins to bend towards cheesecake for some reason and I do not care for that at all. Also the retcons of all retcons lie here, featuring Madeline Pryor and mister sinister. I'm conflicted about some specifics but overall I think this is peak Claremont- amazing development, deft and stirring plotting and set-ups, epic, consequence laden storylines. Inferno is dicey. Really, really dicey. But the final showdown between jean and Madelyne ultimately is one of the most amazing things he's down so far. Also I can't put into words how good brood pt. 2 is. This is NOT easy reading or an accessible entry point in any remote way, but by this point the quality of the stories (and the fact that I've read over 150 issues of this and related series) is so high that that doesn't bother me.

I AM, however, deeply concerned that the drop in quality and liefeldification is rapidly approaching. The art here is a sign of things to come- most of them not very good. But I will try to remain optimistic as this ends on a rare positive note, and the status quo is reset. Also my next volume of X-factor will probably be quick seeing as many of those issues are in here already!

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## Summer says

Hoo boy. I love the X-Men, and I love Excalibur from this era, but this book roundly bites. The "Siege Perilous" plot device is awfully stupid, especially since the Marvel Universe \*already\* used a \*different\*

Siege Perilous in Captain Britain (and it made sense that time - it was a mystic portal that transformed Brian Braddock into the defender of the British isles, not some sort of dumb jewelry that made superheroes invisible to cameras or whatever). Magical themes don't work well in the X-Men storyline, and their useless relocation to the Australian outback completely negates the more interesting parts of the book - the mutants' struggle with modern society and with the idea of humanity.

Actually, I think this is my least favorite team line-up, too. Longshot and Dazzler are terrible characters, I hate Colossus, Rogue is irritating, Psylocke's okay, but otherwise uninteresting, Storm seems strangely flat with the return of her powers, and only Wolverine keeps my interest. It's good to know that Longshot and Dazzler disappear soon, only to be replaced by better versions of themselves, Gambit and Jubilee. That's right, I said that Gambit is \*better\* than someone. I hate Longshot \*that much\*.

The Genosha storyline was okay, though.

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### **Korynn says**

If you haven't read any Essentials collections, you should know they are black and white reprints of storylines as they were printed. In this case, we are following X-Men continuity and here we find them dead and living in Australia (this all makes sense if you read x-men). We have some interesting stories and the typical pathos and drama of the x-books (in-fighting over boys, murder, death, possession, loss of powers, powers corrupted, resurrection of your ex-girlfriend by an evil mastermind who's fascinated by your genetic makeup...) ending up with the Inferno storyline which is WAAY too long and extremely wordy and boring. There are too many characters, too much boring infighting (wolvie vs angel! rogue vs dazzler! storm vs cyclops! and on and on and on...) and how is it that Havok gets beaten with the ugliest costume stick everytime?! The resolution between Madelyne Pryor and Jean Gray is somewhat dubious (because only one can survive!) and I would just suggest you pass on this volume unless you really enjoy x-men. If you're a hard-core x-fan, go buy the reprints in color!!

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### **Jdetrick says**

Besides the typical bad Claremont writing tics, these issues also often don't make sense. It really feels like Claremont is making it up as he goes along, and it's not great.

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### **Mιχ?λης says**

Το ?διο ατ?λειωτο τριγ?ρω χωρ?ς ν?ημα που ?χουμε συνηθ?σει στους τελευτα?ους τ?μους. Με εξα?ρεση τα τε?χη με τη Ganosha που, σε εξα?ρεση με κ?θε ?λλο τε?χος, ε?ναι μ?α ιστορ?α με αρχ?, μ?ση και τ?λος και θυμ?ζει τις αρχ?ς του run του Clairmont.

Υπ?ρχει και το Inferno, που κλε?νει υποπλοκες που χτ?ζονταν χρ?νια αλλ? ε?ναι τ?σο τουρλουμπουνκι και το γρ?ψιμο μελοδραματικ? που τραβ?ει υπερβολικ? πολ? για να αποδ?σει την ?νταση που χρειαζεται.

ΥΓ: Το artwork του Mark Solvestri σ?ζει επισης τα πρ?γματα

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### **Chris says**

I wish Goodreads offered half-stars because this is a 3-1/2 star book. Very enjoyable, not just for nostalgia's sake, but also well-crafted comics at the peak of Chris Claremont's '80s run. The much-maligned Inferno storyline has a great build-up and terrific moments, but suffers from too many climaxes: first we have to all battle N'astirh, now we all have to battle Madelyne, next we all have to battle Mister Sinister... The storyline, unfortunately, doesn't have much of a middle. Luckily we have Marc Silvestri and Walter Simonson's artwork to appease the eyeballs! (And, elsewhere in the volume, several comics by Rick Leonardi, who was one of my favorites.)

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### **Chris Van Dyke says**

Essential X-Men has almost caught up to when I started reading the books back in 8th grade --I came in just after "X-tinction Agenda," and Vol. 8 covers the confusing, forced, pointless "Inferno!" I'm going to keep buying all these TPBs until I've read every X-story, but this act of obsessive completism is also an act of masochism, as this series traces Claremont's fall from masterful pulp author to over-worked, over-wrought hack. It's not all his fault, as at this point he was writing X-Men, X-Factor, New Mutants, Excaliber, and X-Terminators at the same time, all of which were monthly titles. I swear that half the dialogue is just cut and paste from one issue to the next. I suppose that's the point of such catch phrases as "Oh my stars and garters" and "My wings fire blades tipped with synapse disrupting poison!" and every character having to summarize both their powers and half their bio in every issue. And "lover" -- in Claremont's world, every woman refers to her boyfriend as "lover" nearly every time she addresses him. "Just don't get yourself killed, lover."

Please.

Inferno, however, is a low point even for this era of Claremont. First, it involves my least favorite of his thematic obsessions -- demons and magic(k). I've always loved the X-Men's gritty realism, so grinning techno-organic demons were never my thing. Second, the over-arching plot is so cobbled together, so out of left field that you're constantly wondering if you accidentally skipped an issue. I used to think it would make more sense when I'd read the entire saga, but no, it's still just as scattered and crappy. Sy'm appears in Madelyne's dreams, then suddenly she's the Goblin Queen and controlling demons and blasting people with magical power, then demons are eating people in New York. Then there's the climax -- did we need ANOTHER "you stole my life!" "why won't people stop cloning me!" screaming match with Jean Grey? And the Havoc/Cyclops battle will be nearly carbon-copied for the end of X-tinction Agenda.

Did I enjoy it? Yes, because I'm an X-junkie, but that doesn't mean it was good, and watching this series go from "Dark Phoenix Saga" to "Inferno" is depressing.

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### **Jason Luna says**

This was a really good book. Chris Claremont writes in a good mix of fun to read action and heart wrenching pathos involving all these tortured characters.

The Brood infesting and killing everyone they can find...Mr. Sinister seemingly going to kill everyone and

unleash a bunch of demons on the world via a mentally distorted Madelyne Pryor...these and many other stories build up tension very well, and feature that aforementioned action from power packed characters like Wolverine, Colossus, Storm, Psylocke. It's a pretty fun combination.

My only minor complaint is that while the writing by Chris Claremont and Louise Simonson is great, the artwork is not my cup of tea. But while the likes of Rick Leonardi, Walter Simonson, and Marc Silvestri looks a little choppy, it is able to communicate the stories very well, and it has a very distinctive style, like a sort of decaying/pseudo realistic image. It's honestly starting to grow on me.

A very fun read, always has your intention and seems very smart and knowledgeable about its world. 5/5

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### **Veronica says**

I purchased this mainly as it had the first X-men comic I ever bought in it (Uncanny X-men 241). It was actually the best issue in the bunch (the original 5 X-men take on the "current" X-men who are possessed by demons). Like all serial fiction it is uneven, but the quality shift is incredible. The first half of the book (about 200 pages or so) is almost unreadable. It is only worth reading this if you don't mind slugging through a whole bunch of crap to get to the good stuff.

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### **\*\*\*Dave Hill says**

This book marked the point where the X-Men, under Chris Claremont's over-indulgent writing, took a nose-dive into melodrama that even Erica Kane would turn her nose up at.

This collection of Uncanny X-Men 229-243, and X-Factor 36-39 (plus X-Men Annual 2) starts off with the odd interval when the X-Men were living in the Australian Outback, magically thought dead by everyone and undetectable by electronic means. This setup become violated over and over by Claremont, since in practice it makes it very difficult to actually do anything in the rest of the world.

Then we get introduced to Genosha, in some ways the high point of the book, a fairly crisply written tale even if its moral lessons are massively heavy-handed.

This, alas, segues in horrifying swiftness into the whole "Inferno" saga, which features demons infected with the techno-organic virus, Madelyne Pryor dealing with being abandoned by Scott Summers and her baby kidnapped and so deciding to betray everyone and become the Goblin Queen, and the machinations of (gag) Mister Sinister. There are Betrayals! Heartache! Heartbreak! Anti-Mutant Prejudice! Questioning of Self-Worth! Debates About the Meaning of Life! Strange Power-Ups and -Downs of Various Characters! Scott Summers Acting Like An Ass But Later Blaming It All On Mr. Sinister's Sinister Machinations!

Oh, and little twee and humorous intervals, just to show that Claremont can still make fankidz smile.

It becomes so overwrought as to destroy any sense of plausibility or believability, and while Marc Silvestri and Walt Simonson put out some very good art (which isn't well-served in the inexpensive black-and-white volume), it's not enough to keep from turning me off of the X-world. Which this series ended up doing, for

quite some time.

(Part of my irk here, aside from the goofy way everyone acted was that I actually liked the Madelyne Pryor character -- better than the Jean Grey character she was mysteriously linked to ... and to have her grossly mistreated by her husband and by her author felt pretty damned tawdry.)

Bleah. This one goes into the Book Donation bin.

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