



## The Twelve, Volume 1

*J. Michael Straczynski , Chris Weston (Illustrator)*

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Yesterday's Men of Tomorrow - today! Thought lost to the pages of time, a dozen Mystery Men from the "greatest generation" of World War II find themselves thrust into the morally-gray world of the 21st century! Now, Captain Wonder, Dynamic Man, Mastermind Excello, Mister E, the Laughing Mask, the Witness, the Black Widow, the Phantom Reporter, the Fiery Mask, Rockman, the Blue Blade, and Electro the Marvel of the Age must seek a place for themselves in the modern Marvel Universe - while a silent killer seeks to eliminate them, one by one! Collecting The Twelve #1-6.

## The Twelve, Volume 1 Details

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Author : J. Michael Straczynski , Chris Weston (Illustrator)

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## From Reader Review The Twelve, Volume 1 for online ebook

### Alan says

see my review for both volumes in volume two

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### Garrett says

As good as when I read it the first time around; collected like this, though, it's much easier to follow the individual plotlines and track how they are weaved (and woven) together over the course of the whole series. It's easy to get carried away with some characters and care less about others over a several month (and year, in the case of this delay-ridden series) delay, but when it all falls together like this, it's brilliant. Weston's faces are always worth looking at. J. Mike's writing is empathically sad, over and over again. Good stuff.

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### Steven says

NOT Recommended both due to length and to an utter lack of likeable/embraceable characters you actually want to spend that much time reading.

Take the "frozen in WWII and revived in the modern era" trope from Captain America and apply it to twelve different "heroes."

Then watch JMS stretch less-than-meaty plots across so many pages as to make them seem pointless meanderings like he too is waiting to see what his point is.

I will NOT be bothering to finish this story in Volume 2 because it's unlikely JMS could pull together enough story for 4 issues, let alone 12.

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### Joe says

Interesting, different.  
Let us see where they go...

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### Jamil says

"I tend to take this latest development as a kind of eager confirmation that they are still apparently dependent on ideas that I had 25 years ago..." - Alan Moore

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

Joe Straczynski takes the basic idea of Captain America -- a WWII hero reawakened in the modern world -- and applies it to a group of twelve second-string heroes, trapped in suspended animation by the Nazis to be reawakened in modern times -- and the culture / future shock that they encounter.

While it's tough to rehash this with Cap (yet again -- though Mark Waid's "Man Out of Time" does a nice job of it), JMS is able to take advantage of some men (and a woman) who aren't already known as Avengers to play around with their successes -- and failures -- in coping with the future. The various issues the Twelve deal with -- changes in the media, changes in societal attitudes toward race and gender and sexual orientation, different attitudes toward crime and the law, past secrets catching up with them, families aged or dead or resentful -- get mixed together with a still darker set of secrets among their number that lead to murder and madness, to make for a rich and, to me, compelling story of adventure and mystery and what it means to have been, and still be, a hero.

The twelve issues of the book were collected separately into two books; this is volume 1.

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### Anne says

This was kind of cool. Nothing that blew my mind, but I was interested enough to grab the next volume right away in order to find out how the cliffhanger plays out.

I was surprised by the fact that these were *actual* Golden Age Marvel (or Timely, to be precise) comic characters. Some only appeared a few times in random comics, and others had more of a steady gig. Even so, I'd never heard of any of them...

I was also a bit shocked that this story takes place in the *real* Marvel world, and is set during the height of the Superhero Registration Act.

I was all like, *OMG! How cool is that?!*, but then I'm easily impressed.

So, the gist is that these guys (and gal) were all superheroes during WWII, and towards the end of it, were trapped (and put in stasis) by some evil Nazis. <--of course!

Fast forward a bunch of years, and the chamber containing their bodies is found. The government pounces on the idea of a whole roomful of patriotic Captain Americas, and thaws them out.

*Or whatever they do to wake them up. Open the lid? I don't know.*

Naturally, these guys aren't all that...*stable* after waking up in an entirely new sort of world. And as the story goes on, you find out that not all of them were all that heroic to start with. Like I said, it's not the *bestest* thing I've ever read, but it kept my interest, and I want to find out how it all ends.

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### **Anthony says**

Fun. A solid story with compelling characters from JMS. It's nice that Marvel let him play in their sandbox.

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### **Travis says**

What a waste! What a text book example of a good idea done badly.

Twelve heroes are placed in suspended animation at the end of World War 2 and wake up 60 years later to... do absolutely nothing but sit around and mope!

JMS manages to suck all the magic out of these guys and leave us with a bunch of dysfunctional, emotionally stunted whiners. They sit around, complain, have the occasional flashback, so JMS can show us that they've always been messed up, and argue with each other.

What is it with Marvel lately that they can't allow their super heroes to actually fight any super villains? Aside from the first two issues, you get no feeling that this takes places in the Marvel Universe and after the second issue, JMS doesn't even bother to deal with the idea of culture shock and that these guys have to learn about and deal with 60 of history and new technology.

and to add to the mess, after issue Eight, JMS buggered off and can't say when or if he'll ever actually finish this sad Watchmen wannabe of a story.

Not to be completely negative: the art is very nice and a lot of these guys look cool and have potential, unfortunately, they'll be in limbo until JMS returns to screw with them some more.

Do yourself a favor, just buy the one shots marvel did reprinting some of the heroes original appearances from the 40's.

They are goofy, but at least they are fun to read and you'll be able to root for the heroes, rather than pity them.

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### **Gregory Dilcox says**

I always enjoy any title written by Straczynski so when I saw this graphic at the comic book store I had to pick it up. Clearly I saw that it was a Marvel title but I was shocked to find out that it took place in the actual Marvel universe, especially since the origin feels similar to Captain America and Agents of Atlas with the past heroes being resurrected in modern time. This really works though because it is set right after The Civil War so the dynamic of adventurers/superheros that trust the government to be just is an awesome plot line. Introducing twelve characters and giving them all a back story isn't easy, but Straczynski does it so very well. The characters are all rich and fairly fleshed out, and the story line is great. If you are a fan of comics at all you should read this title. I'm tempted to run out to the store today to pick up volume two today.

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### **John says**

This graphic novel is yet another "Watchman" variant, with the twist here being that the old school super heroes have been frozen since the 1940s and thawed out to cope with modern times. This collection contains the first half of the series' twelve issue run, and the biggest criticism I have is that the story doesn't seem to have much forward momentum, even at the half-way point. Perhaps this is just meant to be a character study and nothing more. If so, its still pretty good stuff, with a wide variety of interesting characters who react to their new reality in different ways. However, I hope something happens in the second half to move the story forward. That said, the art is stunning and I really like the odd characters, the occasional humorous asides, and the social and psychological aspects to the story. A little more plot would make this a five star story.

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### **Timothy Boyd says**

A great updating of some vintage characters from the golden age of comics. Very good story and art make this a joy to read. If you like seeing some of the forgotten golden age comic characters then this is a read for you

Very recommended

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### **Serge Pierro says**

With this book, J. Michael Straczynski takes the interesting idea of bringing back twelve Golden Age characters from the past, and placing them in the "present" time. What we get is a combination of Avengers #4 (the Silver Age return of Captain America) and the Watchmen. Sadly, the first volume doesn't equal either of the aforementioned storylines. While the Watchmen-like similarities run rampant, the differences between the time periods are not as developed as I would have liked. I'm also a bit surprised that none of the contemporary characters have made an appearance. We'll have to see how volume 2 turns out...

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### **Andrew Garvey says**

A fascinating idea done brilliantly, Straczynski (and artist Chris Weston, whose work fits the story perfectly) took twelve long-forgotten, obscure characters from Marvel's pre-history, threw them together with a Captain America-like storyline where, in smashing up some Nazis in 1945 Berlin, they end up trapped and frozen, only to be found and revived over six decades later.

It takes real skill to handle twelve characters and give them all something to do in this, the first six issues of the series. True it helps when they already seem so familiar. Captain Wonder, for example is basically Captain America (with added family tragedy), the Laughing Mask is more than a little reminiscent of Watchmen's Rorschach and Dyanmic Man is effectively Superman (if he were an intolerant arsehole).

A mature, thoughtful, even moving story, this first of two volumes is based around their - generally unsuccessful - efforts to find their place in such an alien modern world. It's an introspective story, bigger on

the characters' emotions and backstories than action. As a set-up for the second volume's revealing of secrets and (such as just where the Black Widow's powers came from and why no one murdered the insufferable Blue Blade earlier) this is a great starting point.

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### **Tom says**

I started reading this one years ago in the monthly magazine format, but then issues became sparse and I never really found out how it ended. The premise is interesting in and of itself. Twelve largely forgotten superheroes from the 1940s that Marvel hadn't done a dang thing with since then are revived after being found in suspended animation underneath Berlin. These characters may be so forgotten that two of them had their names given to other, better-known Marvel characters years after the fact (Black Widow and Electro).

Writer J Michael Straczynski does an OK job for the set-up. Much of the story deals with the characters adjusting with various levels of success to modern times. The main point of view is held by one of the non-powered types, a guy known as The Phantom Reporter. I can't help but think he sounds about as threatening as a wet paper bag, but someone thought that was a good idea once upon a time. The rest are given stuff to do with various levels of interest, while a mystery from the first issue (the murder of the obnoxious showbiz hack wannabe Blue Blade) is pushed largely to the background. This trade only covered the first six issues, so the murder doesn't even really happen right away.

So, a story was set-up, not finished, and things happened. I'll say more in my review for Volume 2.

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