



Ultimate X-Men, Volume 17: Sentinels

Robert Kirkman (Writer) , Pascal Alixe , Yanick Paquette , Ben Oliver (Illustrations)

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The X-Men are no more. Long live the X-Men! The man from the future, Bishop, completes his own team of mutants, ready to carry on the legacy of Charles Xavier. And their first task is to stop the attacks of the deadly Sentinels against their kind. And you'll never guess who's behind the attacks... or who the new Ultimate X-Men are!

Collecting: *Ultimate X-Men* 81-88

Ultimate X-Men, Volume 17: Sentinels Details

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From Reader Review Ultimate X-Men, Volume 17: Sentinels for online ebook

John White says

Kirkman has hit his stride all the good plot points from the previous issues are well developed here. The ethos of the X-Men as the Ultimate outsiders protecting all people from injustice is well reflected. The only disappointment with the story is it is very close to a retelling rather than an original story but it is fun, thoughtful in equally measure.

The art by Oliver and Paquette is ok in this collection lacks the consistency and the change of style in issues 81# and 82# are a little bit too cartoon like. This goes against the standard that was set on the Ultimate X-Men title. But overall the art across the collection is good.

Jordan Lahn says

In reading through the Ultimate line, I find I'm looking forward to Spider-Man, dreading Fantastic Four, and feeling indifferent about X-Men. That doesn't mean that every arc meets those high or low expectations, but it implies a trend. Once again, this X-Men arc is just alright. Lots of interesting action. But I don't feel any close connection to these characters... Maybe it's because I haven't read enough classic X-Men stuff. Anyways, I'm glad to have these modern retellings of classic stories. I just don't feel a burning need to read them.

One last point: I did really enjoy Bishop's conversation with Dazzler about how her powers work and what else she could do with them. Interesting attempt to apply science to what otherwise seems like magic.

Brad says

There's a lot of storylines in this volume. The Ultimate versions of Pyro, Shinobi Shaw, the Morlocks, Stryfe, and the Mutant Liberation Front make their debut. Also, Bishop forms a new team of X-Men (I was really hoping they'd refer to them as the "blue" or "gold" team) and Jean Grey keeps seeing visions of the Phoenix and miniature goblins. Plus, Colossus is working at a construction site, Professor X is in the future, and Dazzler's powers are growing. To pile it on further, Storm is seeing visions of the Shadow King, Toad joins the Xavier Academy, and Magneto's on the loose. There's a reason the first volume in this story is called "Cliffhangers."

The main story, however, concerns the deadly Sentinel robots coming back and the mystery behind who's controlling them. With this many storylines, and reading the book when each new volume hits the libraries, I'm having a hard time keeping track of the differences between the Ultimate and regular (or 616) X-Men. Robert Kirkman's plot is making me uneasy. This isn't an diss; I'm just really worried about what he has in store for the X-Men. On his best book Invincible, he juggles subplots wonderfully. Here though, it's not as effortless or successful. Writing a team book guarantees there will be more character arcs. It also means the Kirkman has to give all the characters unique voices, which he doesn't do. Ultimate Stryfe is an great creation: a combination of a bougie college kid and mutant terrorist. But Ultimate Pyro has nothing to offer except a craggy, burnt face.

For a long time Ultimate X-Men has had the worst artists among the Ultimate books. It's hard to compete

with Bryan Hitch and Mark Bagley, but the three pencilers on this book (Ben Oliver draws the first issue) don't come close.

Nate says

At this point I think it's safe to say that Robert Kirkman's strength as a writer is not in the super hero genre. These issues really lack emotional stakes even as the X-men operate on bigger and bigger playing fields. Kirkman isn't helped any by the series art which seems to have taken a big step backwards as well.

Craig Williams says

It's been awhile since I last read up on Ultimate X-Men, but getting back into was like falling off a log. Robert Kirkman, who has always displayed skill at writing ensemble stories from his excellent series Walking Dead, does a fine job here essentially setting up the big Ultimate Apocalypse story arc. I also like the idea of two X-Men teams, which is reminiscent to when the X-Men in the classic Marvelverse used to be split up in 2 teams - Team Gold (Led by Cyclops), and Team Blue (led by Storm). Enjoyable volume in an awesome series!

Bookwraiths says

This series seems to be running out of steam, or, at least, it is growing less and less fun to read as Kirkman rushes through story arcs, too busy forcing as many updated characters and reworked classic plots into the narrative as possible while ignoring any real character growth. I mean, just in this arc alone we see the X-Men splitting up into separate teams, the return of the sentinels, characters return from the dead, the Ultimate Pyro and Stryfe are introduced, and so much more. It is too much, too quick with little buildup and resolutions that are too neat and quick.

The only thing which stays solid here is the art. Still great stuff.

I'm with this until the end, but it is getting more and more difficult to care about this title.

Eric Mikols says

I actually really liked this. It felt hectic and dangerous, channeling some of the danger of the 70s and 80s back into the X-Men.

Sesana says

There's almost too much going on here. The return of the sentinels, Stryfe, the X-Men splitting from the school, the disintegration of the old team, Phoenix, the Shadow King, Beast coming back from the dead... Yeah, a bunch. I am very much a fan of the idea of the X-Men as a team of superheroes being kept separate

from the Xavier school. It is, in my opinion, far and away a more plausible way of realizing the dream. Because the X-Men really aren't the best way to make mutants less hated and feared by themselves, and I never got the impression that they were getting a great education from Xavier. Still, there's so much going on that the threads I did find interesting got drowned out with everything else going on. Like bringing Beast back, which annoyed me. I was basically through with him by the time he was killed, so I had no real desire to see him back again.

Eskana says

Not exactly a good place to jump in, but by the end I understood enough to go on.

I didn't find the art too impressive... maybe I'm superficial, but the characters all looked sloppy. The art wasn't sloppy, but the way they appeared- unbrushed long hair, scanty clothing (I'm looking at you, punk Storm and Dazzler)- was so annoying and unattractive. Honestly, the artist puts women in underclothing as much as he can, it seems... and as a girl, that was annoying and kinda insulting, since it's so unnecessary.

The story was okay, but like I said, not good if you're jumping in, like me. Xavier has apparently died, killed by a mutant. Scott has disbanded the X-men and is trying to make the Xavier Institute an actual school again, not a base of operations, and is working with Jean who is secretly fighting the consciousness of the Phoenix within her. Nightcrawler leaves the mansion and goes to join the Morlocks. Meanwhile, Bishop has decided to fill the vacuum by creating his own team of X-men, which includes Dazzler, Angel, Wolverine, Psylocke, Pyro, and Storm. However, he has his own agenda (connected, of course, to his own timeline's problems.) Anyway, besides Scott's frequently interrupted but successful attempts to continue the school, the story focuses on the new X-men team as they try to track down who is controlling the newest set of sentinels, while tension grows between humans and mutants, especially a new group called the Mutant Liberation Front, run by a suspicious mutant named Stryfe.

It's an interesting story, but altogether, you can feel that it's kind of filler, coming off a big event and striking the match for the next one. It's a lot of starts that are sort of interesting, but since I don't really like Bishop or his team-especially the way they're drawn, I won't be continuing this series.

David Basora says

The Ultimate universe is cool, but c'mon, this story just keeps spinning out of control. Cable is not Wolverine, no matter how you spin it, beginning with the fact that Cable appears to have 2 feet on Logan. That growth wouldn't happen in 20-ish years after nearly 100 at the the same height. The build up to Apocalypse continues, but I'm glad the Phoenix issue is back to the forefront, I just wanna know exactly what Bishop and Cable's game is.

Edward Cheer says

Well, now, here we are. I finally finished this series in the same odd way I did for Ultimate Spider-Man and Star Wars Legacy, but honestly.... I already had a feeling what would happen.

Sentinels appear. X-Men fight the Sentinels and beat them. Set up the conflict for Apocalypse.

Sure, bringing back Hank irritated the hell out of me, but know it was coming had something of a numbing effect on me. I still hate it, sure, but I've gotten over it now. But nothing new really happened. There was a bit more of a set up for The Shadow King in Volume 19, but that was a REALLY fast climax and resolution to all that set up in this issue. And the big reveal that Cable and Bishop are working together was already present in this issue, when they talk together and Cable tells Xavier they've got to get ready to fight Apocalypse.

I didn't hate this issue. I didn't love it, either. It's some average writing from Kirkman's end, unfortunately. But it certainly didn't throw character out the window, like Volume 18, so I can still appreciate what it didn't do.

Brian says

The Sentinels have always been a favorite enemy of mine, so seeing another strong Sentinel arc is also a treat. More time traveling shenanigans occur (which again I have to wonder if anyone will ever feature time travel again in the current series) and formally thought dead character is revealed to be just fine. The arc leaves off on a high note with the tease of a major villain. Mostly, now I'm just irked about Ultimatum again since so many of the interesting mutants in this volume are no longer around.

J. says

So it took a few volumes for Kirkman to really get my attention, but this volume finally catches it. It reads surprisingly similarly to the old '80s X-Men, with way too many characters and very convoluted plotlines, but it all works pretty well. It seems like Kirkman finally gets a grip on the characters in this volume, and his long-term plan finally starts to manifest. The art is a little inconsistent--in the two-part morlocks storyline, the artist makes the morlocks look great, but every character looks equally deformed, including the regular characters. (I didn't even recognize Jean Grey.)

This volume also brings back some old plotlines (Fenris, Beast) and begins to resolve some things. Kirkman keeps the cliffhangers coming, and while they were particularly annoying in the previous volume, they're much more reasonable here. And particularly after the end of this volume, I'll certainly check out the last few.

Anyway, it's clear Kirkman has plenty of plot ideas going, the first few volumes just felt like he was trying too hard to make it all happen. After a year or so, he's finally got it down.

Nicolo Yu says

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The story deals with the fallout from the death of Charles Xavier at the hands of the mysterious Cable in vo

Charles says

Stuff I Read – Ultimate X-Men 81-83

After the rather complicated and very satisfying Cable story, here come three issues that don't do a whole lot. I mean, this is kind of the down time from the team, the time that is necessary to relieve some tension before ratcheting it back up. But not much happens. In the stand alone issue we learn that Beast is still alive and well, and not so blue anymore. Having been kidnapped or convinced by SHIELD to help them build shit, I guess, Hank just sort of shows up to remind us that in comics no one is dead. And Psylocke and that two-headed guy show up and tell the group that they had been working for Xavier. Otherwise, these issues feature more of Kurt, who goes down to join the Morlocks and ends up becoming their leader and such in a kind-of interesting twist on the Storm-Morlocks story from normal Marvel.

But really these issues just feel like the holding pattern until things get moving again with Bishop's team. Because in this we do have Bishop forming the team up. Storm, Pyro, Dazzler, Angel, and Bishop all head for Australia to reform the team and do some good, but don't really do anything in these issues. Like I said, most of the story involves Kurt. And, in my opinion, Kurt is handled fairly badly in Ultimate X-Men. I mean, he starts off good enough, but the whole turning evil thing just seems poorly done. That said, this short arc is more in keeping with the Nightcrawler of old, and does push him forward a bit. So there is that. And I'm not saying that Kurt can't be dark, because some really bad things have happened to him. But I don't really like that they have to have him break down because he finds out that Colossus is gay. That seems an odd tipping point, given how okay he is with killing people.

So I guess these issues just don't really live up to the rest of Kirkman's earlier stuff. They are okay, but not really that interesting and they don't seem to be going anywhere. Maybe this is more of a farewell to Kurt, so okay, there is that. But it doesn't do much for the narrative as a whole. There still doesn't seem to be all that much of a reaction to the Professor's death. Some, but I guess I would have expected more. There are hints and such that bigger things might be coming, but these are fairly forgettable. Though I do like what they are doing with Toad. He does seem like an okay guy in these issues, and does well by Scott. I still don't like Bobby, but I guess that's to be expected. And the relationship between Scott and Jean continues to be strained and not going anywhere, which is fine by me, but seems too sappy at times. But that could just be me.

In the end I kept wanting to see what was happening with Bishop and his group, as they seem to have more cause to call themselves the X-Men at this point. The stuff with Scott and the school and the Morlocks might be necessary on some level to let people know what's happening with the rest of the group, but I found myself just wanting this story to wrap up so that it could get to the more interesting story. I want to see what happens with Bishop, because that seems more original and more intricate and better constructed. There are characters there that haven't gotten all that much attention, like Pyro and Bishop, and I want more. So these issues earn themselves a 6.75/10.

Stuff I Read – Ultimate X-Men 84-89

So this is really Kirkman's penultimate arc, which is called Sentinels and deals mainly with Bishop's new team going up against a group of smaller, more deadly Sentinels. There is also a one and done Shadow King story which I decided to include in this arc because why not, really. And really this arc is about learning more about what is happening, about why Cable came back from the future and that Bishop is still working with Cable and that this is all in training for taking on the Ultimate version of Apocalypse. Throughout this arc, though much more toward the end of it, we get to see that Cable has brought Professor X into the future because he believes that only Professor X can stop what is coming. So they are training, I guess, for what is going to happen. Meanwhile, back in the present time, Bishop is training the X-Men by taking them up against these Sentinels. That story revolves around Pyro infiltrating the Mutant Liberation Front that Stryfe has put together while the rest of the X-Men go after those behind the Sentinels.

This turns out to be the Fenris twins and a Trask, though the Trask is, oddly, the one that wants to stop what is happening. Stryfe is working with the Fenris twins, his power being more about inciting people. Which is a good enough story, because it shows that in this instance it is not the fear and hatred of humans that has spawned the new Sentinels, but the greed and corruption of mutants themselves. This is a mutant organization that is making the means by which their own people are hunted down and killed. Basically, the Fenris twins are taking the role of Sebastian Shaw in this universe, as in both cases it was rich mutants that controlled much of the Sentinel production. So the arc progresses as the X-Men split up and at the Institute Cyclops and Jean are confronted by the traitor within in the form of the new Hellfire club and Shinobi Shaw. This is rather easily avoided though, and in the end so is the Sentinel threat.

It is entertaining in getting there, though, because the action is fairly tight and Bishop's X-Men are just more interesting than most past iterations of the team. We also get Beast's return, which is interesting because it throws this wedge between Storm and Wolverine. Not that there was really anything happening between Wolverine and Storm, but it complicates things in a way that comes to a head in the Shadow King issue, where we actually learn about Storm's past. It is a very strange issue, though, where you never really know if what is happening is true or not, a dream or not, and I would have thought that maybe this is something that would have been come back to eventually but Kirkman obviously never got around to it. It wasn't particularly strong as an issue, but it was all right and it resolved the Shadow King thing to some extent. Not really to a satisfying conclusion, but it did something with it.

Really the arc was full of twists and turns, and ends in a very interesting place. Especially because at the end of the arc we learn that Emma Frost is really working for the Hellfire Club, something that seems full of promise. But it does well with the core of X-Men while taking the time to show other characters like Toad and Iceman and Rogue being taken in new directions and things like that. I mean, With this arc I think Kirkman takes his place as my favorite of the Ultimate X-Men writers, because this is the sort of stories and pace that I like, where everything is working together and toward something. With that in mind, I give this arc an 8.25/10.