



What If? Classic Vol. 1

Roy Thomas , Jim Shooter , Donald F. Glut , Jim Craig , Herb Trimpe (Illustrator) , Gil Kane (Illustrator) , Frank Robbins (Illustrator) , George Tuska (Illustrator) , more... John Romita Jr. (Illustrator) ...less

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Collects What If? (1977) #1-6.

Because you demanded it: The first six awe-inspiring issues of the most awesomely offbeat series off all time. Six titanic tales of triumph and tragedy in the mighty Marvel tradition!

- What if Spider-Man Joined the Fantastic Four?
- What if the Hulk Had Always had Bruce Banner's Brain?
- What if the Avengers Had Never Been?
- What if the Invaders Had Stayed Together After World War II?
- What if Captain America and Bucky Had Both Survived World War II?
- What if the Fantastic Four Had Different Super-Powers?

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From Reader Review What If? Classic Vol. 1 for online ebook

Dustin says

I've always been a fan of the question "What if?" It's inspired me in writing, it's inspired me in gaming, and it's inspired countless others as well. Marvel comics was also inspired by the question and for several years produced a series to answer it. What If was a book that looked at a moment in a story and showed what would have happened had history taken the left turn instead of the right, had zigged when we remember it zagging and ordered vanilla instead of chocolate.

Fans of modern comics might not enjoy the collection, but I would recommend it for anyone who finds themselves pining for the days when superheroes didn't wage war with each other, when continuity wasn't a thing to be reviled and when issues contained stories and not the other way around..

David Sanz says

Impresionante, qué historias, qué alternativas!

Rachel Remer says

Some of these stories were far more interesting than others. However I do like the in-depth analysis of other possible paths these superheroes theoretically could have taken.

Adam Graham says

In the Gold and Silver Ages, DC had imaginary stories. One off adventures that if ever seriously treated as real would fundamentally shake up the DC universe.

Instead imaginary stories had no impact. In his introduction, Author Roy Thomas wants to be clear that What If was no imaginary story.

The premise of What If is that the events DID happen, however they occurred in an alternate universe. The Watcher serves as our guide. As I read the comic, I imagined him as almost a TV host introducing the stories. The concept of the series was solid. And this no doubt played into DC's creation of similarly themed "elseworlds."

The execution could be a little inconsistent. Let's break down the six stories contained herein:

1) What if Spider-man joined the Fantastic Four? In Amazing Spider-man #1, Peter Parker was desperate for money to help his Aunt May. He decided to put on an exhibition against the Fantastic Four to earn a position on the team and some money. Spidey proves his mettle by the FF isn't interested, so Spidey swings away. In What if #1, we see that and then we see what would have happened if he had joined and how it would have

altered the lives of both teams. It was okay but spent too much time explaining how individual issues and criminals would have gone differently rather than telling a greater macro story. Rating: B-

2) What if Hulk always had Bruce Banner's brain?: Another solid concept answered fairly well. It did tell a very story of Bruce Banner, the Hulk, his enemies, and his allies. The nice thing is that they acknowledged that the lack of the Savage Hulk could have a negative impact on history. An interesting story, though perhaps a little fatalistic at the end. Grade: B

3) What if the Avengers had never been? In mainstream continuity, Earth's mightiest heroes went after a combination of the Hulk and Namor in Avengers #3 as they'd been chasing the Hulk after he'd quit as an avenger in the second issue. In this story, Thor as well as Giant Man and Wasp quit. Iron Man however carries on and tries to counter the great threat represented by the two superhumans. Rarely has Iron Man ever been so heroic than in an alternate universe that brought him to an ultimate test. A very powerful story Grade: A-

4) What if the Invaders Had Stayed Together After World War II?: Roy Thomas said this could be considered more a "Why not?" story as it's possible that the Invaders did stay together and that there was a replacement Captain America in Marvel's now hopelessly confused Captain America timeframe. Good solid story. Grade: B+

5) What if Captain America and Bucky had both survived World War II?: In mainstream continuity, Bucky died at the end of the War and Cap was frozen to be thawed out by the Avengers. In this story, we see both Captain America and Bucky live through the war like normal. The only thing that remains somewhat unclear in the story is why Nick Fury ends up dying in Korea in this story and never becomes director of S.H.I.E.L.D. which is a key plot point. However, that little problem aside, this is a great story about patriotism, love, and brotherhood between Captain American and Bucky. Grade: A

6) What if the Fantastic Four had different Superpowers?: A look at how the Comic rays might have reacted differently. An okay story and nice to see Ben Grimm getting some powers he would enjoy as Dragon Fly. Grade: B

Holden Attradies says

I think I like the idea far more than the delivery. Most (all?) of the Marvel stuff from this era is needlessly wordy. The medium of comic books was still being figured out and sometimes it's f'n hard to get through, and some of the stories felt really stretched to take up a whole issue. That aside, they were neat and I look forward to getting the next volume.

Mel says

I picked up all these early issues when they first came out. I was still in my teens and loved the premise of the series as well as the individual books. DC Comics had "Imaginary Stories" (later, Elseworlds), but this was Marvel's first real foray into cooking up twists on their popular heroes.

I picked up all seven Classic volumes and will be working my way through them over the summer, I think. But I have to admit that the initial glow I had on reading the comics just isn't there. I think maybe it's because there are so many permutations the heroes have gone through in their actual series as they've been reinvented time and time again.

And the storytelling just doesn't compare to today's plots and pacing. Of course, you did get one whole store in each issue, so that's something. However, I don't think simply adding pages to the stories would have helped. A lot of the writing in these early issues is ham-fisted and over-the-top for today's standards. Roy Thomas and Gerry Conway were my two favorite Marvel writers while I was growing up. I loved their stories at the time, and they taught me a lot about storytelling.

In this six-issue batch, I think the story about Tony Stark trying to keep the Avengers together without the heavy hitters is my favorite. The Spider-Man initial issue posed an interesting question, but didn't really deliver. Neither did the Hulk tale. The two Captain America-centric issues got redundant, but that may have been because I read them one after the other. I remembered the final Fantastic Four issue, where they got different powers, really well, especially the ending, but it was hokey over all.

The graphic novel is worth a look, but only for nostalgia's sake. Newcomers to comics probably won't be ecstatic about the offerings contained in this volume, but there's some great artwork here and there, and it does give readers a twist now and again.

Stephen says

I loved these as a young reader. It was comics, but they didn't have to fit into a corporate preordained outcome. Anything could happen!

Steven says

I'm a fan of What If and Elseworlds another other alternate universe malarkey, so this was a must-buy during the recent Marvel/Kindle fire sale. Sadly, it's not entirely good...one issue compiled here has some of the worst George Tuska art I've ever seen, some of the writing is truly horrible, and the reproduction is so sloppy that bits of art and dialogue just fade away. The art is inconsistent, but at least the Watcher gets a regular change of toga.

Still, when it's on, it's on, but that might be due to Roy Thomas getting to give the Invaders a workout and go all Golden Age.

Timothy Boyd says

I love the What If? series of comics. Most of the odd ideas I wondered about my favorite heroes get given their own story. Here I can see the other choices explored. Very recommended

Susan Gazaway says**I love the "What If?" books!**

These are great stories. I love reading the "What If?" stories. They are fun and interesting. They are good plots.

Robert Morganbesser says**Could have been a better series**

I collected this when it first came out. Even then, I wondered if marvel really was behind this. Many of the stories are dumb and the artwork worse. The cream of this volume is What If The Avengers Had Never Been, with brilliant art by Gil Kane.

Sean Brennan says

When I was mere snip of a lad I really used to love this title, still do really! It does help in knowing the events that these stories relate to, but I've always liked alternative histories plus The Watcher who always presented the comic was always reminiscent of Rod Sterling and The Twilight Zone.

Yal?n says

What If? Vol. 1 was a great fun, especially if you know even the side characters of the Marvel Universe well. I mostly enjoyed the issues with the Fantastic Four, (# 1 and 6), the others were above average stories as well.

Jason says

Three stars only because it's a mixed bag. Some stories are great and some are meh. The ones I liked: "What if the Hulk Had Always Had Bruce Banner's Brain," "What if the Avengers Had Never Been," and "What if the Fantastic Four Had Different Powers." I was also surprised to see a very different Watcher character design. Interesting how he's changed over the years to have a MUCH bigger head.

William R. Mann says

Great!!

That was a throwback to my childhood.

I loved the "What If" title' as a kid.

The fact that some of the writing was blurred, made me think I was holding the old books in my hands.

Thanks for putting this out for kindle.
