



## New Avengers: Illuminati

*Brian Michael Bendis , Jim Cheung (Illustrator)*

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**New Avengers: Illuminati** Brian Michael Bendis , Jim Cheung (Illustrator)

Collects New Avengers: Illuminati #1-5. The Illuminati. An elite group of the planet's most powerful guardians to face its greatest threats. Join Iron Man, Professor X, Black Bolt, the Sub-Mariner and Mr. Fantastic as they take on the threats no one else can handle - and learn of secrets that will forever alter the way they (and you) look at the Marvel Universe!

## New Avengers: Illuminati Details

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## From Reader Review New Avengers: Illuminati for online ebook

### Grace says

So, I was interested in reading up on the Civil War arc, you know? Having no idea where to start, and Goodreads being surprisingly unclear, I reached out to the internet and the internet reached back in the form of someone sharing a link with me.

This link gives the order I apparently should read comic books in to get the Civil War arc started.

Unless I read it wrong, this was where I should start. Frankly, I don't really see it. But I learned more about the Kree and Skrulls, and Infinity Gems, so there's that. I also got a better grasp on Dr. Strange and Namor. (view spoiler)

In closing, I don't really have a good grasp of everything that was going on, but it was interesting. Especially towards the end. How do you figure out who's on your side and who's not when (view spoiler)

What some people might be uncomfortable reading about in this book because of personal opinion or belief (spoilers): pretty clean for a comic book. PG-13.

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### Jennifer Juffer says

I liked this book for the simple reason that it covered/skimmed just about every significant moment of recent Marvel history.

From the Infinity Stones, the troubles with the Kree, Battleworld and the Beyonder, the Civil War and Captain America to the pervasive and every ongoing threat of the Skrull empire, this book had it all... briefly.

I need to buy and read Omnibuses. Why? Because I'm all over the place.

Just like this book that touches on everything, I'm scattered in the Marvel universe.

It did help fill in gaps that I was missing, and overall it was a pretty entertaining book.

I don't know how true fans that have read every single event will feel.

I do know that this book leads up to Secret Invasions, though.

So if you're a new traveler into the Marvel world like I am, I can, at least, tell you that this book is a great starting off point to that new adventure.

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### Pablo Fernandez says

No me llegó a enganchar, quizás por el batiburrillo de cosas que intentan suceder, sin llegar a pasar.

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## Anne says

I couldn't quite bring myself to give this one 4 stars. To me, it was lacking that special *something* that great stories have. The concept was cool enough, but the way the story was pieced together just didn't give it a cohesive feel for me. The 'secret society within a secret society' theme, reminded me of the storyline in Identity Crisis. As a (mostly) Marvel-girl, I hate to say this, but DC did it much better this time around. However, it is definitely worth the read because of the inside information on the whys and hows of the Secret Invasion storyline. There is also a highly enjoyable scene between the guys about the women in their lives that I found to be quite funny.

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## Anupam Kushwaha says

This is a great read. Combine these iconic characters with a compelling story, a comic doesn't get much better than this.

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## Sam Quixote says

Doctor Strange, Black Bolt, Professor X, Mister Fantastic, Namor the Sub-Mariner and Iron Man are the Illuminati, a secret group that shapes the superhero world, in theory for the better, behind the scenes. But as the saying goes, the road to hell is paved with good intentions...

Brian Bendis and Jim Cheung's New Avengers: Illuminati is an ok comic. It's a collection of five short stories some of which are better than others.

The book opens and closes with Skrull episodes that are Secret Invasion lead-ins. The first issue gives some background on the Skrulls' decision to invade and seeing the Illuminati escape the Skrulls' torture camp was really entertaining. However, having recently read Secret Invasion, I had a hard time giving a fig about the closing issue considering how bad that event turned out to be. Not a whole lot happens in it either: the team battles a Super-Skrull - meh.

I would've liked to have seen some background on the group's formation because we don't get any of that here. Why create this clandestine group and why them - if the qualification is intelligence like it seems to be with Richards and Stark, why not Hank Pym or Beast, why limit it to just six? The moral question is never really addressed either: what gives them the right to make these decisions and who pays when these decisions - that affect BILLIONS of lives - backfires?

Bendis addresses man's fallibility in the Infinity Gauntlet issue when it looks like Reed Richards is about to go full Gollum with the Gauntlet, as well as the nature of absolute power in the Beyonder issue, but his treatment feels shallow and rushed. A more cerebral writer like Grant Morrison would've excelled at this type of story which the more populist-minded popcorn entertainment Bendis can't quite pull it off.

Jim Cheung's art is good throughout and at least half the stories were entertaining enough: escaping the Skrulls, the Infinity Gems quest and meeting the Beyonder, and even having the characters just sit around and talk about their other halves is exactly the kind of thing Bendis does so well (and can overindulge in). But the Noh-Varr issue did nothing for me nor did the Secret Invasion prologue (which you don't really need to read as the dead Elektra Skrull appears again in the full event anyway).

Props to Bendis for creating this team/concept which, though underdeveloped here, is solid. But I recommend Jonathan Hickman's New Avengers, particularly the first volume, for a much better Illuminati comic that also really does them justice. Hickman raises the stakes enormously and shows readers just how powerful this small group really is and the scale that they operate on, as well as the impact of their decisions. Bendis' New Avengers: Illuminati though is by no means a bad comic and serves as a decent jumping on point for this group.

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## Michael says

In retrospect it's pretty obvious that Bendis laid all the seeds here for Marvel's big stories since 2007. Good stuff, but I don't think I'll ever be comfortable with Tony Stark retconned into a guy who feels responsible for the Earth.

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## C.J. Edmunds says

Got this graphic novel compilation for the fact that my favorite Marvel character, Dr. Strange figures prominently in it. And to have other Marvel heavy hitters like Iron Man, Professor Charles Xavier and Reed Richards in it was just too tempting to pass up.

Verdict?

I wouldn't say that it was a must read but given that it prefigures into the reason behind the Secret Invasion, I say that that alone was price of admission.

This edition collects Illuminati 1-5 and shows the collective force of Dr. Strange, Mr. Fantastic, Iron man, Namor, Professor X and Black Bolt of the Inhumans and how they operate along the sidelines, if not, behind the scenes at some of the cataclysmic Marvel events and how they were able to do some damage control thereby proving to be a worthy force to be reckoned with. And reckon with and deal with extraterrestrial events this secret group sure did; from handling the Infinity Gems of the Gauntlet (love that the Gauntlet resurfaces albeit briefly), the encounter with the Beyonder during the Secret Wars saga of the 80's, to the "reforming" of Captain Mar-vell and more recently, the discovery of the Skrull presence on Earth.

But as such with power come both the responsibility in wielding it and the line that one has to draw to prevent such wanton misuse and thereby blurring that same line and changes the hero from champion into a walking power hungry ego with legs and superhuman ability.

The Civil War penned Bendis storyline has shown that our heroes aren't perfect and are subject to the same flaws and judgement-error phases that ordinary people go through and this compilation is no different. Is that credit to Bendis' writing? Perhaps. Or is it the natural progression of heroes nowadays in Comics to embody their real life reader counterparts and be given angst, pride, distrust and all other emotional facets that make us tick.

So did the compilation do its trick or job to clue me in? It didn't exactly tick me off and made me conclude that it would be a useless gesture to read this because it doesn't supplement or create more depth to the Secret Invasion. But what it did show me that this Marvel crisis was something that was painstakingly planned well. The foundations were certainly laid down well and justified the progression of the Skrull crisis.

For an added history lesson into that crisis and ties to the Skrul-Kree dynamic and how they relate to Earth, then yes read it. But if you don't really want to know the laying-in of bricks and mortar to the whole scene and would just want to stroll into the building itself and get to the heart of the conflict, then by all means, walk along and go straight to Secret Invasion.

But then again a little more knowledge never hurt anyone. So still try it out. Who knows you may like it and appreciate Secret Invasion. I know I did. Only after reading it a second time. I may even have appreciated it the first time, had I read this first.

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### **Gavin says**

I really enjoyed this. The concept of a secret group of the brightest minds in the Marvel Universe coming together to take out threats to the Earth without the knowledge of anyone else...(Iron Man, Black Bolt, Dr. Strange, Prof. X, Mr. Fantastic, & the Sub Mariner)

They first formed after the Kree-Skrull War (via retcon, but done nicely) and we follow them as they confront major problems, right up to Secret Invasion.

I just liked the concept right out of Plato, of the Philosopher Kings who rule (Black Bolt and Namor both are Kings as well) because they are the smartest. There's also some hard decisions made, ones that would never fly in the Avengers/X-Men/FF etc.

I don't want to give much away other than to say Bendis nails this one on the head. The personalities clash the right amount, and work together the right amount as well, but it's also nice because we don't get to see some of these guys much, so to have them get a chance to shine is welcome.

Strongly recommended.

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### **Brad says**

The Illuminati, Marvel's secret group of team leaders retconned into existence, gets its own team up book, where they take on the Skrulls, the Beyonder, their ex-girlfriends (sorta) Marvel Boy, and the Infinity Gauntlet. This book provides a logical bridge between two big crossovers, Civil War and Secret Invasion. All the creators involved are guys I like, but this book feels a bit too much like moving chess pieces around to appease continuity gods. That said, Brian Michael Bendis always writes in some nice dialogue. Jim Cheung does quite well with the action scenes, though I think his style works much better with younger characters, like in Young Avengers and Scion. His wrinkly Professor Xavier looks creepy; I wouldn't let my mutant kids go to his school.

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### **Stewart Tame says**

Some of the most powerful members of the Marvel Universe join forces in the aftermath of the Kree/Skrull war to protect Earth from threats the other heroes can't handle. It's an interesting conceit, and puts a different spin on some of the mega crossover events that have happened over the decades. In some ways, Brian Michael Bendis is the Roy Thomas of his generation, deftly and seamlessly weaving new narratives into existing continuities. This book is a touch on the short side, and seems to exist mainly as a lead-in to the Secret Invasion crossover event. I think my favorite part of it was some of the banter between the lead

characters, particularly the whole conversation kicked off by Dr. Strange complaining that Clea left him. How much you enjoy this probably depends on how much of a Marvel reader you are. I liked it, but I've been reading various Marvel titles since the 70's, so I was able to pick up on most of the references. Not sure how new readers will fare.

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## Terence says

The New Avengers Illuminati describes Earth's best and brightest forming a group many years ago to handle the big decisions. Iron Man, Professor X, Mr. Fantastic, Namor, Dr. Strange, Black Bolt, and The Black Panther meet together at Iron Man's request after The Kree Skull War on Earth. Iron Man wants to form all the Earth's superheroes into an army, but the others don't agree. Black Panther refuses to take any part in this group and the others decide to form The Illuminati.

It is interesting to see Professor X and Dr. Strange take part in these secret meetings to decide Earth's path. Iron Man, Mr. Fantastic, and Namor are all egomaniacs who need to control things so it's not hard seeing them do this. I can't really figure out if it's in Black Bolt's character since he rarely speaks and when he does I'm generally too busy looking at what blew up to register his words.

This was a fairly serious comic overall, but they still managed to insert some humor.

The Illuminati themselves aren't a bad idea, but I'd be more comfortable with it if Iron Man and Mr. Fantastic were just advisors and if Namor had no part of it.

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## Daniel A. says

Well, *that* was depressing.

Recently, I sold off my entire collection of comics, but for my bound volumes—trade paperbacks, hardcovers, etc.—and my *MAD Magazines*. The New Avengers: Illuminati, written by otherwise-wunderkind Brian Michael Bendis (in addition to Brian Reed) and penciled by Jim Cheung, is a "perfect" example of why most comics in general and most superhero comics in particular no longer appeal to me.

In *The New Avengers: Illuminati*, a cabal of six of the central figures in Marvel Comics superhero comics formed a clandestine working group to accomplish tasks that heroes could never accomplish in the open, beginning with the 1970s' The Avengers: The Kree-Skrull War. If you guessed that this comic, published in the 2000s, is an excuse to shoehorn plot devices onto past stories while pretending that We Just Didn't See What Really Went On, you'd have guessed correctly. *The New Avengers: Illuminati* is primarily an engine to drive the perennial state of company-wide Comics Events that Marvel—and DC Comics, for that matter—never seems to get out of; even its Ultimate line, so well established by Bendis in the 1990s, fell into this trap with Ultimatum a couple years ago, about which the less said, the better. Such events are plot-driven, but to make extra money rather than to serve any actually compelling storyline; veteran writer Peter David used to complain regularly about such things when he first wrote for Marvel's *X-Factor* title. In this circumstance, *The New Avengers: Illuminati* drives the plot of the entire succession of Bendis-conceived Marvel Events, from Avengers: Disassembled through Secret Invasion and beyond. In fact, the only reason this volume works in the least is because Bendis, who co-wrote this one, also spearheaded so many contemporary Marvel Events.

And therein lies some of my frustration. Bendis is usually known for his crackling dialogue and eye towards characterization. None of that is evident here; that Bendis is playing less in his own sandbox than usual—see my reviews of *Torso* and *Ultimate Spider-Man, Vol. 2: Learning Curve* for more detail—only exacerbates the situation. Perhaps the greatest illustration of this problem is in the fourth chapter of the book: Amidst the Illuminati's dealing with the problem of one character who is in maximum-security super-villain prison for having attempted to conquer the earth, comes an offhand discussion between the Illuminati—all heterosexual males—about their various and sundry romantic interests. Not only do Bendis and Reed—I have no idea how much of this first part is whose—write Professor Charles "Prof. X" Xavier, Tony "Iron Man" Stark, and Reed "Mr. Fantastic" Richards woefully wrong—the dialogue has them barely concealing contempt for those "lesser" human beings who have no idea how much the superheroes really help them, which doesn't fit their traditional characterization at all—but in their discussion of their romantic interests—which aspect is the only real part of the entire volume that even begins to crackle with Bendisian dialogue—their "partners"—who never actually appear anywhere in the comic for more than a panel or two, except as I'll describe shortly—are nothing more than sexual conquests, not even real, fully-fleshed out human beings. That in the chapter's front page by Cheung, the drawings of the women—the only major place they appear—are universally sexualized in a manner not even closely comparable with their male "counterparts"; witness, as did I, a red-blooded heterosexual male myself, their pointy nipples, barely concealed by their skin-tight costumes. Never mind that a story that "passes" Alison Bechdel's test by *not having any women* doesn't really pass it; the so-called male gaze is alive and well here, and that's not a good thing.

In general as a result, *The New Avengers: Illuminati* is a necessary read only to those obsessively reading every piece of background to every comics crossover/event.

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### Shannon Appelcline says

**Illuminati.** The *Illuminati* mini-series is a fun romp through Marvel history, retconning the Illuminati group into several historical events, from the Kree-Skrull War to the arrival of Marvel Boy. The plot is a little light, which weakens these stories on reread, but the history is fun, and it turns the Illuminati into a concrete group, much to the benefit of Hickman's future *Avengers* run. The last issue is something else: it's a direct response to the discovery of skrull-Electra, and it's a great setup for the *Secret Invasion* to come [3+/5].

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### Bekka says

What a comic to read the day before Infinity War!

This story's first part is ALL about gathering Infinity Stones, and the Infinity Gauntlet, which I LOVED to see, it was great to see the comic counterparts before seeing things on the big screen!

The next part was setting up the Secret Wars with the Skrulls, including an appearance from the original Captain Marvel, who is obviously turning up next year, and Secret Invasion is rumoured to be the new MCU storyline after Avengers 4 - so this was a great story, full of information for the future of the MCU!

Thoroughly enjoyed seeing Tony and Stephen interact with Mr Fantastic and Professor X, and am now intrigued by Black Bolt and Namour, who I've not seen before, great comic, will definitely be buying Secret Invasion ASAP!

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