



Champions Vol. 1: Change The World

Mark Waid , Humberto Ramos (Illustrator) , Victor Olazaba (Inker) , Edgar Delgado (Colorist) , Clayton Cowles (Letterer)

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Collecting Champions (2016) #1-5.

One of the great team names in Marvel history returns, in incredible new fashion! During the fallout of Civil War II, Ms. Marvel, Nova and Spider-Man quit the Avengers and strike out on their own! With Viv Vision and the Totally Awesome Hulk by their side, these young heroes are determined to change the world their own way - and they're only the beginning! It starts as an idea. It becomes an ideal. But what happens when it turns into a movement - one so big even the Hulk can't stop it? And will one of the greatest X-Men of all forge a new future by their side? Welcome to the Champions, Cyclops! Unfortunately, not all of your new would-be teammates are glad to see you!

Champions Vol. 1: Change The World Details

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From Reader Review Champions Vol. 1: Change The World for online ebook

Scott says

It's pleasing when all the necessary stuff falls together, while gently breaking some traditions, to make a damned good superhero book.

Ms. Marvel (my favorite new character - a great addition to the Marvel roster), Nova, and Spider-Man decide to ditch the wrecking-ball Avengers, recruit Hulk and Viv Vision, and form a new group. Cyclops, who knows a thing or two about leading a young adult team, amusingly crashes their party not quite half-way through.

These meddling kids (ha!) all about 'building it up' and not 'breaking it down,' and are eager to leap into action - but not mindless violence - to do some good in the world. Fortunately they do come across as believably sincere - Ms. Marvel's impromptu speech after their first roll-out pretty much sells it - and not unbearable SJWs seeking social media attention.

Too bad the name 'Justice League' was taken decades ago - it's more appropriate here.

Sesana says

The morality plays can be a bit heavy-handed, but I like the selection of characters, and I like the team interactions.

Jenny says

*****3.5*****

I got this for free from Amazon when I ordered *Archie: Volumes 3 and 4*. I selected this title because I like the Avengers movies, and this cover reminded me of those movies. I've read a few graphic novels but never any superhero comics until Watchmen and The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen, Vol. 1, Alan Moore's non-traditional superhero stories. I've watched a good deal of Marvel movie adaptations and enjoyed them, so I figured, "Why not?" I didn't really know what *Champions* was about, but I like Mark Waid's *Archie* series, so I thought I couldn't go wrong.

I enjoyed this volume of the new series (published 2016). Waid's voice is distinct--he knows how to write teenagers and make them feel modern and relevant but also believable as people with real thoughts and opinions, not just as slang-spouting, smart phone-wielding millennials (or whatever the next generation will be called). Ms. Marvel, Viv Vision, The Hulk, Nova, and Cyclops are all well-defined characters with specific personalities. Spiderman doesn't really stand out in this series so far. I could tell you all about the other characters (Ms. Marvel is the true leader, no matter what the Hulk says, and she knows how to make plans and keep everyone else calm; Viv is rational and looks at problems from every angle before jumping into anything; The Hulk loves himself and thinks he's hot, but he also cares so much that he's likely to leap before he looks; Nova is funny and prickly; Cyclops is trying to prove himself, knowing the group thinks of him as a villain because of his past/future), but I can't pinpoint any one quality of Spiderman.

Aside from the characters, the stories are decent. I gave this three stars more because everything feels rushed. The way the heroes get together after deciding to leave The Avengers is rushed, and so are the various plots the heroes involve themselves in to help others. A couple of the story lines cross over from issue to issue, but most of them wrap up within the issue itself. There is a good cliffhanger at the end of the last issue in this volume, though, and I'm looking forward to learning what happens with this particular story line.

I love that Waid tackles some heavy and modern problems in this volume. There are story lines about human trafficking, police brutality, fundamentalist oppression of women, and racism/bigotry in small-town America. It's interesting to see such controversial topics in print and to hear the teen voice (via Waid, of course) about these important issues. The volume also publishes fan letters, and most of the fans are really happy to see that teens are being portrayed as people who want to change the world that the adults have corrupted. They see that what the adults have done doesn't work, so they want to try something new, and for Ms. Marvel, that's "enforcing justice without unjust force." Her aim is to create a team of superheroes that *helps* resolve major conflicts but doesn't hurt evil people the same way evil people hurt innocent ones. She wants to do something different, and I feel that teens have always looked to change the world the adults before them created. I like that this volume showcases the energy and passion that adults don't think teens have.

This series also highlights diversity. I love that Ms. Marvel is Pakistani and that the new Hulk is Asian (not having read his origin story, I don't know what his specific background is, but it's mentioned in subtle ways that he's Asian). I love that these cultural backgrounds are given a voice and that Marvel is showing kids of different ethnic groups that they can be just as powerful as white Americans in defending American ideals around the country and the world. I also love that, in this series, Waid is making Marvel and its superheroes relevant to a new generation, just like he is doing with *Archie*. The world changes, and in this era of technological change, nothing is permanent anymore. Everything seems to update as quickly as Apple and Samsung phones. But that doesn't mean that people, that *teens*, don't care about continuity or want something from the past to look to for guidance and help and sympathy. I like that they have it now but that it's also made relevant to them (like when Spiderman says his spider qualities are as "useless as Kanye's indoor voice" in the forest and when Ms. Marvel refers to Malala).

My only real critiques of this volume are the lack of depth/time to develop the story and sometimes the drawing. Overall, I like Humberto Ramos's style, but sometimes, the drawings are hard to follow. Even when I would zoom out on my phone to see the full page, some of the action blended together, particularly in one scene between the Champions and the fundamentalists in Sharzad and in a weird scene with Gwenpool. I definitely recommend this series to Marvel fans, new and old. I recommend it to people who have read the individual characters' stories but also to people who have been following events in the Marvel universe. For me, coming into the series without a background in Marvel happenings, I was able to follow along decently because of the Marvel movies I've seen and because of reading reviews of The Vision and Gwenpool on Goodreads. Waid does an okay job of explaining who everyone is, particularly in Issue 2 or 3 or so where everyone shares their strengths with each other as a team bonding experience. Anyway, you can jump in and still appreciate it, like I did. I'll definitely be reading Volume 2.

Paul E. Morph says

I really, really like this book! It's fun, has a big heart and features a lot of my favourite Marvel characters. The only downsides to it for me are (a) the way Mark Waid writes the Hulk as a bit of a dumbass (he's supposed to be one of the smartest people on the planet but you'd never know that from this book) and (b) the artwork. I've never really liked Ramos' work, but it's a personal taste thing so don't let it put you off reading this; it's a blast!

Wing Kee says

...I love Kamala, ...I love Miles...but this is so bad...what happened Waid????!!!

World: The art is okay, I didn't really like the colors and I felt the art to be a bit to jagged for my taste but it was aight. The world building is good, this is the best part of the book the team coming together, the team dynamic, the world at large, it's solid and presents a clear follow up to Civil War II. It's good.

Story: Argh...this is where the wheel literally fall off the book. The characters are mostly fine but the story is just poorly planed and written. This is a topical book that is just preachy to the point of droning. The book nags and takes a very singular stance that on face value is very good and I agree with it but it's not handled well at all. Instead of trying to create a book that was about inclusiveness and not othering the story is fairly face value and quick to paint broad strokes on complex matters and as a result it's not objective, it's othering and just poorly done. If this book wants to open dialog for discussion then have the heroes talk about it in their banter. I don't want to go into it cause this is a huge discussion that requires pints at the pub but yeah...I love Waid he's great and we get something like this. It's trying to hard and in the end is exactly the type of book that young people will feel that adults are talking down to them...bad.

Characters: For the most part I love the banter and the interaction of the group, it's fun and it's the quiet moments I love the most. That being said, the characters don't really behave like their stand alone series counterparts. Also the characters are rather naive and simple, which is fine cause it allows for growth, but they are simple and naive because they are written that way and nothing to do with the characters themselves being a work in progress, the entire cast of characters and their characterizations is paper thin and bordering on stereotypes...especially the villains.

If we really want to have a discussion about the topics about the complex issues that the book deals with, then have the characters talk about it. Don't make it about us versus them cause that is exactly the root of the issue and this book emphasized this. Instead of inclusion and understanding it was othering.

Onward to the next book!

Tiago says

Decent, but is this the Marvel universe or the Disney channel?

Denise Malta says

Someone said "This could be a good comic but it's being wasted on social justice". What?! How is taking a group of diverse teenage superheroes (that makes it possible for readers of any age, who would usually not feel represented, feel like they have this amazing characters to look up to) and showing how messed up and unfair the world really is and how we CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT (it's in the title) a waste?

This comic book does indeed deal with social (in)justice: racism, homophobia, bullying, abuse... It tries to show the problems in the world and it tries to prove that there isn't good and bad, rather something in between, shades of gray.

In doing so it will state opinions, some of them moral, some of them political. Political opinions can make someone instantly hate something. I didn't agree with everything that was "stated" but I greatly appreciate

how much depth and meaning this issues had, while still being about a group of teenage superheroes and adequate for young readers and older ones alike.

I have some individual reviews for the single issues dealing with the specific theme within them.

Joe Young says

Mark Waid - writer

Humberto Ramos - illustrator

Somewhat of a mixed-bag, but in the end the highs outnumber the lows. The writing by Waid is a little hokey, particularly the characterization of Ms. Marvel. I'm not sure if anybody besides G. Willow Wilson can write her in a believable way, but in Champions she comes across like a 35-year-old actuarial, not the fun and relatable teen we see in Ms. Marvel. The art by Ramos is at times stunning, and at times grotesque. My main complaints being the Sharzadian girls in issue #3 being drawn as rat-human hybrids and Hulk inexplicably having the face of Asian Clint Eastwood. The messaging can be a little heavy-handed too, but I don't really mind. Overall this is a fun book with a lot of promise. I like the idea of getting all the young, idealistic heroes together and I love that they gave them their own team instead of making them into just another division of the Avengers or X-Men. I hate to say it, but I think Waid is too old to write teenagers anymore. I would love to be proven wrong, though. All said this was pretty good, and with a little nudge in the writing department this could be a really great book.

3/5

Tom Ewing says

Mark Waid is in full hey-there-fellow-kids mode in this first volume of Champions, a well-meaning but awkward comic whose premise - teen superheroes set out to change the world - is not well-served by a series of done-in-one morality play storylines. Two of the comics here - the one set in fake-Pakistan and the one about a sheriff with a sideline in hate crimes (because he's just SO BAD that the enormous institutional power of the carceral state isn't enough for him, he's gotta start bombing mosques himself) - play out in basically the same way: bad stuff happens, the Champions turn up and realise there are no easy solutions, then an easy solution in the form of a big speech by a good person presents itself and the Champs sod off. Meanwhile characters I love in other comics - Miles Morales and Kamala Khan - act like bags of traits (did you know Kamala writes fanfic? Huh? Didja?) while characters I detest - bloody Gwenpool shows up - are their usual wretched selves.

The problem is that while it's certainly true that there are no easy solutions to the Taliban or to structural oppression, saying "there are no easy solutions" IS in fact an easy solution to telling a 20-page comic story about them. There are surely good comics to be written as a response to the absurdity, horror, and hope of the present moment, but Champions is a poor, pandering attempt at one.

James DeSantis says

I really had a good time reading this. It's aimed for the younger group, and sometimes I don't like it all, but it

had a lot of my favorite younger superheroes so let's talk about what worked and didn't work.

What I liked: I really loved the art in this. I believe this is the guy who did the art on Big Time for Spider-man run. So enjoyed that. I also really loved the character interactions with each other. I thought them handling situations such as racism, human trafficking, and oversea political issues was a nice touch over the super villain of the week. It doesn't go into as depth as I'd like but as far as a teen book it does it well. Also think the pacing is perfect and the book is never dull.

What I didn't like: The fact we can't get deeper into some of the subject matter. Would love a whole arc to take place focusing on the racist city sheriff and get the underlying themes of corruption and such. Felt like if they aimed for a bigger, deeper, scoped story we'd get that.

Overall I had a lot of fun reading this. Some good laughs, solid subject matters, good team dynamic, and great pacing. Let's hope it keeps up!

Chad says

In the wake of Civil War II, the young heroes of the MU are fed up with the adults leaving devastation behind after one of their battles. It's always been one of my gripes too. I always wonder why New Yorkers especially don't hate superheroes and supervillains alike. I mean even if you did stop Dr. Octopus, you're still the a-hole who threw my car at him. Behind Ms. Marvel's direction, they decide to become more socially conscious, taking on racism, human trafficking, etc. The book is drawn by Humberto Ramos. I know his art is polarizing but I personally love it.

The Good: This is an excellent idea for a series. I'm surprised no one's come up with it before. I love the humor and heart that proliferates the book. I would like to see Waid develop some longer stories. So far the stories haven't lasted more than an issue and a half.

The Bad: I don't care for how Hulk is portrayed as a bro. He's supposed to be the 8th smartest person in the world, not a dumb jock.

The Ugly: Champions was a dumb name for a team in the 80's and it's still a dumb name today.

Gary Butler says

36th book read in 2018.

Number 196 out of 696 on my all time book list.

Very current and funny.

Murphy says

Thanks, but I hate this. These issues contain great messages and characters, however the way their interactions are being written is insufferable.

Poor Amadeus has definitely gotten the worst of the bad characterization. All his obnoxious qualities were pumped up to an eleven while his better ones, including strategic and emotional intelligence, have gone largely ignored so he can fit the unneeded trope of the guy who starts unnecessary trouble.

I haven't read as many comics centering on the other heroes, but I did notice that even though Miles isn't typically a quiet person he barely seemed to say anything throughout this entire volume. It definitely felt like he was being sidelined, including during an issue that focused on racism.

Going back to my dislike with the characters as a group, while it's natural to have tension between teammates who aren't yet close and have differing views and goals, the amount of pettiness is really off the charts.

Yes, teenagers can be melodramatic, I unfortunately understand that from experience, but with these characters who have already shown selfless and insightful qualities it's ridiculous how argumentative they're being written.

The Champions are being advertised as the team meant to heal a world that grown-ups have messed up, but even though they've been helpful in general with the amount of aggression they currently hold towards each other they aren't behaving much better than the adults who seem to consistently get into fights with allies.

Hopefully their dynamic and maturity improves, but right now these comics are a let-down.

Wing Kee says

Goodreads lost my review....

World: The art is good, it's full of personality which is important to me in a team book. The world building was also solid, I like this new team the dynamic makes for good potential banter.

Story: It's okay, it's not peak Waid but it's okay. I did find the story a bit heavy handed and naive in terms of the story, the conflict and how it was resolved. I know I'm not the target audience but I feel the target audience isn't stupid and more depth and motivation in the topic and the resolution would have been better, the middle east resolution was...simple and naive to say the least. The pacing and the writing was a but janky and honestly I didn't like (as I said above) how simple and naive the resolution and conflict was.

Characters: The banter is good, that's the best part of gr character work in the book but I wanted more depth, I know this is a first series for the series but overall I wanted more. I know for a team book this was to be expected, but not for Waid.

It's aight but I expected a lot more.

...goodreads lost my review.

Onward to the next!

Shane says

A fantastic book. A story of kids who are tired of seeing the world as it is and step up to make a difference in it. They have learned from their predecessors and are trying their best to change the world in the most moral way they can. "Sometimes there's just nothing to hit." These kids are changing the world not as super heroes but as activists; with words instead of fists (but sometimes a few fists too).

The writers brought along a wonderful group of characters, smart, witty, motivated...and then Gwenpoole. I think this was an attempt to bring in the younger audience with a character they appreciate, but it was sorely unwelcome. The Champions assembled a team of the best and brightest, then Marvel thought it was a good idea to throw in a "LOL so random xD" character into the mix. I hope Gwenpoole isn't around for long because she very blatantly does not fit into the mix.

Otherwise, this has been one of the best stories I've read in a long time. It's what we love about superheroes, but gives me a sense that I could be one of them.
