



Checkmate Vol. 1: A King's Game

Greg Rucka , Jesus Saiz (Illustrator) , Nunzio DeFilippis (Writer) , Christina Weir (Writer) , Cliff Richards (Illustrator)

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Acclaimed novelist Greg Rucka (A Fistful of Rain) and artist Jesus Saiz, the creative team behind THE OMAC PROJECT, reunite to tell the tale of Checkmate, a covert organization that exists to keep the super-powered factions in the DC Universe "in check" regardless of national boundary, affiliation or agenda.

After the explosive events of INFINITE CRISIS and THE OMAC PROJECT, the United Nations formed this new agency to bring down heroes and villains that get out of line in a world that's more dangerous than ever. Now Checkmate uses unique abilities to deputize human and metahuman forces throughout the world.

Collects Checkmate #1-7.

Checkmate Vol. 1: A King's Game Details

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Author : Greg Rucka , Jesus Saiz (Illustrator) , Nunzio DeFilippis (Writer) , Christina Weir (Writer) , Cliff Richards (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Checkmate Vol. 1: A King's Game for online ebook

Brad says

I've become a big fan of Greg Rucka the past couple of years—his work on Wonder Woman and Adventures of Superman have been especially great. However, I'm becoming less and less fond of his DC spy stuff. Checkmate spins out of the OMAC Project, Rucka's prequel to Infinite Crisis which reestablished Checkmate as a nebulous international spy organization. Post-Infinite Crisis, Checkmate is a U.N.-sanctioned group that protects the world from super-powered threats.

Rucka takes on a bunch of small characters from the DC Universe (the original Green Lantern, Mister Terrific, Count Vertigo, Amanda Waller, etc.) to form the spy organization. The first four issues show the machinations of keeping the group solvent from a threat from the Chinese to veto Checkmate's charter. The last three issues... are a digression.

I'm annoyed by all the aspects of Checkmate that seem to come from the Marvel Universe. The whole naming system—characters are called the white and black king and queen—reminds me of the Hellfire Club, Checkmate itself seems a lot like SHIELD, and one of the villains, Kobra, looks a lot like HYDRA or at least the Serpent Society. These aren't exactly mainstream Marvel properties, but Rucka didn't do much to distinguish his characters as unique.

There are just too many characters in this book. There are some nice parts, especially the negotiating in the U.N., and some of the Chinese superheroes. The last two issues, a Suicide Squad story, add little but clutter to the book.

From reading Queen and Country, I know Rucka can do espionage well, but Checkmate isn't a good showing.

StoryTellerShannon says

This tale focuses upon meta humans and humans being "controlled" by a United Nations equivalent with legal and illegal black ops missions.

OVERALL GRADE: B

Colton says

Wow. I must say I don't get the low ratings for this title. I'm typically not interested in espionage but Rucka knows how to craft a spy story and craft it well. From the use of distinctive covert ops language, to intriguing twists and character shake-ups, "A King's Game" is a compelling read. This book has character in spades.

Ernest says

Part international politics, part superpowered ‘heroes’ and a whole lot of strong writing, this is a volume that demonstrates, if it needed further demonstration, that there can be comics that tackle adult themes and have great action. My reading suffered from not following the events preceding it in the DC universe, but that is purely my fault. That it has made me interested in finding out what happened before and happens after is a testament to this volume’s quality.

TJ Shelby says

It was okay, not Rucka's best work. I think there were a lot of novel ideas that Rucka wanted to incorporate into his story line but they almost seemed to get in the way of the story-telling. The constant beating down the readers throat about the chess name titles grew to the point of annoyance. Hopefully volume two is better.

John Yelverton says

Big character shake ups make this a book worth reading until the end.

Sean says

I hoped for so much more from Greg Rucka. I so badly wanted this to be a mix between Queen & Country and the DC Universe. Sadly, that's not what we get here. The political intrigue is bland, the espionage here is one-note, and the action is decent not enough to make up for the other deficiencies. The cast is interesting but centered on Amanda Waller and Sasha Bordeaux, which is fine but why not just make this into a Suicide Squad book? The art by Jesus Saiz was good but many of his characters look too similar. Overall, a disappointment based on the creative team.

Joey Cruz says

I just wasn't won over by this title. Rucka playing with superpowered spy agencies is cool, but DC's penchant for making their characters stay in costume at all times really undercuts the tone of the book. Sort of disappointing.

M says

Checkmate has always seemed like a poor man's SHIELD - a wanna-be global response team to metahuman threats that fails to make a dent in the DC Universe. Greg Rucka attempts to alter that notion with the newest incarnation of the Checkmate organization - until the New 52 shift, that is. Checkmate has grown into a UN-charted peacekeeping force, pairing enhanced operatives with normal human counterparts to better balance the power. As Checkmate is about to lose its UN status, White Queen Amanda Waller puts her plans into motion - sending the group on a spy-hunting mission into China. Running afoul of both assassination plots

by Kobra and super-team the Great Ten, Waller uses her Checkmate agents and duped Suicide Squad to play the cards in her favor. Former Bat-flame Sasha Bordeaux shines as the newest Black Queen willing to go to any lengths necessary, while ex-GL Alan Scott plays his heroic role to a T as the latest White King. Sadly, the volume concluded with Scott's departure and Mr. Terrific taking the vacant seat - which ended the moral struggle between Alan and Sasha. Rucka is a master of the spy genre, but the levels of interplay between convoluted characters (with little to recap) plays havoc with the overall plot. Game over for this reader.

Kelsey says

This would get a five if it weren't for the crossover with the Suicide Squad in issues 6 and 7. Well written, well drawn, but still felt like a managerial/editorial decision from on high, not necessarily cohesive with the flow of the book.

Other than that, a fantastic read. This is the Suicide Squad's more refined, politically-minded noble cousin. Lots of good stuff here, with many checks and balances between players you wouldn't normally see interacting. Alan Scott and Amanda Waller at the head as White King and Queen? Priceless. Plus a healthy introduction to Sasha Bordeaux, who could become a favorite with more time.

As an aside, there's just something satisfying about seeing the Wall consume a hearty meal. Something careful, deliberate, and even intimidating with her enjoyment of the finer things in life. Reminds me of the Suicide Squad trailer with Viola Davis, and just makes me look forward to that movie even more.

Jedhua says

ABSOLUTE RATING: {3+/5 stars}

STANDARDIZED RATING: <3/5 stars>

Victor Orozco says

Bit of a letdown. After having read bits and pieces of this story before in certain stories I can't help but feel that way after finally reading this.

Basically Checkmate is a clandestine espionage organization that functions by sending spies, soldiers, assassins, political emissaries involved in matters serving the will of the United Nations and the United States. This type of story feels more Jason Bourne than DC Comics but it does involve some characters.

On some level it does continue in the similar vein as Suicide Squad but those stories were so much cooler. This is a little too awkward and political for my taste.

Some members of the Squad do involve themselves in Checkmate in particular Icicle, Tattooed Man, Mirror Master, Bronze Tiger and others. Some of them quickly disband.

Nothing that great. D

Mike says

Not only boring and pedestrian, but the "chess pieces as code names" gimmick really gets in the way of following the story. Black King's knight vs. White King's bishop? Who the hell can keep them straight - and who cares enough about these generic cardboard cutouts to care? What "spies" would really use such ridiculously juvenile references? (This may have sounded cool to 12-year-old boys, but at my age this is just irritating.) And ultimately, who cares?

Go read *The Authority* instead, for really **interesting** tales of world-dominating beyond-government policing by metahumans.

Chad says

The U.N. is taking over the running of Checkmate to monitor metahumans. Set up with 2 kings and queens running the show, with the white side running policy while the black runs special ops. Lots of personal conflict with the Golden Age Green Lantern and Mr. Terrific from the JSA, Amanda Waller, King Faraday, and Count Vertigo from Suicide Squad, and Fire from JLI all at odds with one another. It's a well done push and pull between the characters while balancing the interests of all the major countries on the UN security council. I dig Jesus Saiz's art on the book. I love the look with his heavy lines and character work.

Timo says

There must've been a reason why I liked this when I first read it because I seem to have collected all other issues of *Checkmate* too. After this second reading, I could not find a single reason why I did so.
