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The Avengers have always been Marvel's premiere super hero team, made up of all of the heavy hitters that the House of Ideas has to offer. But what happens when a team of this stature is squarely defeated -- and on their home turf to boot? Avengers: Under Siege collects the classic storyline in which the Avengers are finally bested by their villainous archenemies, the Masters of Evil. Even worse, their base of operations -- the Avengers Mansion -- is intentionally destroyed in the process. Can even the Earth's Mightiest Heroes rebound from this debilitating defeat?

Avengers: Under Siege Details

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From Reader Review Avengers: Under Siege for online ebook

Jeff says

My good pal Anne: (to me) How could you recommend a book to me without posting a review? Get on it. Now!!

Me: Lower the shot gun and be reasonable, buddy.

Anne (aims shotgun at my head, trigger clicks): Let's go!! I have to pick up my kids at school.

Me (after peeing myself): Sure thing.

At one point in my life, I took a long break from comics (I know, I'm going to hell for that.), to pursue other things, like, girls. Scouring the bargain bins at a comic book convention (this was back in the day when they had, you know, comics and not celebrities pimping stuff), I came across a few random issues of this story. I read them and became intrigued enough to shell out more money for the complete story. Upon further reading I discovered that this particular Avengers story arc was near or at the top of the greatest Avengers comics of all-time.

Damn, Jeff! I'm really intrigued. What this about?

Well, Random Goodreader, first, my compliments for getting past the restraining order, the 20 foot electrical fence and the rabid guard dogs. How'd you do it?

Anne gave me a lift.

sigh

Baron Zemo, seeking revenge on the Avengers for kicking his ass countless times before, has put the comic book logic aside that says if you want to take out your heroes don't send your evil buddies in one at a time (e.g. see every Silver Age Spider-Man and the Sinister Six story) to get their butts handed to them.

New Zemo-rrific plan: Gather as many mooks as possible and dogpile the crap out of the good guys.

Also, brainwashing a powerful, yet weak-minded, dude that can control the uber-awesome Darkforce is a real bad-guy bonus.

The successful dogpile gambit renders Hercules unconscious...

...and Jarvis beaten within an inch of his life and the Avengers reeling.

Let the gloating begin.

Boys, break out Mad Dog 20/20.

The shrinky-dink heroes, Wasp and Ant-Man (pre-punch line Scott Lang) are forced to defend a hospitalized Hercules from the Absorbing Man and his girl-friend (and my *evil* girl friend of choice) Titania.

She's a whole lotta woman.

Meanwhile, back at Avengers mansion, bloody but not beaten, Cap's had enough.

Call me a sentimental fool, but I love it when he makes those little speeches.

Enter Thor for a little God-time.

Wah Wah Wah!

Yet, Zemo made Cap cry.

Son of a Nazi bastard!!

(view spoiler)

Uh, that was an accident. Honest.

Bottom Line: If you have any interest in the Avengers, this is a must read. That said, your mileage may vary depending upon whether you think all comics published before the year ~~2000~~ 1990 were infantile pap. It's an old school tale that still packs some punch.

Laika says

I'm slowly educating myself on superhero comics. The 1980's era Superman and the 90's Spidey have been the cornerstone in that genre to me (Batman doesn't count as a superhero comic to me, for some reason), but there is so. much. more. than I've read. So now I picked this story, filled with heroes and villains I've never even heard of before.

I liked it. My mind wasn't blown, but I was entertained and not grunting nearly at all. I think I just need to adjust my brain more to the silly-mode next time, because this was really, really silly at times. Most times. And so much of it was about physical prowess, that got very old very quickly. I'm the one who yawns during the fighting scenes. Luckily I don't mind yawning.

Terry Collins says

In a word, one of Roger Stern's finest hours as a writer for Marvel Comics. One of several, in fact, for if there's one thing about Stern, it's that he's both respectful of the past continuity of the characters he scripts while bringing new insights and creative energy to his storytelling. I read this during the original publication years in the 1980s and it never left me. In particular, with no spoilers I offer you the fate of Avenger's butler Edwin Jarvis and the contents of Captain America's footlocker - two events that were unforgettable and resonate to this day. I am so very pleased to revisit the story decades later and find it is as solid as I remember, which, let's face it folks, isn't always the case with comic books. Solid artwork by John Buscema (about whom nothing else needs to be said - he's THE Avengers artist of the 1960s, and to return in the eighties without missing a beat is amazing) with the always superlative Tom Palmer providing finishes over Big John's breakdowns give you the action, but also the emotion of the story. Powerful work during an era of The Avengers where many weren't giving the book the attention it deserved. Their loss ... but now, they can find out what those of us knew back in the day - Roger Stern was giving us monthly pearls, and many in fandom were unappreciative swine.

Vikas says

This classic story begins a little slowly as The Avengers fight their battles and fight among themselves while the evil awaits. Literally Masters of Evil organized by Baron Zemo and they get their act together and with planning they are able to capture the Avengers Mansion but also are able to capture many avengers one by one. But by the time even one Avenger is out there the tide can be turned as Wasp tries to win the day with the help of remaining heroes, Ant-man comes and assists so does Thor. Very nice and although it started a bit slow it soon picked up the pace and it ended with a bang. I would surely also read the second part of the story but after some time.

Sebastian Song says

Definitely not the best avengers tale but a significant one foretelling of the many great battles to come and the heavy price of dominance.

Jdetrick says

While this isn't a perfect storyline, its awfully close, and its the story that really cemented me as an Avengers fan.

Dankwa Brooks says

Way back when these were originally published (1986-1987) I read the original printing of these issues Avengers #270-277-- written by Roger Stern and illustrated by John Buscema and Tom Palmer.

I had been reading the Avengers for about six months when this storyline came up and I thought it was one of the best comic book stories I have ever read. I guess Marvel Comics did too and published this storyline in this trade paperback.

Led by Baron Zemo, the newly formed Masters of Evil formulated a plan to not only defeat the Avengers, but completely decimate them.

The Avengers line-up at the time of the siege was:

Captain America
Captain Marvel
Black Knight
Hercules
Wasp

Joining later was:

Thor
Doctor Druid

The Masters of Evil were:

Baron Helmut Zemo
Absorbing Man
Blackout
Black Mamba
Fixer
Goliath
Grey Gargoyle
Mister Hyde
Moonstone
Screaming Mimi
Tiger Shark
Titania
Whirlwind
Yellowjacket

*The Wrecking Crew

Bulldozer
Piledriver
Thunderball
Wrecker

As you can see the numbers were stacked against the Avengers and The Masters of Evil took on the

Avengers piece by piece. Just when you thought there was no way the Avengers could survive...well you have to read the book, but everything in the end was not a happy ending.

Ultimately though it was a great storyline filled with action and plot twists and as Oliver Sava, A.V.Club.com put it "Roger Stern and John Buscema's 1986 story arc 'Under Siege' finds Avengers Mansion under attack by a new Masters of Evil, leading to one of the purest superhero-vs.-supervillain team fights ever put on the page."

FILMMAKERS OPINION

As stated this was one of the greatest superhero/supervillain battles ever and of course given the success of the Avengers movie (2012) this would make a great follow-up...but it's just too expensive to ever make into a live action film.

The fights in the book were awesome and bombastic and possibly could be filmed, but the amount of characters, heroes and villains would just be too much.

I think for an ANIMATED film I think it could be a great adaptation.

Jeff says

Baron Helmut Zemo picks up where his father left off, forming a new incarnation of the Masters of Evil. Exploiting the interpersonal stress existing between the Avengers team (Captain America, Black Knight, Hercules, Captain Marvel, and team leader Wasp) and taking advantage of some members being gone, Zemo leads a devastating attack on the Avengers' mansion. Joining him are such foes as Moonstone, the Wrecking Crew, Mr. Hyde, the Fixer, and the Absorbing Man Zemo draws the line when it comes to inflicting the Avengers and hated enemy Captain America pain. While not my favorite line-up of Avengers, it was interesting to see how they interacted with each other, whether Hercules' brash and somewhat misogynistic attitude, to the Black Knight's jealousy, and the public's outcry when Namor joins the team. Baron Zemo truly proves himself as a big league villain worthy of his father's legacy and setting the framework for future acts of villainy (like founding the original Thunderbolts). An Avengers' tale for the ages when Earth's Mightiest Heroes are taken down in a big way.

Nicolo Yu says

Avengers: Under Siege by Roger Stern, John Buscema and Tom Palmer, is one of those stories that stand the test of time. Reading it after it was initially published almost three decades ago, it is not as dated as the other stories from that era.

In this Stern scripted epic, the Avengers face a familiar team of foes, the Masters of Evil, assembled by Baron Zemo, who brought the fight to their home in the Avengers Mansion. The Avengers, in their many incarnations have at one time or another dispatched the individual members of this new iteration of the Masters. But Zemo's strategy was to trump the Avengers' vaunted teamwork with a roster size twice that of the current line-up and populated with powerhouses that could match Thor in strength. The Masters attacked during their rival lowest ebb in alertness and managed to take the mansion and some of the Avengers

hostage. Even faithful butler Jarvis was not spared from the atrocities the Masters inflicted on their prisoners. This was a clear cut defeat, but when the Avengers counter attacked, they showed their true resolve.

This is an excellent collected edition. Not only does it have the main issues, which are some of the best comics ever and I'm proud to have original copies of it, but the prologue issues as well. This is a great read and it is nice to have these issues to read in one sitting.

The cover copy on issue 276 said it all, "Master of Evil Beware! They're not called the Avengers for nothing!"

Chris Marsh says

Good story. The heroes here are much more dimensional than the villains. Nevertheless, it all works. Prince Namor's sub-plot works well within itself and as part of the main story. Wasp makes a very credible and challenged leader. The heroines Wasp and Captain Marvel and the female villains Moonstone and Yellow Jacket are the most developed and interesting characters in the story. Their actions are the main drivers. The one hero who is the most one-dimensional is Hercules. But he's funny. And his misogyny is integral to the plot. The art is OK. Nothing special by graphic novel standards. Just pretty good comic book art.

Jordan says

It's strange, the lifelong Marvel Zombie I am, how few old-school Avengers comics I've read. I knew this arc had an excellent reputation and Roger Stern's work tends to hold up well, so I picked up the back issues. After a bit of a slow start, it turned out to be pretty excellent. I knew the basic "why has nobody done this before!?" plot about the Masters of Evil just walking in the front door of the very public Avengers Mansion. What surprised me was the depth of characterization. The Wasp shines, proving herself a capable leader on every page. Hercules blusters, incapable of taking orders from a woman. The Black Knight frets about being kind of worthless as a hero and undesirable to Janet. And Cap proves his mettle yet again as the never-say-die backbone of the team. 80s work is always dated, but there were some outstanding lines and more than a few moments that still felt as thrilling as anything on the shelves today.

Brian Poole says

Avengers: Under Siege was the last great *Avengers* story of the '80s. As the action opened, the team was beset by tension, with many members off doing their own thing. Baron Zemo assembled an army of super-villains into a new Masters of Evil. The Masters invaded the team's mansion, seizing control and taking faithful butler Jarvis hostage. They ambushed Black Knight and Captain Marvel. Hercules's rash invasion of the mansion led to a severe beating at the hands of the villains and of the Masters taking Cap hostage. Wasp and the new Ant-Man faced off against the formidable Absorbing Man and Titania, then coordinated a counterstrike that included a returning Thor and Doctor Druid. Zemo forced Cap to watch Mister Hyde beat and torture Jarvis nearly to death. Fierce fighting damaged the building heavily, until the climactic confrontation between Cap and Zemo.

Under Siege was possibly Roger Stern's best arc on the book. It took a lot of chances with the narrative, such as allowing serious injury to Hercules. The very concept of the Masters of Evil changed in this story. Instead of a roughly equivalent force of villains, it grew into a large organization centered around Zemo, a concept that's evolved even further in modern comics, where the villains inhabit their own country. While the mansion had been a battle site for the Avengers before, they'd never had their building hijacked by enemies. The psychological drama between Zemo and Cap was fairly spellbinding. Perhaps most disturbing was the treatment of Jarvis. God knows the faithful butler had been taken hostage plenty of times in the past, but he usually emerged with little more than a crease in his morning coat. Seeing the character beaten near death while a helpless Cap watched was the most disturbing sequence. The story also charted how far Wasp had come in a few short years. She took down heavy hitters Absorbing Man and Titania almost single-handed and rallied the troops at the darkest moment. *Avengers: Under Siege* is an amazing volume that any fan of the series should have.

A version of this review originally appeared on www.thunderalleybcp.com

Caroline says

Remember when the Avengers were a bunch of C-list characters and they fought a bunch of C-list villains? This is kind of fun, though I'm not sure what it was about these particular issues that merited collecting. It was interesting to see characters like Monica Rambeau as Captain Marvel (that was a good idea, they should have stuck with her!), and Janet van Dyne (Wasp) as leader of the Avengers (though it's kind of grating that most of the story is about how her teammates won't take orders from her because they don't respect women -- Hercules -- or because they're in love with her -- Black Knight). Also, Karla Sofen as Moonstone fills basically the same role on the Masters of Evil that she has, recently, on *Thunderbolts* and *Dark Avengers* -- ie, being smarter than the person who is in charge; though here, she also gets to do science-y things. Captain America does show up in the last couple issues, mostly to be tied up by Baron Zemo and fume at him. These are, of course, my favorite parts.

Will Cooper says

I'd probably say it's actually 3 and 1/2, because it was an enjoyable read. Love Captain America's never failing resolve and utter sweetness. Except for the deus ex machina of Doctor Druid, the bad guys were actually doing pretty well and working how you should if you want to defeat good guys.

Devero says

L'altra saga, vetta di eccellenza, del Periodo Stern-Buscema su Avengers.

Il Barone Zemo jr sta assemblando la squadra dei Signori del Male più potente e pericolosa di sempre, il cui nucleo centrale formerà, anni dopo, i *Thunderbolts*. Questa è la storia di come andarono molto vicini ad annichilire i Vendicatori, distrussero la loro base, mandarono Ercole in coma, piegarono ma non spezzarono Cap e il Cavaliere Nero e il povero Jarvis. È anche la storia di come Wasp si guadagnò la stima dei suoi compagni guidando la riscossa, di come Monica Rambeau, Capitano Marvel II, vinse le sue paure e del Dr. Druido che ripaga un vecchio debito.

È una grande storia magistralmente scritta da Roger Stern, ottimamente disegnata da John Buscema e Tom

Palmer.
