



Doctor Strange Omnibus, Vol. 1

Stan Lee (Writer) , Steve Ditko (Illustrator) , Roy Thomas (Writer) , Dennis O'Neil (Writer) , Don Rico (Writer)

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Vain, greedy and prideful, Dr. Stephen Strange was a world-renowned surgeon until a car accident crippled his hands. Broken and destitute, he journeyed to Tibet in search of a legendary healer. He found not a man of medicine, but the venerable Ancient One -- and the path to the mystic arts! From Doctor Strange's eerie house on a Greenwich Village corner, Stan Lee and Steve Ditko unleashed new dimensions and otherworldly terrors -- stories that remain as influential today as they were on 1960s counter-culture. Now, Marvel is proud to offer this Omnibus collection of the complete Lee/Ditko Doctor Strange run! In one beautifully restored hardcover volume, experience the iconic first appearances of Baron Mordo, Eternity, Dormammu and the Mindless Ones, as well as Wong and the lovely Clea!

Collecting: material from *Strange Tales* 110-111, 114-146 & *Amazing Spider-Man* Annual 2

Doctor Strange Omnibus, Vol. 1 Details

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From Reader Review Doctor Strange Omnibus, Vol. 1 for online ebook

David says

Shockingly slim for an Omnibus. Not sure why it's called an Omnibus, honestly, other than it's the craze. It's barely 450 pages. And that's only because Ditko used fat ink. Should have been called an OHC instead.

Saif Saeed says

Going back this far is never a good idea when it comes to comics. It's like a meet your heroes situation, or seeing a picture of the love of your life when they were in the 8th grade. Most of the time, it's just an ugly awkward precursor to the beautiful thing you love right now. That's about how I'm feeling with this book.

It's fun to see Dr. Strange when he was still a vignette in Strange Tales, battling Mordo and Dormammu in ten pages an issue sandwiched between The Human Torch and Nick Fury back when he was white. It was nice seeing the origins of Strange, back when he was just a black magic sorcerer and not the Sorcerer Supreme. Clea, Dormammu, Wong was in like two panels. This was fun. It just wasn't good.

This is supposed to be a remastered HD Blu-ray recolored version of these old comics and it still mostly looks like crap. The stories are ok, but they're a lot better when they do them again in Dr. Strange or in Dr. Strange Sorcerer Supreme. Here in Strange Tales though, they're kinda crap.

For me, personally, it's ok, it's a fun read. I can imagine nine out of ten people would give this a negative star review, and the people who would actually enjoy this comic are a very rare breed. If you actually want to jump into Dr. Strange, definitely go for any of the collected Dr. Strange or Dr. Strange Sorcerer Supreme stories, those are great. Skip Strange Tales unless you like Silver Age stuff. I've enjoyed very little Silver Age stuff and even as a Strange fan this is definitely more on the meh side.

Camilo says

I haven't read much of Silver Age comics, but this definitely was one of the best I've ever read. Loved all the crazy stories and love even more the art by Steve Ditko.

Alex Andrasik says

I dig Doctor Strange! He's far-out, inventive, and introduces more of a mystical cosmology to the Marvel Universe early on than I would have guessed. There's no denying that we owe most of this to the recently-departed Steve Ditko, whose artwork conjures up a trippy pop-art surrealism that informs the entire series, and his hand in plotting these adventures is clear. That's not to say that Stan the Man is off the hook; his love

of language, the more over-the-top the better, lends a cadence and rhythm to Strange's stories, and, at his best, an inscrutable sort of majesty and nobility.

This collection of stories is very thin on the usual tropes that Marvel leaned on in the Silver Age. There's not a communist to be found, and sci-fi style extraterrestrial menaces are in equally short supply. Oh, sure, the various extra-dimensional entities fulfill essentially the same role; but their status as mystical threats, beyond the conception of the science-minded like Reed Richards or Bruce Banner, adds a chilling, almost Lovecraftian sort of inscrutability to their methods and motives. The earliest Strange tales, indeed, dip into 50's-style twist-ending occult tales that Ditko, in particular, was so good at crafting.

But the storytelling really takes off when Lee and Ditko introduce a narrative concept that I haven't seen yet in the Marvel canon so far: the ongoing, multi-part, continuous story--and it is glorious. I don't know how much of a risk this format must have been in the era it appeared--maybe not so much of one, since the good doctor was the B-story to the Human Torch and, later, Nick Fury--but it feels pretty momentous, introducing a pattern that Marvel and the rest of the industry would make such heavy use of in the decades hence, for better or worse. Whatever your personal opinion of the multi-part epic generally, you've got to admit this one's a great example: you've got a real challenge for the hero, with some built-in dramatic irony in that while we, the audience, understand the true threat he's facing, he's mystified about the source of his enemy's sudden power-boost; there's mystery, in the question of what, or who, is "Eternity;" and there's peril for two supporting characters, one a captive, the other ailing and hidden away from hunting villains. Strange himself is on the run through most of the story, which is thrilling in itself; it's unusual to see a hero depicted as a fugitive, especially for such an extended period, as his headquarters is invaded and his allies scattered. There are daring escapes, nail-biting duels, and hints of the mighty Marvel cosmos to come. Oh, sure, it gets a little flaccid in the middle, and it's clear that toward the end there were either disagreements about the direction of the story, or else fill-in issues required to make up for delays, but for the most part the story stands as a very successful epic.

This collection is also notable for its treatment of non-white characters. I'm not sure we've met any Asians before the point who aren't villains and/or subjugated victims; even the noble Professor Yinsen from Iron Man barely registers as more than a plot device. This changes in Dr. Strange with the introduction of the Ancient One, Strange's mystic mentor and a formidable sorcerer despite his advanced age. Certainly he owes much to less-than-pleasant stereotypes, but he's depicted, for the most part, with respect and dignity; Strange's travels to the Ancient One's realm and throughout the world, moreover, allow for sympathetic portrayals of other characters of color. There's even an African-American doctor depicted in one of the later issues--surely an eye-catching choice in 1965.

All told, Dr. Strange is an intriguing and exciting read with a lot of new ideas and cool characters. The psychedelic artwork and amazing character designs simply must be experienced.

LADYWATCH: AN interesting edition of Ladywatch here today; this collection is light on the ladies, and the most significant of them (Clea) goes unnamed until its very end, after spending many issues in captivity. Still, she's a pretty decent character, having earned her imprisonment by bravely aiding Sr. Strange. Another issue features a powerful female villain, opposed by her somewhat timid sister.

BRING ON THE BAD GUYS: This collection is dominated by the twin threats of Baron Mordo and Dormammu, the latter of whom sports one of the all-time great character designs. The cosmology of mystic Marvel provides plenty of motivation for villainous threats, as dabblers in the dark arts seem primarily concerned with one-upping each other and gaining power by acquiring some new artifact or bit of spellcraft; Doctor Strange will have none of that, of course. But threats like Dormammu--extra-dimensional and beyond

mortal ken--exist merely to dominate, subjugate, or destroy. An interesting addition is the Mindless Ones, who are less supervillain than force of nature, living on the edges of Dormammu's realm and serving primarily as a check on his power, seemingly an attempt to head off readers before they can ask, "If Dormammu's so all-powerful, why doesn't he just wreck everything with a snap of his flaming fingers?" Of course, there are some magical turkeys here among the proud eagles of villainy; Mister Rasputin springs to mind, because no Silver Age run of comics can go too long without impugning the reputation of at least one eastern European. (I guess Mordo fits that category as well, but at least he's got self-respect.) Special shout-out to Mordo's ethereal servitors, who flit around hunting Strange very creepily in a way that made me think of J.K. Rowling's Dementors.

COSMIC ENCOUNTERS: Though first appearing here in a supernatural setting, the mighty figure of Eternity, embodiment of all that is, will go on to be featured primarily among Marvel's cosmic pantheon. Of course, the line between the cosmic and the mystic has always been rather porous for Marvel.

HOSTS OF HOGGOTH: This series lays the foundation for pretty much all of Marvel's mystic wing, as best expressed by the various wizards' use of cool-sounding epithets that may or may not get fleshed out in future stories. Among them are the eponymous Hosts of Hoggoth, the Flames of the Faltine, the Roving Rings of Roggador, and the ever-lovin' Vishanti. Mystical implements introduced here are the Eye of Agamotto and the Wand of Watoomb.

SUPERHERO TEAMUP: Doctor Strange meets Spider-Man in the annual that concludes the collection. Spider-Man handles his introduction to magic with decided equanimity, and makes a good friend of the Doctor.

CONTINUITY NOTES: Another of the mystic watch-words introduced here is the "crimson bands of Cytorrak;" these will play an important role in X-Men history via their Cytorrak-empowered foe, the Juggernaut. Strange's long ongoing story-arc raises an interesting question for the first time: how much time passes within and between issues of a comic book? At various points in the story, Strange mentions being on the adventure for weeks and then months, but in my headcanon it's no more than a matter of days. This may have been hard for readers, and even creators, to conceptualize in a process that would take over a year to complete. Meanwhile, Stan makes liberal use of asterisked continuity notes, though sometimes admits to being unsure of which issue the events referenced took place in; they must not have kept back issues around the office for long.

Tony Calder says

This omnibus edition reprints the early appearances of Doctor Strange - from his start as the back-up story in Strange Tales (the main feature was solo stories of the Human Torch) through to the period when he was sharing equal space - having outlasted the Torch, Strange Tales was now co-featuring Nick Fury. It also includes the story where Doctor Strange co-starred with Spider-Man in Amazing Spider-Man Annual #2. It does not include Doctor Strange's guest appearance in any other Marvel comics, nor does it include the other characters stories from Strange Tales.

In the 60s, the dominant creative forces at Marvel were Stan Lee, Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko. Kirby was doing the artwork on Marvel's flagship title, Fantastic Four, and Ditko was bringing his ability to invoke weirdness to Marvel's most popular character - Spider-Man. He also provided the artwork for Doctor Strange and his style was an excellent fit for the mystic mayhem of Doctor Strange. The scripts are much simpler

(and often much cornier) than current day fare.

The omnibus starts with Doctor Strange's origin and introduces the main characters - Doctor Strange, the Ancient One, and Baron Mordo - who are all portrayed reasonably accurately in the movie. The initial stories are pretty much stand alone until about halfway through, when the long running story pitting Doctor Strange against Mordo and Dormammu, and it's conclusion ends this omnibus. This story also introduces another important character, Clea, although we don't discover her name until the last few pages of the final issue.

If the movie has piqued your interest, and you want a crash course in the Doctor Strange universe, this is an excellent place to start. Unfortunately, there is no volume 2 in this omnibus series, and it doesn't seem that there will be anytime soon.

Sean Curley says

Stan Lee, Steve Ditko and Jack Kirby laid the foundations of the Marvel Comic universe in the 1960s in a succession of seminal series. Lee and Ditko's most famous creation was, of course, *The Amazing Spider-Man*; Doctor Strange would have to count as a somewhat distant runner-up. This Omnibus collects the entirety of Lee and Ditko's collaboration, issues #110-111 and 114-146 of Marvel's *Strange Tales* split book (the good doctor shared the book with, by times, the solo adventures of the Human Torch and later Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.).

The aforesaid split books means that any individual Doctor Strange tale is at most half the length of a standard solo issue from the period, and in turn that means this is easily the shortest Omnibus of a major run (it amounts to about 400 pages; comparatively, something like the Lee/Ditko *Amazing Spider-Man Omnibus* exceeded 1000 pages). It shows, in some respects, in the stories themselves. It's easy to see why Stephen Strange never made it above the B-tier of Marvel's superhero characters, even in the hands of his most storied creative team. Many of the signature aspects of Marvel's innovative 1960s superhero comics are wholly absent here: Strange has no personal life at all (neither friends nor love interests, though by the series' end a prospective one has finally appeared in the form of Clea), no duel between person and superheroic demands on his time, and minimal supporting cast.

The first half of the run is decent, if somewhat formulaic. Strange spends the bulk of his time fighting just one villain: Baron Mordo, a rival former student of the Ancient One, Strange's mentor. These schemes recur frequently enough that at one point a reader wrote into the letters column to complain. Mixed in are other Marvel villains such as a memorable one-shot appearance by Loki (which establishes, for the record, that Lee and Ditko consider Loki far more powerful than Strange), and a few appearances by Nightmare. However, things markedly improve in the second half, as Lee and Ditko create a huge serialized storyline pitting Strange once again against Mordo, but a Mordo now backed by the Dread Dormammu, a powerful sorcerer from the Dark Dimension (who is also, confusingly, invoked repeatedly earlier in the series as a source of Strange's power).

This lengthy storyline features some of Ditko's more expressive and imaginative artwork, particularly the design for the character of Eternity. And the magical combat gradually becomes more interesting to watch, as the creators get the hang of creating strategic challenges for Strange, a man whose powers often seem infinite.

Karen says

Sorry, guys. I didn't like it at all.

(Lies--I liked the very last issue with Spider-Man in it. That got a star of its own.)

Sean Gibson says

After 400+ pages of Stan-Lee-in-his-prime dialogue, I'm contemplating changing the way I talk, at least at work, to mirror Stan's writing—that is, I'm going to conclude every sentence with, at a minimum, one exclamation point! Or, I might even use two!! If warranted by the circumstances—say, an emergency like running out of staples—I might even use three!!! EVERYONE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY PRAISE MY ENTHUSIASM, THE VISHANTI INCLUDED!!!!

(I kid, Stan—you know I love you.)

Doctor Strange was a weird addition to the burgeoning Marvel Universe, a curiously arcane figure who debuted after the underwear-on-the-outside, human-emotions-on-the-inside likes of Spider-Man, the Fantastic Four, and the X-Men (one wonders what it would be like to wear one's underwear on the inside...hmmm...perhaps one shouldn't wonder so much). Rather than cosmic rays, a mutation, or clever use of technology, the good Doctor derived his powers from enchanted objects and mystical mumbo jumbo, and, even by the end of this run—which collects the initial collaboration of Lee with legendary artist Steve Ditko, who pulled double duty as penciller and plotter—he was still an awkward fit alongside those heroic luminaries. That said, he had come into his own as a character, with his own mythology, burgeoning rogue's gallery, and stylish visual flair that would guarantee his popularity—if not his sales success—to the present day, when inexplicable international sex symbol and presumed advocate for the discontinuation of surnames Benedict Cumberbatch is poised to send interest in this red-robed bastion of arcane abilities careening across dimensions and all the way into the domain of the Dread Dormammu.

The most interesting part of reading Doctor Strange's early adventures was watching the character evolve from a generic back-up story cipher to a fully formed (and unique by the measure of his cape-wearing colleagues) character capable of carrying his own book (albeit with only sporadic success...I suggested in a review of another Doctor Strange book that he's a tough character to write a monthly series for because the stakes are too high; if he loses, Earth—and the Marvel U—are essentially kaput, so there's a paucity of dramatic tension). Even more than his character developed, however, his look evolved, with Ditko upping his game each issue and producing a look and feel that was entirely its own, whether Strange was relaxing in his Greenwich Village sanctum sanctorum or projecting his spirit self through the ethereal plane.

Are the stories themselves a little repetitive? Sure. There are only so many times you can read about a character succeeding through the use of exceptional willpower before you start to wish the Hoary Hosts of Hoggoth would knock back a few tequila shots and become the Whorish Hosts of Hoggoth so we could have a sexy time interlude (one wonders if said Hosts met Mr. Cumberbatch whether they would do just that...but, again—one shouldn't wonder so much). Still, Stan and Steve created a character that has stood the test of time and, by virtue of his uniqueness, has acted as a fulcrum in major storylines that have transformed

various aspects of the Marvel Universe.

And, come on, let's be honest with ourselves...if you could have a cloak of levitation and a manservant and pull off a goatee without looking like someone stapled a diseased wolverine to your face (as this author discovered he could not do when he made the unfortunate decision to rock a goatee consistently during his collegiate years; to be fair, though, that was more a result of laziness with respect to shaving than it was because I thought I was as sexy as Doctor Strange), you'd do it.

Relstuart says

Contains the origin story of Dr. Strange and mostly short single issue stories.

Blindzider says

This was pretty good. I've read enough of classic Stan Lee writing to expect a certain type of story, but this was even a little bit better. There are a couple one-off stories in the beginning, introducing his main nemeses Baron Mordo and Dormammu, then fairly quickly moves into a multipart duel between them. Along the way you see the origin of Clea and even Eternity and also see the moment when Strange receives his cloak. It's all a really nice introduction to Dr. Strange.

Donovan says

"Dr. Strange: Master of Black Magic!"

Collecting Strange Tales issues #110-111, 114-146 and Amazing Spider-Man Annual #2, Doctor Strange Omnibus Volume 1 takes us way back to July 1963 through July 1966. At 409+ pages of incredibly redesigned classic comics, this is totally worth owning!

And damn, what a long book! Somewhat exposition heavy, but fun and enjoyable. These are the oldest comics I've read, and they hold up fairly well for being 53 years old! (I've read newer and far worse!) It's a bit sci-fi campy, as Stan Lee makes it up as he goes along, and Dr. Strange always wins in the end. But take it in context and you'll enjoy yourself. Doctor Strange's "indomitable will," his wit, the alliterative incantations, the outlandish foes, and the brilliant modern art of Steve Ditko make this a great read.

A five page feature in the back of Strange Tales #110, featuring The Human Torch, is where Doctor Strange makes his first appearance in comic history. It was decided by readers' letters to continue the series, and so "Dr. Strange" appeared again in Strange Tales #114 with the return of Baron Mordo and the Ancient One. That's how it all began!

Dean Mullaney writes in the introduction: "The series incorporated themes of Eastern mysticism with the

multidimensional planes of science fiction, all wrapped within the near-psychedelic landscapes that the straightlaced Ditko brought to the page."

What I enjoy about the world of Dr. Strange is that it rides the line between indie and superhero comic. Instead of heroics and feats of strength, it's mysticism and wit, spells and dimensional travel, monsters and evil magicians. And there's even a pretty girl or two! It's refreshing to read a comic that's so quintessentially Marvel in its levity and sci-fi wackiness, but there's no spandex! And though the stories always start in reality, you never know where they'll go.

As this book literally collects individual comics, it's interesting how the covers progress for Strange Tales. At first there's no mention of Doc Strange. Strange indeed! Then tiny boxes tagged "also starring" show up after a few issues.

Not until #121 does Strange get the bottom 1/4 of the cover. And #124 he gets half the cover. #126 and 127 are interesting issues for two reasons: they feature a huge special detailing Strange's voyage to the Dark Dimension and his battle with the Dread Dormammu, and at the end of #127 it's revealed that Strange has essentially been promoted and gets a new costume. In #128 he gains his now well known red cape of levitation and a more powerful round amulet!

In #130 Dr. Strange gets nearly a full cover while The Human Torch is a feature. Ha! Only at #146, the big finale between the Dread Dormammu and Eternity, does Strange finally get the whole cover! By the Hoary Hosts of Hoggoth!

It's also interesting how these short and infrequent comics are relatively self-contained yet draw upon a larger universe over time. Each battle with his enemies gets greater and more epic as they learn each others' weaknesses, and sly Stan Lee has to increase the danger and hyperbole. Nightmare, Baron Mordo, and the Dread Dormammu are awesome villains! Can't wait to see them in future books!

So overall a great book and time machine into mid-century Marvel Comics. Light humor, great adventure, and creative, engaging storytelling make Stan Lee and Steve Ditko's Doctor Strange a timeless classic.

Zachary King says

By the hoary hosts of Hoggoth! Stan Lee and Steve Ditko at their mind-numbingly mystical best. Maybe all the stories haven't aged so well, but they're important for introducing Doctor Strange and his offbeat adventures. The long arc against Mordo and Dormammu in pursuit of Eternity is a real highlight.

Richard Guion says

I decided to crack open the recently published Marvel Doctor Strange Omnibus, which has all of Lee/Ditko's Strange Tales stories plus the team up between Doc & Spidey in Amazing Spider-Man Annual 2. Original comics are the best, but this oversized format is superb, I love the larger page format. While many of the original comics listed Ditko as only the artist, the index page here clearly states that he was the plotter for the

entire run. His genius on this series seemed to expand every few issues, designing new characters and dimensional vistas. By the middle run Ditko embarks on a multi chapter saga with the Ancient One deliriously sick & Doc on the run as Mordo, powered up by Dormammu, pursues him across Asia. Reading this in the early 70s was frustrating because the stories were scattered across different reprint titles like Marvel's Greatest Comics & Marvel Tales - I had to wait years to find out how Doc got out of an iron mask / manacles because I missed a reprint. Having them all collected in one volume is fantastic. It also contains reprint covers & illustrations from other artists.

Scott says

This volume collects the earliest Doctor Strange stories, from the two-in-one comic *Strange Tales*. I had read a few of them in earlier reprints, but most were new to me. Reading this collection was at first a wondrous experience of sixties psychedelia. Artist Steve Ditko, though never a favorite of mine, was at the top of his game, and one has to appreciate his original renderings of other-dimensional realms and magical effects. As the book wore on, though, Stan Lee's voluminous verbiage--and let me be clear here, I adore Stan and often refer to him as "my real dad"--began to wear on my brain. It probably would have been better to read a few issues at a time and then put it down for a while--except that I didn't want to put it down. They start to feel samey after a while, especially as the eeeevil Baron Mordo (never forget that he is evil) keeps returning time and time again to destroy Doctor Strange. So by the second half of the book (it may not seem like a large volume, but each episode is only about eight pages on average, with a lot of writing packed into each page) I was enjoying myself a bit less. Recommend you take 2-3 chapters and then call on the Doctor again the next evening.
