



FF, Volume 1

Jonathan Hickman (Writer) , Steve Epting (Artist) , Barry Kitson (Artist)

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A bold new direction for Marvel's First Family featuring new members, old friends, older enemies and uneasy alliances that will send shockwaves through the Marvel Universe. With stunning artwork by Steve Epting, Paul Mounts and Barry Kitson, join writer Jonathan Hickman as the "World's Greatest Comic Magazine" forges ahead and faces the future!

Collecting: *FF* 1-5

FF, Volume 1 Details

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Author : Jonathan Hickman (Writer) , Steve Epting (Artist) , Barry Kitson (Artist)

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From Reader Review FF, Volume 1 for online ebook

Aaron says

It is really just so cool to see all of Hickman's setup paying off. I mentioned this in my review of Fantastic Four Vol. 4, but it's still just so satisfying, particularly coupled with the fact that Hickman continues to lay groundwork for future storylines as he pays off his older ones. If this is the kind of stuff we can expect from him, I really can't wait for Secret Wars.

In this volume, pretty much every one-off story Hickman told in the first 4 volumes of his Fantastic Four run is coming to a head, even though a few of them already seemed like they HAD to come to a head. It just shows how good at plotting this guy is. Plots that I thought had presented as many twists and turns as possible aren't done! I am continually impressed, and can't wait to continue this storyline (particularly since I'm about to finish Secret Warriors, and was concerned that I wouldn't have any solid Hickman stuff to read for a while).

This review has kind of just turned into me singing the author's praises, but I don't want to get too much into plot details. They're too fun to watch unfold, and I wouldn't want to spoil that for anyone else. Deal with it, I guess! *lowers sunglasses*

Mike says

Somehow even though there's quite a number of big changes being played out in this book, it feels positively threadbare and languid compared to the previous Hickman volumes.

Hickman pulls a little dramatic bait-and-switch on us, and while I'm still a bit miffed he resorted to a cheap writers' trick, the underlying storyline (alterna-Reeds run amok) is generally interesting.

The story doesn't go as far as fast as previous Hickman FF's, so frankly I'm disappointed and hoping it's an aberration.

OK no, you know what? I'm officially pissed - what the hell, Hickman and Epting? You add probably one of the coolest superheroes ever to grace coloured pages, and he gets relegated to a few half-hearted and not terribly imaginative quips while doing nothing particularly unique or...Spidey-like? The inside cover promo-quote actually says "Hickman really gets the character of Spider-Man" and I have to call shenanigans. The character of Spider-Man is not some pasty, timid, second-string BORING generic hero!! Wow - I kept turning pages, hoping to god there'd be something redeeming, Bendis-esque, or at least one good joke in the lot. He tried - don't get me wrong - but it was so damned *flat* I wondered whether the Disney/Marvel mgmt forced Hickman to take a character he DISlikes.

And what's with the parade of also-ran losers that were trotted out as villains? I cannot believe that Diablo was one of the all-time arch-villains of the FF. Cripes, next they'll be bringing out Batroc the Leaper. On the plus side, Hickman writes a perfectly despicable, self-righteous and uber-arrogant Doom.

Second reading, February 2015: going back through this story, trying to build the momentum to make it ALL the way through Hickman's run, I didn't dislike this story as much as my first run-through. Partly because I

am more familiar with some of the players (High Evolutionary, Inhumans) from Hickman's later work in his Avengers run, and partly because I can see this as an arc in Hickman's uber-storyline and thus it isn't quite as pointless as before. Not exactly *exciting* yet, but ranks another star in my rating from 2 to 3.

Jesse A says

An excellent volume in this overall Hickman run.

Roy says

I've read a few Hickman novels before and he always has grand ideas and concepts but at times are hard to follow. I found this the same. I could see the cool ideas but I felt like a lot of prior knowledge was required for it to make sense. Will keep the next Volume on to be read list for another day. Too many other things to start.

Sam Quixote says

I'm not the biggest Fantastic Four fan, in fact I've never read a book of theirs but they have been in numerous Marvel "event" books I've read and I used to watch the 90s cartoon and of course the lacklustre movies, so I feel I have a fairly good idea of who they are. But this book shows the Fantastic Four are no more – Johnny Storm/Human Torch is dead! And there are all manner of oddballs that fill the Baxter building: a robotic dragon with the personality of Frasier, some bug-eye alien kids, Reed's long-lost-presumed-dead father, and now Spiderman.

It's ironic that the first page of the book has scientists gathered around a device saying something like "we have to create something new and different, we can't rely on the old ways", because it seems the most cynical move on Marvel's part to take their flagship character and plonk him straight into an ailing franchise. Right, "new"...but it isn't even that big of a deal as Spiderman barely figures in the story (though it is Vol 1, so he might play a larger role in later volumes).

The story instead is about a gang of Reed Richards from an alternate dimension plotting to destroy Earth in an effort to save thousands of other planets, and the Future Foundation (as the Fantastic Four are now called) selfishly set about stopping them (though to be fair they don't know why the Reeds are out to destroy Earth yet), enlisting the help of their greatest foes including Victor Von Doom.

The book is interesting enough to read but I felt as a first-time reader to the FF, there was a whole ton of stuff I didn't know about going in. How did Johnny die? Why is Sue Queen of Atlantis? Who are all these weird new characters? And why has Spidey decided to join the FF? That part felt the most contrived, he's fine by himself, he doesn't need the others. Plus Jonathan Hickman throws in all kinds of references to past stories that made no sense to me.

Steve Epting does a wonderful job drawing this book, I remember reading his and Ed Brubaker's "Marvel Projects" book last year and was floored by the quality of the art, and he doesn't disappoint here. Hickman also writes the story well despite all the numerous location jumping and events that preceded this book.

“Future Foundation” is an enjoyable book that I’ll continue with (Vol 2 is out now I think) even if the inclusion of Spidey is gimmicky and the alternate universes storyline feels overplayed by Marvel at this point.

Jan Philipzig says

Frustrated with the scientific community, Mister Fantastic gathers a few brilliant young minds to form the so-called Future Foundation (FF), a group that combines science with combat in an attempt to, you guessed it, create a better future for all of humanity. How exactly it plans to achieve that goal, I am not sure, as it appears to have its hands full with fighting evil alternate versions of Mr. Fantastic (or something)... which isn't exactly the first thing that comes to mind when I think of a better future for all of humanity.

I generally did not get a good sense of what this Future Foundation is really all about, or what the roles and personalities of its members are. Big ideas are thrown around, but I couldn't detect much of a heartbeat - and the whole thing thus ultimately left me rather cold. I'll say this, though: it was my first encounter with Hickman that did not make me mad, and that definitely counts for something (my previous encounters had been *The Nightly News* and *East of West* #1-3)... even if part of the credit for that goes to the clean and pretty artwork provided by Steve Epting and Barry Kitson.

Zack! Empire says

I’ve read most of the Kirby/Lee run of the Fantastic Four, and I recall two issues of it from the mid 90’s. (One where Reed fights his evil doppelganger, and the other one had Reed stuck in prehistoric times and Namor might have been in there too.) Well it would seem that between those issues and this one I missed quite a lot. Though I can’t say I’m really surprised at this. Comics tend to move along very fast and what might be the status quo today might not even be something that holds any water just a few months later. After Spider-man however, the Fantastic Four are my favorite Marvel Property. (The whole of the X-men being number three in case you were wondering) so I thought it was high time I check in with them. Previously in Fantastic Four the Human Touch died, which might be a bit of a spoiler, but this fact is either already known to you, you don’t care, or you read the synopsis of the story contained on the back of the book and already knew it anyway, so I’m not very worried about it. Johnny recorded a message of himself saying that if he did die Spider-man should be the one to take his place. Reed and the others have decided to no longer be the Fantastic Four, but to be the Future Foundation and that, rather than simply fighting whatever dickhead villain happens to show up that week, they are going to really strive for making the world a better place. It’s also very beneficial to a team to drop the word “four” from its name, because now the team can have as many members as it wants and no one can say shit.

Armed with a giant team roster, snazzy new costumes, and a new team mission of making the world a better place to team proceeds to...fight some villains? What the fuck? Well, hold on to your hats true believer because the stories just get started. Rather than going off to fight the same old rouges gallery they always do the FF are instead trying to recruit them to join the team. One of my favorite things about the Fantastic four has always been that the majority of its villains are intellectual threats, rather than just smash up villains. When the team runs up against a threat too big for them to handle they are able to put aside their pride and appeal to them for help, which goes right along with their mission of making the world a better place, not just a safer one.

The threat they face isn’t just something simple like yet another alien invasion, or a mad dictator making a

play for control of the earth but what might be the biggest threat the Marvel Universe has ever seen: An entire army of Reed Richards, who aren't worried about getting their hands dirty. Gathered together from the multiverse the army of Reeds isn't about saving just one earth, but the whole of creation, and if Earth 616 has to be destroyed to make that happen so be it! I just can't imagine a scary or harder to beat opponent than that.

Alright enough with explaining the plot of the book let's get into what I thought about, which is kind of the point of all of this anyway right? Despite having missed nearly 40 years of FF history I wasn't lost at all while reading this. Some parts are a bit confusing for me (did I mention the 40 years I missed?) but on the whole Jonathan Hickman was able to draw me in and keep me informed all at the same time. To me that is the mark of a good writer. Too many writers today tend to forget that every issue is somebody's first issue and in today's continuity heavy storylines it's important to give the readers as much information as possible. That being said it's also important to not make someone feel like they are just reading page after page of exposition. Jonathan Hickman is a good writer, and I'm looking forward to reading more of his work on FF and I think that is the highest comment you can give a writer: wanting to read more of their work.

The art is very good as well. Steve Epting is a good artist. His style is gritty and dark, without being muddy or too bore down in hatching, or solid blacks, which seems to happen to many artist with a similar style. I practically like the way he handles Susan, who I always picture as being a bit like Marilyn Monroe, a woman who looks beautiful in all conditions. The way he drew her on the cover of FF #1 is one of my favorite renderings of her. I liked Daniel Acuna's covers, especially the variant cover for issue one. Although I wish he had done some interior work. Perhaps he is just too in demand as a cover artist.

This is a good book. I'm a bit pissed that it ends on a cliffhanger, but I guess I can let it go since it is a Volume one collection, and not the collection of an entire storyline. My other complaint would be that it reads rather fast, but many superhero comics suffer from that same problem. Maybe too many people that read comics suffer from ADHD? I've already gotten Volume two though so clearly I liked it enough to continue on with it.

Artemy says

After the events of the last volume, Fantastic Four is no more, now they're called Future Foundation. The bigger overarching story continues though, as the threat of evil Reeds from several parallel universes forces the regular 616-Reed to cooperate with some of his biggest arch-nemeses in order to defeat them. Hickman's F4 run continues to be excellent, and the addition of Spider-Man to the new team roster is a great idea that works well. My only gripe is that Hickman is juggling a lot of plots here, seemingly without trying to bring them all together into one cohesive thing. I'm sure he will eventually, but so far it all feels a bit disjointed. Other than that, this series keeps being a very fun and enjoyable sci-fi adventure.

Bill says

The classic comic book question is, "why doesn't Reed Richards use his intellect to change the world?" FF, short for Future Foundation, approaches that question in the wake of the death of Johnny Storm, the Human Torch. Reed and Sue gather some of the brightest young geniuses of the world to improve the world, and it's an interesting premise -- but sadly, they first have to deal with Reed's alternate universe selves, off building nefarious machines. The logic of some of the choices in this volume just don't make sense to me. Why, for example, gather classic Fantastic Four villains to tackle the four-evil-Reeds issue when there are so many

heroic geniuses in the Marvel Universe? It seems more like a set-up to tackle some morally ambiguity. Oh, and Spider-Man joins the team. The only interesting part of that is seeing how his sense of humor just doesn't click with the stodgy (and, admittedly, grief-stricken) team he's just signed up with.

Emmett Spain says

A jumping off point for new readers, one gets the impression that this story comes in the middle of a much bigger saga. There's a very brief introduction that throws out random details like "Oh, Susan is leading Old Atlantis, and there are a bunch of aliens and some clones and a demon robot thing". A lot isn't really adequately explained, so this is really tough to grasp for those new to the FF hijinks (FF stands for Future Foundation by the way--what the Fantastic Four are calling themselves after the death of Johnny Storm and inclusion of Spider-man).

The saving grace of this work is that the characters are sharply realized--Spider-man is appropriately written with smarts and sass, the kids are precocious, Doom is pitch perfect, Thing is sympathetic, and Sue has a real resilience and strength about her. Hickman gets these characters, and that saves what is otherwise a conceited set up that feels sandwiched together to create toys (new outfits) and generate sales (Spider-man and the Fantastic Four together!).

Be warned that this isn't a full story--it's very much a part one. It's intriguing... Hickman's strength is that you don't really know what turns the story is going to take, which makes it compulsively readable.

Not bad for those looking to invest in the Fantastic Four, but you might find yourself wanting to dip back into Hickman's previous volumes on Fantastic Four so you can grasp just what the heck is going on.

Dan Schwent says

In the wake of the Human Torch's death, the remainder of the Fantastic Four, plus Spider-Man and some others, form the Future Foundation. Their first goals: restore Doctor Doom's mind and defeat the Council of Reeds...

Here we are again, Jonathan Hickman throwing around some big ideas and whetting my appetite. As I said before, I love the idea of the Council of Reeds. In this volume, the FF join forces with The Wizard, The Mad Thinker, Diablo, and others to try to outwit the Reeds and their plan to combat the Celestials.

It's a good story so far but this volume has no sense of being complete or self-contained. I have a feeling I'll need to read the next two volumes to achieve any sort of payoff or literary orgasm. Still, Hickman keeps me interesting and Steve Epting and Barry Kitson do a great job on the art. Hickman has all of the character's personalities down pretty well. I just wish he would have given me some kind of payoff to hold me over until the next volume.

Michael says

Today is grey skies. Tomorrow is tears (Tom Waits)

Johnny Storm ist tot und Marvels First Family in Trauer. Auf Johnnys letzten Wunsch hin stößt Spidey zum Team, dass sich fortan Future Foundation nennt.

Kann Spidey Susans charmanter Einladung widerstehen?

Die Idee - zahlreiche Reed Richards aus anderen Welten / Dimensionen planen unsere Welt zu vernichten, damit sie in ihre jeweils eigene zurückkehren können, klingt spannend genug, und auch dass Reeds Tochter zur Bekämpfung der anderen die Erzfeinde der FF zusammenruft. Die Ausführung fand ich allerdings eher lahm und nicht so mitreissend, und trotz der hervorragenden Artwork ist dieser Band nur ein mittelprächtiges Leseerlebnis.

Donovan says

Johnny Storm is dead and the Fantastic Four are finished. But they've got optimism, new costumes, and a new partner, the Spectacular Spider-Man. And Doom has temporarily joined their ranks.

The fun factor winds down as the crazy dial is cranked up. With the team in mourning, this volume is more somber. But it's nothing shy of exciting with total war, conspiracy, and the FF's super villains joining in to stop their greatest foe.

Anne says

*Our **FOURTH** week of Shallow Buddy reads is a nod to Marvel's oldest family, **The Fantastic Four!***

Sadly, Johnny Storm is dead. So, FF now stands for Future Foundation.
Because Fantastic Three just doesn't have the same ring to it, you know?

Each member of the family is dealing with it in their own way.
But everyone has been hit hard by his death, including his best friend, Spidey.

Ironically, Johnny has left a last will and testament (of sorts) that names Peter as his successor, should anything happen to him.

After all, who wouldn't want to be part of the ~~Fantastic Four~~ Future Foundation? And if anyone can replace the sexy playboy persona of the Human Torch, it's Spider-Man!

I thought Hickman missed an opportunity to bring a little more humor to the title by not using Peter to his full extent...quip-wise, anyway. Unfortunately, to me, he seemed a bit like an afterthought to the entire story. He didn't really add anything to the dynamic, because with Alex Power in full dress-up mode, they already had a fourth (quasi-adult) member. I wasn't *upset* that Spider-man was included in the line-up, but I wasn't impressed with him just *being there*, either.

The actual plot was...well, it was classic Fantastic Four wackiness.

You remember all of those *Alternate Reeds* who formed a secret cabal in some pocket area of limbo?

Yeah, me neither.

But they're out there...*lurking*. Making dirty deals with the Mole Man, and other random *not-human* villains that I didn't recognize.

Turns out, not all Reeds are created equally. And not all Reeds give a shit about pesky little things like *morality*.

Yeah. So it appears that there are several evil versions of Mr. Richards running around wreaking havoc on our Earth.

The solution?

Call in all of his greatest nemeses, and have those fellas band together to come up with a plan, of course!

Enter DOOM!

And other less-recognizable important villains.

And did they help?

shrugs

I don't know. Maybe? Ish? It's so hard to get a straight answer out of this title!

On a somewhat unrelated note:

Doesn't Reed just look *sassy* on this cover?

WhoTheFuck thought this was a good look for a middle-aged married man?!

He looks like he's about three seconds away from breaking out into a rendition of Over the Rainbow! Admit it, you know I'm right.

Alright back to the story.

Of course, those darn Franklin kids were running all over the place.

The creepy little girl, Valeria, played an especially large role in the story. And, naturally, she *knows* more than she's letting on at first.

Ugh. She freaks me out! Am I the only one who gets the shivers from this kid?

The Inhumans show up at the end, so I'm pretty sure that if this new team can't put a stop to the bad guys' shenanigans, Medusa and Black Bolt will sort 'em out.

Ok. Here's the thing, I really *want* to like the Fantastic Four. I feel like I should somehow connect to these characters, because they're a *family*, and I'm a *family* kind of gal.

Somehow, I should recognize something of myself in Sue, because she's a ~~smokin'~~ hot wife and mother like me, right?

But...I just *don't*.

I always end up feeling bad for her.

She should have swallowed those weird kids when she had the chance, and left Bill Nye the Science Guy for Namor a loooooong time ago.

sigh

A girl can dream, right?

Not a bad first volume for FF, but I'm still not sold on this team. Lucky me, I've got a whole week of their titles! Maybe the next one will hit that honey spot?

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William Thomas says

Hot damn, Hickman hit it outta the park with this one. Everything here is just pitch perfect. All of the confusion and chaos he was bringing to the Fantastic Four book was making my head spin. It was just much too much. In this, he slows the pace and makes the story linear for once. So thanks for that, Jonathan.

FF is a fantastic idea. Its the brightest spot in the darkest of seas right now. With so much garbage floating around the Marvel Universe (I'm looking at you, X-books), FF is an exciting, Golden Age-type idea with huge implications for a team that has been reduced and relegated to the back burner for years now while Bendis has used his marketing savvy to create no less than 3 concurrent Avengers books at any given time.

Although Marvel has brought back the core Fantastic Four book, this arc is supposed to act as the new Fantastic Four- the Future Foundation. In it, we have kids from the Power Pack, Leech, a clone of the Wizard, Dragon, Spider-Man and the remaining Four. Its an exciting cast and Hickman knows exactly what to do with each and every character. Its a smart book that doesn't have to have Wolverine on the team or the covers to sell it. Although I'm upset that this volume ends rather abruptly, I have no qualms with it whatsoever.

Jack Kirby would be proud.

On the art side, although long-time artist Epting pencils the first 3 issues, the real star here is Barry Kitson and his work on the last half of the volume. His pencils and inks are slender and clean, and he has a better eye for composition than Epting. Whereas Epting's panels and pages tell Hickman's stories perfectly fine, you could eliminate the lettering from all Kitson's pages and still understand the story. He works in harmony with the script, seeing the bigger picture. Its beautiful.

Writing: A

Art: A
