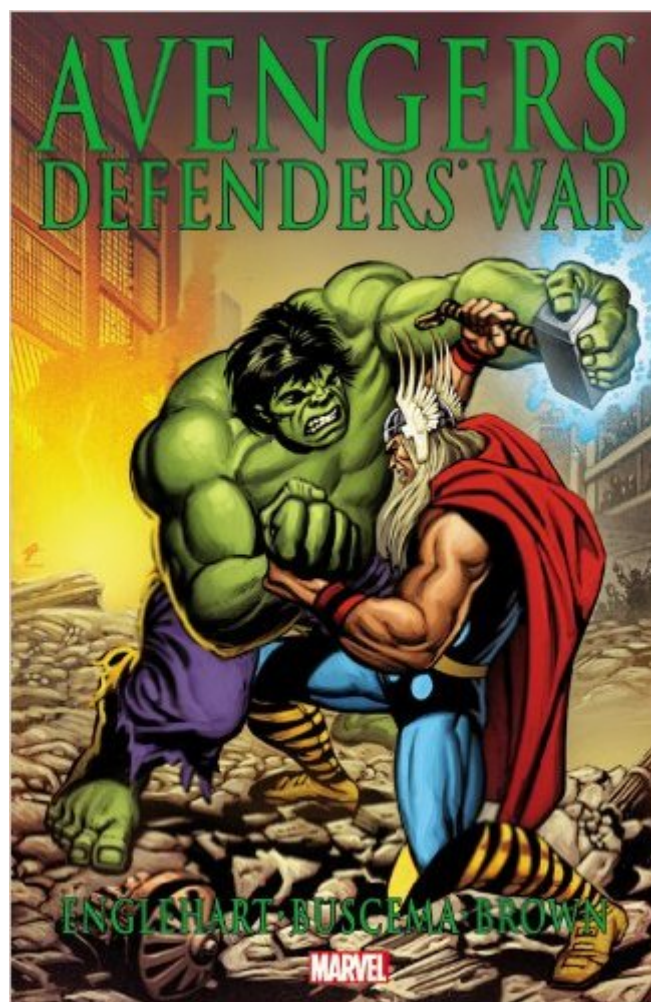


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Avengers/Defenders War



Synopsis

Powerful pawns in a game of gods! Captain America vs. the Sub-Mariner! Thor vs. the Hulk! The Swordsman vs. the Valkyrie! These and other matches comprised the Silver Age's most sensational clash of costumed champions - but whoever wins the war, Dormammu and Loki are prepared to make Earth the loser! Collecting AVENGERS (1963) #115-118 and DEFENDERS (1972) #8-11.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I don't remember exactly, it was the summer of 1973 or 1974 back in the 'ol neighborhood when my circle of friends, our ages ranging 9 to 11 were having a serious discussion of immense importance - who would win if...We all had our favorites - Donald it was Captain America, Joel liked the Hulk, Bill, it was Iron Man and myself, Steve, it was Thor - Who would win if these comic book greats were to battle each other? - oh my, the debates were intense, heated at times, but for young boys sitting under the shade trees in the hot Texas summer sun, it was the endless topic of our summer vacation days and we all had pretty good legitimate arguments - who's the better fighter, but who's stronger, yeah, but who has the more powers - it usually went along those lines. That summer, wishes came true and arguments were settled when Marvel came out with an ingenious idea of a series of issues, bouncing back and forth between the two mighty super hero teams - the Avengers and the Defenders - the battles of epic proportions commenced. My friends and I practically counted down the days when we would hop on our bikes, rush to the corner store and with our nickels and

dimes saved up from washing cars and mowing lawns, snatch up the latest issue that would provide the answers to our debates. Each issue was an absolute delight -- between the pages of cosmic Silver Surfer and high-tech Vision battling to fisticuffs and the swordplay of Valkyrie and Swordsman crashing against one another, it was worth the wait - Iron Man vs Hawkeye - Captain America vs Sub Mariner, it was comic book heaven, and then the ultimate showdown the battle of Marvel's two great titans - Thor vs Hulk. When it came down to that final battle, the one that would settle once and for all who the mightiest in the Marvel Universe was - we, my friends and I, all described to each other our own scripts as to how the grudge match would play out - punch for punch, Hulk's brute strength and Thor's unrelenting power - who would prove to be the better - but then something very strange happened that summer - that myself and my friends could never explain. When that final battle, the one issue that we all were counting down to race to the store to possess, did not show up in the squeaky, metal turn-stile comic book rack that week, we looked at each other with raised brows and frowns. Already, highly anxious and now slightly annoyed, we rode our bikes back home and waited the following week - like bolts of lightning, we raced to the store again - but again, were turned back home as the issue was again not there - "Had they all been sold already?" we thought - But the store clerk insisted that was not the case - "Had it not come in?" we asked - "Don't know" was the answer - so again, disappointed, we rode back home empty handed. But it was to only get worse - each time we rode our bikes back to the store - we were met with another discouraging ride back, sometimes with a new comic book, but not the one we had all been waiting for - we were now getting as frantic as 10 yr old boys could - Where's is the issue! - what has become of this epic battle? Thor vs Hulk -- we must know who won!!! Weeks went by, then months, we returned to school for the new year - I inquired to classmates, "Did you get that issue?" - "Did your hear who won?" this the greatest of all battles in the Marvel Universe - "Well...I thought I heard someone say that Hulk had won." - "No...I heard that Thor had won." "You're both wrong -- it was a draw." -- this was intolerable - I must know!!! Several summers passed, and no one in my circle of friends had ever come by that single issue, none possessed it among their collections, it didn't show up in any of the countless garage sales that would pop up from time to time in the 'ol neighborhood (this was before the signature comic book stores, so popular today would spring up, with their massive selection of back issues) no word of what had transpired in this great epic of battles in the comic book world. Years passed and we all grew up - we went our separate ways - and most of my friends and I never saw each other again. The final conclusion that I had drawn from second-hand news mostly guesses from some that had vaguely heard or remembered that once titanic battle between the Mighty Thor and the Incredible Hulk - that it had indeed been a draw. For now I would have to

be satisfied with that conclusion but without ever having the pleasure of actually holding that highly sought book, seeing with my own eyes, the drawn images leaping from the pages - the great battle, blow by blow - the massive green behemoth and the crimson caped god of thunder, doing battle. Then, one day last year, having not walked in to a comic book store for ages - I inquired - "Yes, I remember that great battle." "It was re-printed in a graphic novel...but we don't have it in stock." AARRRG!!! was there no end to this calamity? Wait - " - I'll check !" And lo and behold - the Avengers vs Defenders epic battle - every issue, in its original artwork, all together in one book - officially titled the Avengers/Defenders War graphic novel - I immediately ordered it and within a week, this now 50 year old received it in his mailbox and glowing with the giddiness of his 10 yr old self, relished each and every glorious panel of Steve Englehart's story and Bob Brown and Sal Buscema's classic artwork, to his heart's content. (Spoiler Alert!) It was indeed a draw - the battle between Thor and Hulk - but oh, what a battle, each bone-crushing punch and earth shattering blow, neither getting the upper hand - till they stand toe to toe, neither yielding to the other - the Irresistible Force vs The Immovable Object. How that last issue of what was the most memorable comic book series I have or will ever remember, somehow managed to never find its way to the 'ol neighborhood corner store, was never explained. How it eluded my friends and I for so long remains to this day, a mystery. I savor the heroes of my youth, still in their prime after 40 yrs - and especially the Thor vs Hulk match, that now I can enjoy over and over again, till I can describe, blow by blow, each and every wonderful panel by memory. Since then, sparked on by the wonderful films too, I have ordered several other Marvel graphic novels, allowing me to once again span the bridge of my young years, enjoying Marvel's timeless stories, mostly my beloved Avengers, and I admit I make more frequent trips to the comic book store now, once I found one that carries a good inventory. There are other Marvel graphic novels stories that may be better some of them are now in my collection, but this one will forever hold a special place.

The possible attraction of these comics might exist in how old you were back during the summer of 1973 when they were originally released. Personally, this was well into the apex of my teenage comic interests and it only took a couple pages of this TPB to bring back some good memories. To offer some context, back then society was still of a mind that kids were supposed to be "seen and not heard". That philosophy would probably be considered quasi-"child abuse by today's ever-"enlightened standards. To offset our "of" school idleness we had neighborhood sports, making models, mowing lawns, bicycles AND COMIC BOOKS. Keep in mind that Magnavox had only just introduced the first video

gaming console "Odyssey" the year before. My father was sure that this outlandish invention would poison my mind thus making me "stupid". (Well Pop, I'm now retired, 30+ years married, raised a flock of kids, now a grandchild and ultimately I proved you wrong "I easily attained stupid without that video game!") At the time crossovers were a reasonably new concept and writer Steve Engelhart had to convince then Editor "Chief Roy Thomas. The story would unfold in alternating issues of the Avengers & Defenders, with a new installment hitting the drugstore turnstiles every two weeks. Basically, the story was how to restore the stone-faced Black Knight. Six individual quests were needed to gather six parts of a powerful "doohickey" that could save the day, or the Knight, as it were. Each release was designed to offer one major smackdown;

004 | Introduction by Steve Engelhart July 2007
006 | Avengers #115 Prologue:
"Alliance Most Foul!"
009 | Defenders #8 Chapter 1:
"Deception!"
013 | Avengers #116 Chapter 2:
"Betrayal!"
024 | Avengers #116 Chapter 3: "The Silver Surfer vs. The Vision & the Scarlet Witch"
033 | Defenders #9 Chapter 4:
"Divide & Conquer"
037 | Defenders #9 Chapter 5: "The Invincible Iron Man vs. Hawkeye The Archer"
045 | Defenders #9 Chapter 6:
"Dr. Strange vs. The Black Panther & Mantis"
053 | Avengers #117 Chapter 7: "Swordsman vs. The Valkrie"
064 | Avengers #117 Chapter 8: "Captain America vs. Sub-Mariner"
073 | Defenders #10 Chapter 9: "Breakthrough! The Incredible Hulk vs. The Mighty Thor"
084 | Defenders #10 Chapter 10:
"United We Stand!"
093 | Avengers #118 Chapter 11: "Face To Face With Loki And The Dread Dormammu"
113 | Defenders #11 Chapter 12: "A Dark And Stormy Knight"
133-136 | Cover Art

If this chronology seems slightly askew it's that the full-length stories didn't begin until Avengers #116 & a couple later issues incorporated additional prologues. I'll end by saying there were additional guest appearances, the artwork of Bob Brown & Sal Buscema has much of the same understated appeal of then Art Director "Jazzy" John Romita, and with the new Dr. Strange film underway it just adds to the anticipation!

by the many moons of Munnopor, the Demons of Denak, the Seven Rings of Raggadorr, the Winds of Watoomb, the Flames of the Faltine, the Icy Tendrils of Ikthalon, the Seven Suns of Cinnibus, the Crimson Bands of Cytorrak
oh, screw it, I'm going to bed! Good nite!

I don't think that people understand how significant this collection is. In this day of constant multi-comic story arcs and crossovers, they don't remember when this kind of thing didn't happen. I do. The Avengers Defenders War was the first major one, as Steve Englehart says in the introduction. This was incredible to read when it came out, and great to see again with the art in this format. If you remember the story, it will be fun to read again. If you don't, it will be fun to learn how this kind of thing all began.

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