

Ultimate X-Men

### **The Complete Series**

[Ultimate X-Men: The Tomorrow People \(Volume 1\)](#)

[Ultimate X-Men: Return to Weapon X \(Volume 2\)](#)

[Ultimate X-Men: World Tour \(Volume 3\)](#)

[Ultimate X-Men: Hellfire and Brimstone \(Volume 4\)](#)

[Ultimate X-Men: Ultimate War \(Volume 5\)](#)

[Ultimate X-Men: Return of the King \(Volume 6\)](#)

[Ultimate X-Men: Block Buster \(Volume 7\)](#)

[Ultimate X-Men: New Mutants \(Volume 8\)](#)

[Ultimate X-Men: The Tempest \(Volume 9\)](#)

[Ultimate X-Men: Cry Wolf \(Volume 10\)](#)

*all reviews by [petra](#)*

[back to top](#)

### **Ultimate X-Men: The Tomorrow People**

Volume 1

ISBN: 0785107886

by Mark Millar

Art by Adam Kubert and Andy Kubert

Marvel Comics 2002

The X-men made their first appearance in the 1960ís. In the intervening four decades the X-men mythos has been reinvented any number of times. However, the central message of tolerance and the struggle for acceptance that the X-men represent remains unchanged and relevant. Ultimate X-men is the latest incarnation of the series, updating the comicís context while retaining its core plot lines. It is both an accessible introduction to the universe for first time readers, and a worthy next generation for long time fans. This first volume of Ultimate X-men introduces the main characters, and establishes their origin stories. We meet Jean Gray (Marvel Girl), Scott Summers (Cyclops) and Professor Xavier who form the core of the X-men. During the course of this volume the first round of X-men are recruited to Professor Xís cause ñ Ororo Munroe (Storm), Hank McCoy (Beast), Bobby (Iceman) and (Colossus). We are also introduced to the opposing side, Magneto and his followers in the Brotherhood of Mutants. Mark Millar quickly establishes the central conflict between the X-men who seek to integrate into humanity by promoting understanding of mutants, and the Brotherhood who see themselves as the next evolutionary step and humanity as expendable. Mark Miller manages to write a briskly paced story without compromising the voices of his characters. His text is accompanied by beautiful artwork from Andy and Adam Kubert (check out volume 3 for a stunning portrait of everyoneís favorite bad-boy, Wolverine).

[back to top](#)

### **Ultimate X-Men: Return to Weapon X**

Volume 2

ISBN: 0785108688

by Mark Millar

Art by Adam Kubert and Chris Bachalo  
Marvel Comics 2002

This second volume in the ongoing Ultimate X-men series introduces a second round of familiar characters. Nightcrawler, Rogue, Juggernaut and Sabertooth join the cast as unwilling members of the Weapon X project. Weapon X is a strike force of mutants run by the very human Colonel Wraith, who takes perverse pleasure in experiments on the genetically enhanced. He has a particular hatred reserved for Wolverine, and in the course of hunting him down Wraith uses the Weapon X team to systematically capture the X-men and forces them to act for his cause. In an interesting turn, the X-men must forge a tenuous alliance with the Brotherhood in order to combat Colonel Wraith. One of the biggest advantages of a series is that it allows characters a chance to develop over time. Mark Millar uses this to full effect. His X-men are strong figures fighting for the good cause. But, as we get to know them, we see that they are not always right. Interestingly Professor X does not always take the moral high road. When forced by necessity he will use his powerful psychic abilities to alter memories and eavesdrop on fellow team members. The weaknesses of the X-men will continue to be explored in later volumes, and it makes them accessible characters that we can relate to.

[back to top](#)

### **Ultimate X-Men: World Tour**

Volume 3

ISBN: 0785109617

by Mark Millar

Art by Chuck Austen and Essad Ribic

Marvel Comics 2002

This is the third volume of the Ultimate X-men series and despite the stunning portrait of Wolverine on the cover the real focus of this story arc is Professor Xavier. We begin to see the long term impact of the Professor's decision to not kill Magneto instead installing a memory block, while allowing the world to think that he is dead. Colossus has returned to Russia because of his disagreement with the Professor on this issue, and the beginnings of fractures in the X-men can be seen. This story's main focus is around the Professor's heretofore unknown son, Proteus, who has escaped from Muir Island where he was being held. The X-men have to scramble to fight Proteus who (understandably) has something of a grudge against the father who abandoned him. The insight into the Professor's past makes him a more complex character, and perhaps a less likeable one. He is not infallible, and his decisions can have disastrous consequences which affect more than just himself. The final issue in the volume is an unconnected story in which we get to meet Gambit, seen here as a street hustler who uses his powers to save a little girl. The art work is, as always, superb. The characters are clearly superheroes (skinny form fitting costumes and all), but their expressions and reactions are very human. Kubert and Bachalo's artwork helps make the X-men seem less fantastic and more accessible.

[back to top](#)

### **Ultimate X-Men: Hellfire and Brimstone**

Volume 4

ISBN: 0785110895

by Mark Millar

Art by Adam Kubert

Marvel Comics 2003

This is the fourth volume in the ongoing Ultimate X-men series. It addresses one of the questions that has always bothered me about this particular series ñ what do the parents say when their kids get hurt when they're off doing X-men stuff? In the course of the last volume Bobby Drake (Iceman) is fairly seriously injured during a missions, and his parents decide to sue the school for reparations. When Kitty Pryde (Shadowcat) is brought to school by her mother it is with the strong proviso that she not become a part of the X-men. We also get some answers about where all the Professor's money comes from, not as you might have assumed from private wealth, but from a group of anonymous backers. The Professor has always assumed that they had benevolent goals in this philanthropy, but as he and the X-men learn this is perhaps not the case. This story arc marks the beginning of the Dark Phoenix saga, and also contains the seeds of events which will have reverberating future consequences. What looks like Hank's harmless internet flirtation turns deadly, and a dinner party with the Professor's anonymous backers the Hellfire Club ends in a fight against a god and Jean's metamorphosis. Adam Kubert's art nicely highlights that the mutant powers of the X-men are evident not only in their roles as X-men, but also in their daily lives.

[back to top](#)

### **Ultimate X-Men: Ultimate War**

Volume 5

ISBN: 0785111298

by Mark Millar

Art by Adam Kubert and Chris Bachalo

Marvel Comics 2003

In the previous volume Cyclops, Wolverine and Shadowcat were all dispatched off to the Savage Land to investigate some mysterious and suspicious goings-on. Now Wolverine and Shadowcat have returned, but sans Cyclops, and without a particularly good explanation as to why. Jean exercising her new powers accuses Wolverine of killing Scott in order to have a chance at her love; an accusation which rocks the X-men and readers alike. This volume also marks the explosive return of Magneto. Freed from his artificial memory block Magneto's first order of business is to destroy the Brooklyn Bridge with maximum carnage. The President squarely places the blame for this on Professor Xavier for concealing that Magneto was still alive. When the X-men resist capture the US government sends the Ultimates (a conglomeration of superheroes, including Thor and Captain America, who are long standing Marvel characters and occupy their own universe) after them. The battle between the X-men and the Ultimates is interesting, but perhaps a little drawn out because we know that the final showdown will be between the X-men and the newly reformed Brotherhood. There are also some interesting points about the relationship between Magneto and his children Quicksilver and the Scarlet Witch and their decisions about the Brotherhood in his absence. While this volume is filled with action, its focus is on consequences ñ Professor X's decision to leave Magneto alive, Wolverine's actions in the Savage Land, Beast's on-line indiscretion.

[back to top](#)

### **Ultimate X-Men: Return of the King**

Volume 6

ISBN: 0785110917

by Mark Millar

Art by Adam Kubert and David Finch

Marvel Comics 2003

This is the final story arc written by Mark Millar (Brian Michael Bendis of "Ultimate Spiderman" is taking over for the next volume). Millar starts by providing some further back story to the Xavier/Magneto friendship and subsequent falling out. We gain some insight into the evolution of Magneto's goal for mutants, and the development of Xavier's reaction to that. That, however, is just the prologue to this volume which returns to the Ultimates vs. X-men plot line of the previous volume. After the conclusion of the "Ultimate War" Professor X places the X-men under government supervision and they work together (more or less) to try and stop Magneto who is threatening to explode a nuclear device in Florida. We also get some closure on the Wolverine/Cyclops in the Savage Land plot line, with a genuinely surprising twist that left me shocked (but I won't tell you about because you deserve the chance to be shocked too). I did feel like the wrap up of that subplot was a little neat at the end of the volume, but perhaps we will come back to it in later issues. Overall I was not as impressed with this volume as I have been with earlier "Ultimate X-men" books. I'm not entirely sure why either, because it did have interesting plot twists, and Millar's usual high caliber of writing, but I was not as involved in the plot as usual. Still worth reading, and I'm looking forward to the next series which is written by Brian Michael Bendis and looks to be highly Wolverine centric (and crossed-over with Ultimate Spiderman).

[back to top](#)

#### **Ultimate X-Men: Block Buster** (Volume 7)

ISBN: 0785112197

By Mark Millar

Art by David Finch

Marvel Comics 2004

Marvel loves its crossovers. Whether you love them or not tends to depend on whether you have any connection to the universes they are combining. This is one of the more successful crossovers, at least for me, because I like both the X-Men and Spiderman with a little bit of Daredevil thrown in at the end. After his disappearance at the end of [Ultimate X-Men: Return of the King](#) Wolverine surfaces again in New York, being chased by an unidentified group with lots of guns and no compunctions about using them. Which is, clearly, where Spiderman enters the picture. Peter Parker returns home from a long night fighting crime and worrying about the PSATs to find an almost dead Wolverine curled in the corner of his basement smelling like wet dog. There follows a chase around New York through Hell's Kitchen, where Daredevil is less than amused by their presence, until eventually the X-Men catch a clue and intervene. Millar also continues the Dark Phoenix story line with Jean getting scarier in her abilities and her morals about using them. David Finch's art is excellent as always with a rich and vibrant use of color.

[back to top](#)

#### **Ultimate X-Men: New Mutants** (Volume 8)

ISBN: 0785111611

By Brian Michael Bendis

Art by David Finch

Marvel Comics 2004

This volume of **Ultimate X-Men** introduces Warren Worthington, later known by his X-name of Angel. Warren's arrival at the Xavier Institute with his highly visible and dramatic mutation of angel wings tests

the acceptance and understanding of even the Xavier Institute attendees. His story in this volume is one of coming to accept who he is and be accepted in turn. It is also about beginning to understand Xavier's mission and his place in it. Bendis tells Warren's story well, and uses it to convey a delicate understanding of what the X-Men universe has always tried to say about diversity and community. Bendis doesn't let other elements of the ongoing plot drop and he pulls in a creepy subplot about the new ways General Fury is using the X-Men. The colors are lush, and David Finch conveys a subtle sense of how different the X-Men are even when they look just like everyone else.

[back to top](#)

### **Ultimate X-Men: The Tempest** (Volume 9)

ISBN: 0785114041

By Brian K. Vaughn

Art by Brandon Peterson

Marvel Comics 2004

The traumatic and shocking events at the end of the last volume have had a lasting effect on all the students at the Xavier Institute, but none more so than Storm. In the midst of their grief and anger the X-Men are called on to face a serial killer who is targeting young mutants in New York. Xavier reluctantly allows the older students to try and find the killer, named Sinister, but insists that the younger members of the school remain in safety creating divisions and resentment among the students. In the end we get to know many of the younger students better when Sinister targets the school, also conveniently allowing a kicking off point for future plots involving the heretofore lesser known characters in the Ultimate X-Men universe. The art conveyed a nice sense of shading and shadow which echoed the plot well, but I found many of the characters to be too chisled looking and too angular.

[back to top](#)

[back to top](#)

### **Ultimate X-Men: Cry Wolf** (Volume 10)

ISBN: 078511405X

By Brian K. Vaughn

Art by Andy Kubert

Marvel Comics 2005

Somewhere along the line Ultimate X-Men became a soap opera. A good, well written, very pretty soap opera in which I am deeply invested, but a soap opera nonetheless. To recap . . . Storm is still grieving and goth and hitting on Wolverine. Rogue has been kidnapped by some unscrupulous incestuous business tycoons with an evil plan for world domination. Rogue thinks X-Men don't care about her because she used to work for Magneto. Gambit is back, in fact he did the kidnapping of Rogue for the evil business tycoons. Wolverine does care about Rogue, in fact thinks of her like a little sister and goes mildly ballistic when she gets kidnapped. In the end evil plans for world domination are thwarted, Rogue learns that she does have a place with the X-Men but goes off with Gambit anyway because he can touch her, at least for short periods.

Okay, I'm making fun of a volume of a series that I did actually enjoy. The plot of any superhero book is going to be a little farcical when you lay it out. However, Brian Vaughn does a nice job with Rogue's vulnerability and with turning Gambit's character from kidnapper to reluctant hero in a fairly short space of

time. The strength of the series lies in his ability to make you care about the characters even when the plot line is a little ludicrous. I always like Andy Kubert's artwork, and this is no exception. The colors are gorgeous and the characters demonstrate the physicality of the superhero without sacrificing the emotional depth of the person.

[back to top](#)