

Comics

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all things, a mutagenic reaction to a mongoose blood transfusion given to him by his medically inept father while dying of snakebite in the jungle), Jack Frost (an Iceman predecessor who used his powers over ice and snow to nip at nogoodniks' noses), and...drumroll, please...the Thin Man (a scientist who stumbled onto a race of Himalayan mystics who taught him how to make himself...well, thin. Like a piece of paper. Probably darn useful for slipping under the doorways of criminal strongholds and such). The Liberty Legion and Kid Commandos appeared frequently in the *Invaders*, but all three groups faded from sight after the comic's cancellation.

Most of the characters have been either killed off or otherwise deep-sixed in current Marvel continuity, but the Golden-Agers get another shot in the new *Invaders* series. It's a great nostalgia piece, with Cap, Namor and the Torch joined by Whizzer, Thin Man, and Miss America to battle yet another Nazi plot, but the new series thus far flounders in its ties to a past era...not so much the forties (in which the story is set), but rather the seventies, in which the comic's creative team seems hopelessly trapped.

The story (at least so far as issue one is concerned) goes like this: Cap, Namor and the Torch encounter a Nazi agent named Doctor Death (complete with elegant handkerchief face mask) leading a group of costumed super agents called (brace yourself) Battle Axis in protecting a Nazi submarine. The *Invaders* get their collective butts kicked and the Nazis vanish, but when our heroes compare notes with the Thin Man they find out that Battle Axis are actually obscure American costumed heroes (genuine Golden-Age vintage, actually, among the most obscure of Marvel's old forties characters): Spider Queen (not a transvestite Spiderman, just a female crimefighter equipped with rather Spidey-esque web-shooters), Volton (an electrically powered heroic type lacking pupils in his eyes), the Human Meteor (an "atomically-powered", fast-flying crime-fighter decked out in green cape, trunks, and boots and also mysteriously white-eyed), and...drumroll once again...Strongman (whose name pretty much sums him up). By the time the *Invaders* learn that the Battle Axis are either traitors or brain-washed pawns, Dr. Death pops up with his merry crew long enough to grab the Whizzer and leave Miss America clinging for dear life to the spire of some cathedral while Doc Death and company scheme to implement the Fuhrer's master plan "...to knock America out of the war!" (insert dramatic Musical sting here).

While the nostalgia quotient is pleasantly high (with even more Golden-Agers like the

Blazing Skull and the original Vision slated to appear later in the series), the series is shaping up to be disappointingly unremarkable. The references to and relations with the World War II era are fairly superficial and insufficient to make this book succeed as a period piece alone. That aside, the book is really just a left-over seventies super hero slugfest, a disappointing reversion for veteran writer Roy Thomas, who's done this story a million times before (and often better). While Thomas' work of recent years has often been very good (ie *Avengers West Coast*, *Infinity Inc.*, and the wonderful World War II era *All Star Squadron* series), this smacks of his hackwork from the sixties and seventies. Characterization is restricted to superficial, one-dimensional depictions: Namor and the Torch bickering, Captain America posturing, the Whizzer and Miss America making out (incidentally, their modern day offspring is a bald, radioactive mutant nicknamed "Nuklo" who goes on to become a gas station attendant). Doc Death is just another Nazi, and his master plan is just another Nazi plot. Plus, Thomas frequently indulges his unfortunate weakness for contrived or long-winded explanatory dialogue, i.e. the Battle Axis arguing as to what to do to Captain America as he is supposedly plunging into the sea even as they speak, the Human Torch feeling it necessary to visually describe the interception of one of his fireballs by Volton's electrical burst as it happens, Namor boasting to a torpedo as he wrestles it off course, and virtually all of the heroes introducing themselves in the third person for the reader's convenience (i.e. Cap's leaping into action while saying "This is what Captain America was born to do!").

As for the art, penciller Dave Hoover is more than competent, with good, solid figures, and while he's not the most sophisticated compositionist he has a competent sense of storytelling and some occasionally flexible and imaginative layout. Brian Garvey undermines it, though, with his careless inking of the drawings.

All in all, *The Invaders* is a neat concept and not an altogether horrible read, but not the height of comic literature either. If you're looking for something original or sophisticated, then don't waste the \$2.25. ●

CRTC

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lines about the same stuff.

It is important to remember that "difference" is not necessarily a negative term. Really, it is quite an enriching state of affairs that people are different. With regard to music, it is quite easy to see the difference between the artists in different countries. In a general sort of way, we group reggae and other types of music together as "World Beat Music", or some other arbitrary title. Punk was primarily a British thing, while rap seems to be part of the American voice. We have learned to identify certain types of music as the voices of certain identities. As such, it is perfectly understandable for people participating in these identities to want to listen to this music. It becomes an affirmation of self, in a way. So, what does Canadian music sound like? Is it possible to identify something in any type of music as typically Canadian? The fact is, Canadian identity is still being developed. We are a young country, and we are still deciding what our voice is. Canadian art is just as much a part of the search for identity as constitutional debate. To think otherwise is to deny art a position of importance and power in a person's life. By protecting Canadian music within Canada, the CRTC is looking beyond the music scene to the country's integrity as a unified nation. In return, as a Canadian identity is developed, Canadian music is going to change. Eventually, the CRTC regulations could be redundant, but right now, they are very important. ●

Turkey

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symbolic integrity. Good one, Kev.

Favourite Quote: The fat guy, for no real reason I can deduce, stands up and says, "Sir, I have just pissed in my pants, and there's nothing anyone can do about it." That kind of doomed resignation is admirable in a bit part. The second best line is a subtitle which reads, "Killing a white man is a delicate matter..."

Judgement: As a historical epic or period piece, it's okay. As a lesson in literary contrasting, it's superb. They really knew how to bang concepts together over at Orion. But as an apologetic letter to the Native American, *Dances With Wolves* is too little, far too late. And since the term "Indian" recently became acceptable in mass media again, we can assume the brief interest in real Native Americans generated by the movie's release is now over. So much for the myth of the enduring message. ●