

the pure-blooded vampire tribe, led by a slinky, scantily-clad Queen who bears a disturbing resemblance to Deanna Troi from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. They want Team 7 on their side... and plan to use all their wiles to do it.

It's not a bad comic. The Image-style bloody violence is almost overshadowed by the neat bio-armour concept. The snappy banter between teammates seems natural, as opposed to the forced characterization of *Force Works*. And there's a weird sense of humour underlying everything: the tainted vampires boast Geordi LaForge-style headgear, and the plague container is a giant beach ball.

And so, despite reservations about the eventual development of the concept, I say it might be worth your while to check out *Wetworks*. Normality need not apply.



Supreme

Issues 14-17
 Story by Rob Liefeld
 Image Comics
Supreme is the eXtreme Studios rip-off of *Superman*. The one interesting and original thing about him is his supposedly enormous ego. It would make for a nice twist, Supes flying around showing off instead of humbly saving the world.

Unfortunately, *Supreme's* ego has taken a trip and left Madness in its place.

You see, circa *Supreme* #11, the big guy lost his powers to Quantum. Fortunately, he fought with Thor, won, and got Thor's hammer. Unfortunately, he's now out of his mind and it's taken six issues to work it out.

Unfortunately, his therapy consists of nothing but fighting with various guest stars instead of character analysis. In every chapter some other big, burly Image hero shows up and has a badly done fight with *Supreme*. The sole exception so far is the *Spawn* guest issue (#15), wherein *Supreme* and *Spawn* stand around and bitch about their horrible lives.

There's just too much wrong with this comic to go into here, but I'll hit the high points. First of all, none of the various artists seems to have any sort of grip on drawing the characters. Pedi's (his real name?) art on #15 is especially grotesque, distorted and unappealing. Everyone looks like Plastic Man on steroids in a blender while high on LSD.

Secondly, the story and dialogue are unbelievable. *Supreme's* 'mad ranting' is not only unconvincing, it sounds like *Fantastic Four* dialogue circa 1964. Also, the characterization of the guest stars isn't consistent with their own books. Excellent example: *Storm Watch*, the issue #16 guests, are a multinational U.N. group. In their own book, the nationality of individual characters is played up only rarely in order to give a feeling of unitedness. In this appearance, however,

Hellstrike (a Brit) and Fuji (Japanese) spout more national cliches than *Supreme* can shake his hammer at: Fuji continually refers to everyone as '(name here)-san', while Hellstrike says "bloke" and "mate" almost every other word. This in the face of *Storm Watch* continuity that has Hellstrike in a coma!

So far I've managed to find only two things I liked. One was a panel in issue #14 that

featured cameos by several dozen famous action figures, like the Transformers and Thundercats. The other was a stapling error in my copy of *Supreme* #17 (guest star: Pitt, sans Timmy and Jereb) which left page 7 a free-floater. I had endless fun inserting page 7 in various point in the story. Know what? It made perfect sense in all of them! This comic book Lego was the most fun I had with the book (besides naming all those action figures). Don't buy it. It sucks.

Pitt

Issues #5 and 6
 Story and Art: Dale Keown
 Image Comics

It's a weird story that has the potential to be cutting-edge work, but it doesn't quite make it.

You see, Pitt is an alien halfbreed with enormous muscles, a violent temper, a denim vest and cool chains. Moderating his *Incredible Hulk*-like nature are a disembodied voice named Jereb and a small boy named Timmy (Pitt's answer to Rick Jones!). But for some reason, Jereb has merged his mind to Timmy's brain and now poor Timmy's in a coma.

Since I didn't read the back issues of *Pitt*, I have almost no idea what's going on. The letter columns were invaluable in shedding enough light on the backstory to help me review it.

Issue #5 begins with Pitt standing a lonely vigil over Timmy's hospital room. He is distracted by a mugging in progress in the alley below. Three guys are about to tear up a woman who stiffed them on a drug bill; Pitt leaps into the fray and saves the lady by wrapping a signpost around her attackers. Bad move! The miss turns out to be a head-eating were-fiend! Pitt rips its heart out... and gets nailed by a local superteam when the corpse turns human. Issue #6 features Pitt in a fight with said superteam. Meanwhile, unidentified bad guys kidnap little Timmy. Pitt and the superteam set aside their differences to chase the bad guys. Hooray!

Dale Keown was one of the first to draw in the Image style, and remains one of the best at it. Every one of the zillions of little lines seems well-placed, and the overall value of the composition is very high. There are also fewer of those lines than in most Image books, which adds strength to Keown's work.

Like I said, it has loads of potential. The down side is that each issue is heavier on

bloody violence than on plot development. But this gripe aside, it's still kind of cool. Keep an eye on it, 'cause if it ever lives up to the potential, it's gonna be one of the best 'big monster' stories going.

Codename: Stryke Force

Issues #4-6
 Story by Mark Silvestri
 Art by Brandon Peterson
 Image Comics

In keeping with the horror-or-horrible theme, the current story arc in *Codename: Stryke Force* is a not terribly good retelling of the classic nail-biter *Alien*, except with big, burly, superheroes versus the grotesque thing

from beyond. Oh, and *Storm Watch* guest stars... again.

Here's the story in a nutshell. *Skywatch*, the giant orbiting head quarters of *Storm Watch*, has somehow been invaded by a shape-shifting alien. Weatherman, the base commander, is menaced by the creature. To deal with it, he calls in *Stryke Force*!

Chasing the alien around takes about four issues. That's not the problem (heck, it took twice that for *X-Men* to tie up that whole alien Brood mess back in the eighties). The problem is the thinness of both the plot and characters. *Stryker* (from whom the Force gets its name) does almost nothing. Ditto most of the team. The only character who gets any sort of development at all is *Black Anvil* (the name says it all. Really.) and most of the time it's as comic relief. He leaps out of a helicopter, mugs for the camera, spouts one-liners, gets into bar room brawls, etc. It's not that he isn't funny, it's just that he's about the only cool thing in the book.

The polymorphous alien is cool and appropriately gross, but his English has an almost Yoda-like syntax problem. Also, he imitates *Black Anvil* one too many times.

Oh, by the way, it looks like *Killrazor* is gonna be offed in the last issue. I don't know if he lives because I haven't read part four yet and don't care to.

As a stand-alone book, *Codename: Stryke Force* is mediocre superteam fare. As a companion piece to *Cyber Force*, it only creates continuity problems. For the fans only.

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