Ultimate Fantastic Four, Vol. 2 by Jae Lee

Re-Exploration And Re-Envisioning Of Negative Zone

This deluxe hardcover collects Ultimate Fantastic Four Vol. 3: N-Zone and Ultimate Fantastic Four Vol. 4: Inhuman, plus a hefty helping of DVD-style extras! In N-Zone, its the beginning of the FFs exploration of the mysterious N-Zone! Young Reed Richards wants to duplicate the accident that changed the four into the bizarre beings theyve become and thereby reverse the process. But will their noble attempts at redress cause more harm than good? And in Inhuman, a classic Fantastic Four villain makes his debut here in Ultimate form, turning the Baxter Building into a virtual trap set to capture and eliminate the fledgling adventurers. And what of the other denizens of the skyscraper, including Johnny and Sues father Dr. Storm? And who has the power to outthink even the most brilliant man alive, Reed Richards? Plus: the first appearances of the Ultimate Inhumans! From a hidden race, she came to steal the heart of the FFs youngest member. Shes the beautiful elemental called Crystal! Collects Ultimate Fantastic Four 13-20, Ultimate Fantastic Four Annual 1.

My Personal Review:
Warren Ellis returns to the Ultimate Fantastic Four series with a vengeance in the second hardcover collection of the monthly issues. In this six-issue story arc, we see one of the universal themes of the Fantastic Four manifest. As in the original series, Ben Grimm isnt happy about being turned into a monster. Reed promises to try to find a way to change Ben stop with back into human form. This is partly the truth and partly a way for Reed to get the chance to explore the N-Zone universe that lies directly beneath our own.

Ellis does an incredible job with the science behind the premise for his story. This story arc could have been a movie because of the visual presentation delivered by Adam Kubert. The art flows together seamlessly and I felt like I was entering the N-Zone with our heroes.
Im also enjoying Sue Storms role as the team biologist. In the early 1960s and 1970s, writers often presented Sue as flighty and fashion conscious. She didnt get much better presentation in the two movies, although the movies were a lot of fun. I like the fact that shes nearly as intelligent as Reed, but in a different field of applied science. She stands up for herself as an equal, not just a smart woman. And I like the way the writers are continuing to write her in this series.

One of the other really incredible twists in this art is the revelation about Johnny Storms flame powers. The platelets concept really makes a lot of sense when you think about it. Of course, it still doesnt explain how a man on fire can fly, but it wouldnt be cool to just run around on fire.

Another subplot deals with Ben Grimms increasing depression and feelings of isolation. When Johnny talked to Ben and told him how cool it was that he could drop on a monster and fight it toe to toe, I felt like a kid again realizing how awesome the Thing is. Underneath all that orange rock, Ben is just a man with a big heart and a lot of loyalty. He has always been and will always be one of the favorite and most understood heroes ever created.

The fight scenes with Nihil totally rocked. The fact that Ben could breathe the poison gases that would kill a normal person was great. Ben on a rampage with plenty of opponents to fight was a lot of fun as well. The story is well-told, and Ellis leaves plenty of plot threads dangling for more adventures to be told.

The second arc in the book is a two-issue action extravaganza that kind of reintroduces The Thinker, another old Fantastic Four villain. Theres an age and gender change for this one, though. The Thinker is a female ex-student who has pumped up her intellect to levels that rival even Reeds capabilities. Theres nothing new here, and it doesnt really expand this ultimate version of the Fantastic Four, but I suppose the bar has been set high so far. Still, Mike Careys script and Jae Lees art are really good and the story moves quickly.

The Inhumans gets revamped in the final story by Mark Millar and Jae Lee. This was originally a one-shot annual in the series. Mark Millar follows the bones of the first introduction of Black Bolt, Medusa, Karnak, Triton, and the other Inhumans. Its a good set up and Im waiting to see what happens next.

Overall, this is a solid follow-up to the Ultimate Fantastic Fours first adventures.