

Avengers: Infinity War presents a dark chapter in the Marvel series

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
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Running Time: 160 minutes

Rating: «« out of «««««

Many fans of the Marvel Universe are finally getting, well, half of what they've been clamoring for since *The Avengers* opened in 2012: A showdown between the famous superheroes and their biggest foe. With expectations so high, there certainly must have been a lot of pressure for this film to deliver.

Avengers: Infinity War does suffer from an overlong running time and a repetitive structure, yet there's enough of the film that does work to earn it a pass—but that all depends on how events ultimately play out, since audiences will have to wait another year to see the big finale.

The villain this time out is Thanos (Josh Brolin), an intergalactic giant who has been seeking out the six infinity stones that will grant him God-like powers. After seeing his own home-world wither due to overpopulation, his motivation is to use the magical gems and wipe out half of all life in the universe. Early on, Thanos hunts down the remaining stones in outer space. As he grows even more powerful, the despot sends threatening minions to collect the rocks located on Earth. With the planet and other parts of the galaxy under devastating attack, the Avengers set out to stop the threat.

There are more than 20 protagonists in this film and that can't help but be something of a problem—at least Ant-man and Hawkeye are excused from the proceedings or we may have hit a three-hour running time. Sure, the leads have been established in previous features, but that's still a ridiculous number to juggle. And of course, fans want to see each and every one of them

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get their moment to shine, in action as well as with other characters. That means there's an awful lot of jumping around and characters disappearing for significant chunks of time, as well as an excessive amount of action scenes involving the heroes battling alien creatures. The movie does its best to keep things moving and generally succeeds, although this reviewer found it all tiring by the final act.

Some of the interplay between characters being introduced to one another helps to keep things lively. Thor (Chris Hemsworth) and Tony Stark (Robert Downey Jr.) each have an opportunity to meet and trade verbal jabs with Peter Quill (Chris Pratt) and the rest of the Guardians of the Galaxy. Not all of the film's dialogue between the heroes scores, but there are several one-liners, particularly the ones early on between Thor and the Guardians, that hit the right comic tone and earn laughs.

These moments are certainly needed to add some levity, because the movie is far bleaker and serious this time out. And there is a definite attempt to make Thanos a foe who will end lives. Over the course of events, things do not go particularly well for the Avengers (parents be warned, the kids may not be happy with what they see). It's a nice attempt to add more gravitas to the proceedings, although it doesn't always work. For adults, the concept of altering space and time has already been toyed with in Marvel films, so the grim moments don't have as big of an emotional impact they might have otherwise. Then again, this may also be due to the fact that when a seismic event occurs, viewers are forced to see the characters react to what is happening about ten times over.

Admittedly, I'm not sure that anything can be done to prevent parts of the film from feeling belabored. People have demanded to see all of these characters in the same story and there's simply no way to get around the repetition that occurs as a result. However, the action itself is well handled and exciting (at least, it is early on before the fighting becomes too familiar).

Overall, it could have been much worse. For this reviewer, the previous *Black Panther*, *Thor*, and

Spiderman

films were smoother and more consistent, simply because they didn't have to contend with so many elements. Still, this follow-up works well enough and one should give it credit for its tireless effort. If you're ready for a darker superhero feature, and are willing to wait a year and fork over another twenty bucks to see the story satisfactorily resolved, then you'll likely find

Avengers: Infinity War compelling.

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