

Sometimes, it's best just to put things bluntly. Justice League United, which started off shakily but with promise, has devolved into a hot mess. Writer Jeff Lemire always had difficulties with the dynamics of a large and disparate team drawn together suddenly from scattered locations in response to a very complicated emergency. The time and effort required to keep all of the moving pieces in from crashing into one another left him precious little space for exploring all his characters and their relationships, much less carefully explaining the ins and outs of the twisting plot spanning the galaxy and the millennia. Imbalances appeared quite early and never really got rectified. But one had faith that Lemire, proven to be one of DC's premier up-and-coming writers and sometimes mentioned as a possible heir-apparent to Geoff Johns, would eventually bring his house in order. And then he did something inexplicable. When faced with sprawling complexity, he decided to increase his bet. He did not double down on the wager, or even triple it. He raised it by an order of magnitude, choosing to involve the team that, over the years, has come to epitomize sprawling complexity in the DC Universe, the Legion of Superheroes. And he did not just involve them, he threw them into the breach in separate groups across a time barrier. That way, madness lay. We see the results of this decision in Justice League United #9, which is essentially one long, incoherent fight scene as the legion and the JLU battles Infinitus, who turns out to be a villain who, somehow, encompasses all of time and space with his consciousness. In other words, to define him in terms of Marvel mash-ups, he looks like Galactus and has the essence of Eternity. That or he's God on a very bad day. Somehow, while they are doing this the young alien Ultra is still inside the singularity into which he was taken by the villain Byth, who is revealed here to be some kind of immortal, demonic shape-shifter. As Ultra will grow into Infinitus, if he can be persuaded to desist from whatever path leads in that direction, the destruction of the cosmos by his elder self can be avoided. Unfortunately, it turns out that Ultra has already been seduced by a taste of omnipotence, leading Martian Manhunter to make a tragic choice. But, this being a hot mess, just as he does so, Brainiac 5 of the Legion launches a superweapon designed to cause Infinitus to implode, accidentally triggering the formation of a black hole in the midst of the Legion and the JLU. As in earlier issues, some salvation comes from the art. Jeromy Cox's colors are vibrant and sometimes nearly explosive. Neil Edwards draws in the Jim Lee style, which works well for extended action sequences. Jay Leisten and Keith Champagne make strategic use of thin lines and shifting shadows to suggest fluidity and movement through three dimensions, rendering the space battles more dynamic than might otherwise be the case considering how long they have been strung out. The post Justice League United #9 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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