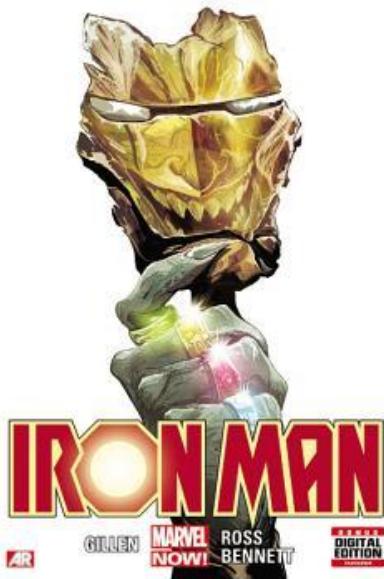


"This creative team has the potential to do some special things with Iron Man, and I recommend any lapsed or on-the-fence fans give this one a shot. I highly doubt you'll be disappointed."
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Iron Man, Volume 5: Rings of the Mandarin

Kieron Gillen (Writer), Luke Ross (Illustrations)

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Iron Man, Volume 5: Rings of the Mandarin Kieron Gillen (Writer) , Luke Ross (Illustrations)

An all-new epic begins! Malekith the Accursed, lord of the Dark Elves, has a problem with Iron Man. Then again, Malekith the Accursed has a problem with pretty much everyone on Earth. And when Malekith the Accursed strikes, blood will flow and darkness will fall...unless Iron Man can gain the upper hand! It's cutting-edge mortal science versus the most arcane Asgardian science imaginable...all in a bath of blood. Plus: which classic Marvel UK character returns in a reinvented form after the events of Revolutionary War? And how do the Mandarin's rings factor into this crisis? Iron Man vows to get to the bottom of things...assuming he lives!

Collecting: *Iron Man* 23-27

Iron Man, Volume 5: Rings of the Mandarin Details

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From Reader Review Iron Man, Volume 5: Rings of the Mandarin for online ebook

David Sarkies says

All Against Ironman

23 August 2016 - Amiens

Well, I wanted something quick to read so I could write a review while I was sitting in my hotel in Amiens (though I probably should be sleeping, but then again I am one of those people who tries to squeeze as much into my day as possible) and was not expecting to visit the Jules Verne House until Wednesday. Well, as they say – the best laid plans of mice and men – I ended up visiting the Jules Verne House, and has also finished Around the World in 80 Days, but that is another story because I also finished the Iron Man comic and this is what I am writing the review on.

Anyway, as I tend to do, I wanted to check out a comic book store in Melbourne, since I actually hadn't done that yet, and in doing so decided to grab an Iron Man comic, namely because I had been rewatching all of the Marvel Cinematic Universe movies. In particular I wanted one with the Mandarin, simply because Iron Man III, at least in my opinion, was nothing more than awesome. Well, it seems that the Mandarin is, as was the case in the movie, a shadowy figure that doesn't actually have an identity. Also, as it turns out, he happens to be the leader of the Ten Rings, which are the bad guys in the first movie – to an extent. In this comic I discovered that the ten rings are actually ten physical rings that give the wearer a specific power, and are designed to turn them against Iron Man because, well, he's Iron Man and he is a good guy, as well as a superhero, and tends to get in the way of people's nefarious plans.

Mind you, Iron Man, aka Tony Stark, is also a capitalist, so being a good guy, and a capitalist, doesn't really sit all that well together because capitalism is generally based on greed, and screwing over everybody around you so that you can become as rich and powerful as possible – which is not necessarily my definition of a good guy. Okay, in the films Tony Stark does take control of his company from the board and attempts to take it away from building weapons for the US Military that inevitably land up in the hands of the bad guys and focusing on more ethical projects, but that is beside the point. When you have pharmaceutical companies buying the rights to life saving drugs and jacking up the price because the only people that matter are the shareholders, then you have a problem – not really the actions of people that I would consider good guys.

The thing with this particular book is that the Mandarin is hunting down people that it might be able to turn against Iron Man and decides to approach everybody's favourite Dark Elf king – Malekith. Bad idea – when he discovers the rings he decides to go and grab them all for himself, so he hunts down the other bearers, kills them, and takes the rings. This is not really what the Mandarin expected. Okay, since Malekith is involved you would think that Thor would come rushing to the rescue, and apparently in one spot he does, but it turns out to be an illusion – all the other ring bearers have joined forces and decided to put an end to Malekith's mischief.

This once again brings up the idea of magic and technology. In previous posts (of which I can't remember, namely because I'm not that organised) I have suggested that magic and technology are simply two sides of the same coin. Well, Malekith suggests that as well, though there are differences, but they happen to be slight. One thing I like is that the rings, when viewed by Iron Man, tend to reflect the mindset of a

technologist, while Malekith tends to reflect the mind of the sorcerer, even though both are basically as powerful, and as intelligent, as each other. I don't think one would go as far as calling Thor a primitive simply because he refers to an Einstein-Rozencrantz bridge (wormhole) as the Rainbow bridge, particularly since the Asgardians actually built it (though it is called The Bifrost).

Anyway, I enjoyed the story, and am half tempted to get hold of some of the earlier volumes (namely because the advertising at the back grabbed my attention) however that is unlikely to happen because I generally do frequent comic book stores all that much, and if I do it is only to add a geeky review to Yelp.

Shannon Appelcline says

A good conclusion to Gillen's run on Iron Man. I loved his new vision for Mandarin's rings, and it plays out full-screen here. Gillen also makes great use of a variety of supporting characters including Arno, Red Peril, and Pepper. Perhaps some elements were a little rushed at the end, but we still get a solid ending and it feels like Gillen was able to tell his story.

Overall, I don't understand the dislike for Gillen's run. It was brimming with new ideas and reimaginings of Stark and his rogues gallery that simultaneously broke new ground while also remaining true to what had come before. If I had to pick one problem with the run, it'll only be that he backed off of his rather magnificent reinvention of the Mandarin, rather than keeping it as part of the ongoing status quo.

Still, it's a run that was more coherent than the excellent Fraction run that preceded it and at least as imaginative and revolutionary.

Nuno Gil Franco says

It's always nice to see a story coming full circle (or as close as it gets). And while it had been ages since I've regularly read Iron Man comics (Quesada was writing the book at the time), this sort of felt like a cop-out: the revelation of the "top" bad guy might have ringed (eheheheh) truer to people that were reading the book back when Fraction was writing it but to me it was all "meh". Add to that the fact that Ross (like so many of today's artists) can't draw more than 2 complete issues in a row (not criticizing the rest of the art teams - some are pretty good) and Gillen wraps this up pretty midly. I would rate it a low 5/10.

Gavin says

This is the end; beautiful friend...the end.

Jim Morrison sums up pretty much how I feel about the way this series has played out.

So glad for it to be done. This just didn't feel like Tony Stark at all, I mean I see how they wanted to knock him off his comfort level and they did that, but otherwise, it's just very disjointed and all over the place.

So, remember how the Mandarin Rings were stolen? Turns out it was everyone's favourite Dark Elf: Malakeith the Accursed, the King of them. Yup.

Oh, well then, just call Thor, Tony, he's one of your best and oldest trusted friends!

Oh we cannot do that, because the 9 realms has some sort of peace treaty going on and this would screw it up...WHA?

Anyhow, Tony takes the fight to him, with the help of Dark Angel, an expert on Magic...of course who's got some past with Marvel UK line of cosmic/magic shit. Her dad apparently sold her to the devil for power, and she got left behind...anyhow...

She helps him get to Dark Elf Land (Svartalfheim) where he battles the elves, who, coincidentally, have issues with Iron, as in it kills them painfully. (Why hasn't Thor brought Tony here before?) Anyhow, we see Tony hates Malakeith a lot, and is taking out a lot of Dark Elves in the process...

Then the rest of the Mandarin Rings show up, and they include a bunch of no names (oh and Mole Man...so mostly no namers). I have to think there would be more people out there who hated Tony Stark than that...but it's lame.

Malakeith offers to give Tony back the last ring he has (after Tony captures the other 3) if he'll leave him and take on the other 6 instead.

Of course, we just get a bunch of robots fighting again, including Red Peril, who Tony (and Arno) decided was someone they should trust, even though 5 issues ago she was blowing up Troy...

Of course. Oh and they take out everyone, except the last, who's someone they don't know, but he's holding Pepper hostage! It's Marc! Red Peril's ex, who's engaged to Pepper! But it's a trick! so everyone is defeated.

Yay.

The rings get locked up, for now, and I'm sure they will reappear whenever Mandarin does.

Oh, and Tony finally decides its time to get rid of 451. The Rigellians show up, and one of them explains that 451 influenced the Mandarin Rings...he's smarter than Tony, and Tony has to ask him to say it so he can understand (mildly amusing). Then the aliens (who all look like the Wizard from FF) take 451 robot back to the stars...

Also, Arno is interviewed by Red Peril whatever her real name is I don't even care; Tony sees this piece and discovers that Arno is resurrecting the Extremis project and tells him it's a bad bad idea. Then we see Arno is a Stark for sure, because he assures Tony that he'll fix all the problems. They're totally setting up Arno to become a villain, and not at all subtly.

- 1) He's in a breathing apparatus or an Iron Lung
- 2) He's deathly white
- 3) He was left alone and Tony got his life
- 4) He's a genius who's had his whole life to plan
- 5) He made a joke about Tony needing to be the face of Troy, because usually people like him are supervillains
- 6) He's already made himself a gigantic Iron Battle Suit, with no help from Tony, so Tony won't be able to stop or control it. (this also makes no sense because the first time we met Arno, he was all about helping the world and not violence...we'll see how long that lasts)
- 7) There's already tension building between the brothers, and they don't see eye to eye
- 8) The End of this book has them flying off in robots together, with the caption "The End...?"

WEAK! This is just not where I thought they'd go at all...so many possibilities and all Arno does is exactly what Tony does: Extremis, Robots, super ego, build build build (except he's not a capitalist, and we all know, Tony is one and is more Captain America than Steve Rogers, because he worships the capitalist mentality)...

I also really thought there was potential for a Tony/Thor team up, even if Thor showed up to help Tony with some strategies or advice, or even told him to stay out of it...but NOTHING.

I'm also pretty sick of the fact that Tony's robots do anything, he's got like 1000 of them, and even the one he wears can adapt and transform...oh and turns out? the city of Troy itself is also a robot...Iron Metropolitan!!! It helped beat up the baddies with rings...

Seriously, what the hell? Maybe I don't like Iron Man? Yes I do, I liked Matt Fraction's run before Marvel Now, I just think Gillen's run wasn't a success, and the ideas, while OK, took too long a route to introduce Tony's "brother" who will just turn into a villain, and then probably have his origin retconned in a year.

Adam Fisher says

This Volume was okay. The story was better than the last Volume and featured some fairly decent fighting, but the addition of many unknown characters (who seem to be important) and having them play a heavy role, just felt really forced.

This title is finished (seeming to be replaced by Superior Iron Man) and I'm not sure that Iron Man is working so great on his own right now. Again, and its probably just me and my preferences, but Marvel NOW! isn't coming close to New 52 DC AT ALL.

Still a decent read, and will finish out the story, for now...

Recommend, but with reservation.

Praxedes says

This graphic novel is anchored by its nice, tight storyline. It is full of action (hooray!) and is entirely self-contained (no need to read outside sources to understand things). The artwork is very very good, supplementing the story and occasionally adding to it.

As in most literature that is plot-driven, it sacrifices character development. But that is alright since we know most of the protagonists already. And the ongoing theme of mixing of magic and technology allows the writer to explore all sorts of scenarios. Nicely done!

B says

It's always nice to see some new old villains. There are certainly enough villains that they can be reduced, reused, and recycled. The problem here is that none of them are ever built up. They just show up, obviously empowered. But how can we care about their threat if roughly 100% of their scare comes from having a

single Mandarin ring each (that is, 1/10 the power of the Mandarin).

They're really playing up the "Arno is a threat" subtext. Also, that Tony is a beserker, which is . . . new, right? I wonder if there's anything interesting they can do with it.

This wasn't a bad book but I don't remember being particularly excited most of it.

Roberto Diaz says

El último volumen del tiraje de Guillen, termina con Tony enfrentando a un villano que se siente elegido por la editorial más que por el escritor (teniendo en cuenta que la publicación original de esta saga fue en víspera de "Thor: Mundo Oscuro"), pero resulta una lectura enrretenida durante su duración, presentando a varios villanos clase B de Marvel y dando un vistazo al funcionamiento de los anillos de Mandarin.

Si eres fan del Iron Man de Matt Fraction o del Tony cinematólico, puedes pasar por alto a Guillen, pero si quieres igual ver algunas historias de Tony fuera de su elemento, esta saga completa de sus 5 volúmenes tal vez te llame la atención.

Anthony says

Gillen's Iron Man is disappointing. Even more so when you look at other work he's done within Marvel (young avengers, journey into mystery and even his X-men was pretty good).

This is the final volume (or penultimate if you include the Original Sin Hulk/Iron Man he did with Waid). It plods along and feels very editorially driven, mainly because the villain is Malekith, who was getting a push in the comics around the release of Thor: The Dark World. He needs to collect the rings of the Mandarin (that can now talk to each other? Is this a new thing?) to wreak havoc on all the 9 realms! And Tony can't call in Thor because that could make this book better and shorter by just having Thor hit everything with his hammer.

I think the artwork is also very uninspiring, and makes the story more dull to read.

Also, Tony being adopted can not be retconned too soon. I mean, seriously?

Mitchell says

Iron Man. And the Rings of the Mandarin. And Malekith. None of which I like or am interested in. It was kind of a high barrier to me liking this book. It could have been a whole lot worse. Essentially this was plot driven when it could have hypothetically been character driven. But it made sense and the writing and art was good enough. It would have been better if I cared. I kind of liked Shevaun Haldane.

Alex E says

So this concludes Gillen's run on Iron Man and in my opinion, it limps to the finish line.

Overall I think Gillen had a great first premise, which he pulled off pretty well back in vol 1 and 2, but after that, it was just half hearted plots full of half thought out ideas. The same thing happens in this volume, just compressed into one single volume.

This volume picks up from the last one in that Malekith, who now has 3 of the 10 rings begins plotting to get the rest. But Tony, with the help of some magic...scientist...(oxymoron?) plan to infiltrate Malekith's realm to preemptively strike and get the rings back. Good premise, interesting idea, but again the premise is better than the execution. The book meanders through 5 issues. Maybe that was the problem, parts of it felt stretched out and unnecessary. And the part about the rings talking to each other in some kind of chamber... ugh.

I liked the art, as it was more of a throwback to 80's-90's Iron Man art style.

Give it a read if you are an Iron Man fan, you may enjoy it more than I did.

Chris Lemmerman says

Whilst it's fair to say that most of Kieron Gillen's run on Iron Man hasn't been up to his usual standard compared to other runs like Journey Into Mystery or Young Avengers, his final Iron Man story is a pretty good way to close everything off.

Continuing the story that began in Iron Metropolitan, this volume sees Tony and friends tracking down the now-sentient Mandarin rings from Malekith the Accursed and some other supervillains. The addition of the more mystical elements play right into Gillen's strengths, especially when you compare the first three issues with the last three and notice the difference in quality straight away. Gillen wraps up all of his storylines satisfactorily, though the last minute reveal regarding Pepper is a bit cheap, in order to give the next writer a clean slate with the character.

The artwork begins strong with Luke Ross and Joe Bennett sharing duties, but the final few issues have two or three artists apiece, and whilst none of them are particularly bad, they're all pretty run of the mill, with the likes of Cliff Richards and Derlis Santacruz splitting issues. I hate it when series do this - it feels like editorial have already written them off before they've finished and started to focus on whatever's coming next instead of giving the series a proper send-off.

James says

Kieron Gillen wraps up his "Iron Man" run with a fun spin on the Mandarin mythos. The powered rings that once belonged to their problematic, Fu Manhu'd villain are zipping around seeking new hosts in a manner that won't surprise anyone who's ever read a Green Lantern comic.

One of these hosts decides it will be easier to steal the other rings than cooperate with their owners, and this

sets up an Asgardian adventure that sees Tony working outside of his comfort zone as he deals with dark elves and foul magicks.

The magical undertones carry through to the close of the volume as he deals with the wielders of the rest of the rings. While I enjoy the idea of Iron Man having a magical consultant on retainer, the final issues of the series felt a bit rushed as Gillen's run came to its conclusion. There's a big villain reveal that didn't quite have enough time to settle as well as what feels like a bit of false conflict between Tony Stark and his new "partner."

The art by Luke Ross is strong throughout--his characters are clear, and his designs for some of the alternate Iron Man suits are cool, which is about half of the game here. Overall, it's a fun volume that seems to come to a premature conclusion.

Katherine says

I've really enjoyed this entire run of Iron Man. Whilst I haven't read much of the character before I felt Gillen's characterisation was good and the overall storyline was dynamic and interesting, and this was a fitting end to the series. Overall I'd probably say this is one of the weaker volumes of his run but still a good end, though it doesn't quite compare to Secret Origins parts 1 and 2 in my opinion. Still, a good series to read for fans of Iron Man.

Dean says

This was ok, nothing more. The story was ok, though it didn't really suit Tony Stark as a character, and felt far too stretched out. Dialogue was decent generally, though the writer was not half as funny as he thinks he is. And, yet again in a Marvel book, all a bit of a mess.

Too much going on at once, too many characters to follow, made for a hard book to follow at times. Ultimately, a book I wanted to like but found to be acceptable at best, very flawed at worst. Recommended? Probably not.
