Entertainment

APRIL 27, 2018



And it's really the simple pleasure of seeing so many good actors togeth-

er that makes "Infinity War" -

"Ocean's Eleven" in hyper drive -

work. The screenplay, by Christopher

Markus and Stephen McFeely, spreads

the heroes around in improvised

groups that create some funny

dynamics. The Guardians, who inject

most of the life to "Infinity War,"

swoon for Hemsworth's one-eved

population anxiety in Thanos' ambi-

tion and in the Russos' frighteningly

overcrowded film. Its saviors repeat-

edly contemplate sacrifice. Previous

"Avengers" chapters and the Russos'

"Captain America: Civil War" expend-

There may be some hint of over-

Southern 🕑 Standard

McMINNVILLE, TENNESSEE

ARLO AND JANIS[®] by Jimmy Johnson



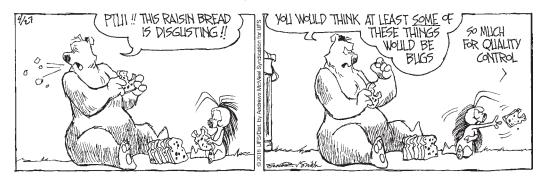




FRANK & ERNEST[®] by Bob Thaves



THE GRIZZWELLS[®] by Bill Schorr



BIG NATE[®] by Lincoln Peirce



ALLEY OOP by Jack and Carole Bender

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AT THE MOVIES It's superheroes galore in colossal blockbuster

(AP) -- After 10 years of lean, Mackie. threadbare, Lilliputian tales, Marvel Studios has, thank heavens, finally

decided to go big. The scale of "Avengers: Infinity War," of course, isn't a departure for Marvel. It's an apotheosis. But is it possible to supersize what is already colossal? "Infinity War," which brings together more than 30 significant characters from the Marvel Cinematic Universe and enough spandex to clothe a small nation, is a little like launching an invasion after the war was already won. Despite assured dominance, Marvel has gone nuclear.

"Infinity" is an interesting word for the Marvel machine, which sets much of its development pipeline a decade in advance. Never-ending is indeed how the superhero era of blockbusterdom sometimes

feels, both to its fans and its critics.

But the title refers to the six "infinity stones" scattered around the universe, each conveying

power of sorcery, like the time-warping one held by Doctor Strange. They are dearly sought by Thanos, the indestructible Titan warlord, who rules over much of space but would like all of it. With all the McGuffins — er, stones — he can, with the snap of his fingers, wipe away half of the universe's beings: a rapture to cull an overgrown herd, he envisions.

And it's, in part, the lure of finality that has made "Infinity War," directed by Anthony and Joe Russo, one of the year's most salivated-over movies. The preamble has been one long tease - we have seen fleeting glimpses of Thanos (Josh Brolin) since Barack Obama's first term — leading up to a battle royal that could mean the demise of some of Marvel's most famous faces.

Arguably the best quality — and most vital asset — of the Marvel canon is its star-making power. On the one hand Chris Pratt's performance as Star-Lord in "The Guardians of the Galaxy" has been terrific and turned him into a household name. On the other hand, we've hardly seen Robert Downey Jr. outside of the Iron Man suit in the last decade. It took 18 months to shoot both parts of "Infinity War" back-to-back, putting a stranglehold on some of our best movie stars, like Chris Hemsworth and Anthony

cal subtext.

Thor.

ed some effort considering the Avengers' place in society and whether they should be controlled by the state. But this movie, a sensory onslaught, has little room for politi-

Still, I doubt such gestures of allegory are anyone's favorite part of the Marvel movies. Most come for the action, the quips and the characters, and I suspect "Infinity War" will deliver for most - particularly thanks to the Guardians. In such a bruisingly long showdown, the action sequences never the strongpoint of the Russos, who cut their teeth on comic ensemble like "Arrested Development" and "Community" — grow monotonous, and the interludes amid the rubble more infrequent. But if "Infinity War" is a lavish reunion tour propelled by star power, the Russos are sure to plays the hits.

The movie's ending - just one of the spoilers that divulging here would bring Thanos' fist down upon me will be the major talking point. But for me, its power only lasts as long as a commercial break with an easy-to-seethrough "to be continued." Who lives and who dies? It's hard to fret too much with an eternity of sequels and spinoffs lined up. 'Avengers: Infinity War," a Walt Disney Co. release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for "intense sequences of sci-fi violence and action throughout, language and some crude references." Running time: 149 minutes.



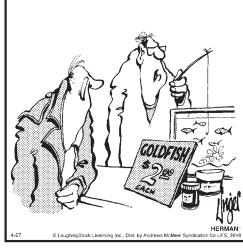
SOUP TO NUTZ by Rick Stromoski



THE BORN LOSER[™] by Art & Chip Sansom



HERMAN[®] by Jim Unger



"You'll have to come back later. They're not biting!'

REALITY CHECK[®] by Dave Whamond

