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Possible spoilers ahead



The worldwide box-office smash hit *Avengers: Endgame* marked the end of an era in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. And after the movie's spectacularly tragic ending fans were left wondering what the future of the MCU will look like.

The events of *Avengers: Endgame* quite literally opened up the MCU to a multiverse of exciting possibilities. We were introduced to the existence of alternate timelines and we now know that one of the "Snaps" created an inter-dimensional hole (as seen in the recent trailer for *Spider-Man: Far From Home*).

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While Marvel gets ready to launch their five-year plan for Phase 4, the biggest buzz surrounding the franchise is the possible introduction of the X-Men. Ever since the Disney/Fox merger became official there's been a lot of speculation about how mutants might make their MCU debut.

But the most logical theory suggests that Professor Hulk's Snap is responsible.



Let's recap Avengers: Endgame for a minute...

After the Avengers learned that Thanos destroyed all the Infinity Stones, which left him pretty much powerless, it was obvious that our heroes would have to find a way to retrieve them.

After a whole bunch of time travelling to gather all the stones, the team was faced with a new challenge – who would be powerful enough to wield the new glove/gauntlet and revive everyone who was snapped out of existence?

Banner explains that the new gauntlet, which looked a lot like part of the Iron Man suit, will give off potentially lethal amounts of gamma radiation. Since his body already has tons of that it will cause him the least harm, making him the best candidate to take its impact.

Hulk's Snap revives everyone who had turned to dust in *Infinity War*. He suffers serious, but not life-threatening burns from the surge of gamma radiation it unleashed.

It would have killed anyone else...



The X-Gene and Mutation

The origin of the X-Men lies with the discovery of a subspecies of humans often referred to as mutants. Mutants possess a genetic trait called the X-Gene which causes them to develop superhuman powers that manifest in their teenage years.

Mutants have always been regarded as the evolutionary progeny of <u>Homo sapiens</u> and are generally assumed to be the next stage in human evolution. Unlike mutates who develop their powers only after exposure to outside stimuli or energies such as the Hulk and Spider-Man, mutants have actual genetic mutations.

But the accuracy of this has been the subject of much debate in the Marvel Universe...



Did Hulk's Snap Create The X-Gene?

Endgame doesn't focus on the repercussions of that much gamma radiation being unleashed on the general population (twice). They also don't tell us if people experienced any side effects after being snapped back into existence. Either of these events could have had a lasting impact on regular humans.

This impact or side effects could manifest in two ways...

- The exposure to gamma radiation experienced by regular humans was secondary at best because the general public was not in close proximity of the counter-snap. Over time the watered-down radiation would have been absorbed through the air, water, food, etc. This could have caused subtle mutation to occur. A type of mutation that would only affect the genetic code and be passed down to their offspring as the X-Gene.
- Being snapped back into existence is quite literally a life-altering event. In the realm of superheroes coming back from death generally goes along with the acquisition of some form of superpower. If "the fallen" only experienced subtle biological and chemical side effects over time (which they then passed down to their children), this would also explain the origin of the X-Gene.

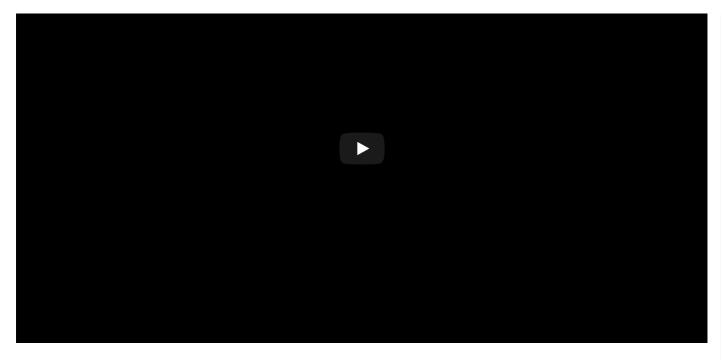


Marvel Studios' Plans For The X-Men

It's still not clear what Marvel and Disney have planned for the X-Men, but they certainly have a few cool ways to introduce them to the Avengers and greater Marvel Cinematic Universe.

However, in a recent interview about the Disney/Fox merger, Marvel Studios President Kevin Feige suggested that the X-Men weren't part of the post *Avengers: Endgame* plan.

"It's all just beginning and the five-year plan that we've been working on was before any of that was set. So really it's much more, for us, less about specifics of when and where The X-Men will appear right now. It's more about the comfort factor and how nice it is that they're home, that they're all back. But it will be a very long time."



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