

## How To Improve 'The Defenders', According To Our Writers

⌚ September 10, 2017 🗓 Charles Villanueva (<https://mcuexchange.com/author/charles-villanueva/>)

It's been a couple of weeks now since *The Defenders* premiered on Netflix. Since then, we here at MCUExchange have been able to contemplate on how we truly think of the show. While the show delivered on the great character interactions and incredible action sequences it promised, the show overall wasn't as satisfying as we had hoped in the story department. And because we all had something to say about what we felt was lacking in the much-awaited season, we decided to compile all our ideas on what we think would have improved *The Defenders*.

### Focus on the Five Fingers

One of the better aspects of *The Defenders* was the way the writer's developed the Five Fingers of the Hand. The execution wasn't totally right, but the idea is interesting. A group of people from different continents have come to K'un Lun to learn the mystical ways of the city. During their time, they discover a sacrilegious way to keep themselves alive for millennia. Because of their discovery, they are banished. Over the years their ambition and greed cause them to cross one another and attempt coups, but eventually their bond proves stronger than the spat of the century. It is sibling rivalry allowed to fester and morph over centuries and centuries. How would someone feel about their sibling if they had millennia of disappointments and fights? What if one could kill their sibling and know they'd come back awhile later? How would trust and distrust ebb and flow over the years?

The problem is that this really cool idea just doesn't stick. It's underdeveloped and the Fingers seem underpowered. What would make the show infinitely more interesting is flash backs to the Fingers over the years. Show the fall of Pompei or what happened to Constantinople. Show Gao's attempted coup. Make the relationship between the five both more contentious and more connected than what Defenders actually showed. It would make Alexandra's character more intimidating because her millennia of leadership and control would be demonstrated. Viewers would know why the other four fear her. Also, it would demonstrate just how important the Black Sky is. Elektra literally undoes their entire history. Showing Alexandra prophesy the coming of the Sky and watching them debate the concept over centuries would also help the mythology. Fights with the Chaste would make the epic quality of the show stronger. Sowande would finally have something to do! All the way around, showing the history of the Hand and the Five Fingers in flashbacks would really improve the show. – **Caleb Borchers** (<https://mcuexchange.com/author/caleb-borchers/>)

### Give a definite purpose to the Black Sky

**The Defenders** has a glaring villain problem. There's no way around it. Most of the nitpicks you'll read here revolves around that criticism. You'd think that several hours of mythology building would have developed the Hand into one of the MCU's true terrors. Instead we had a group of criminally underdeveloped antagonists that didn't retain the mythological badassery that was set up seasons prior. A good example of this is the famed Black Sky. Described by Stick as "the bringer of shadows" and the kind of weapon "you don't want in this world", the way the Black Sky was portrayed in **The Defenders** failed to lend itself to any of those cryptic descriptions. Turns out the Black Sky was nothing more than a brainwashed enforcer a few notches stronger than Daredevil, at best on par with Jessica Jones' and Luke Cage's strength that Alexandra saw in a prophecy.

Why not connect the Black Sky to a more exciting and satisfying idea? With such a rich and interesting comic background to begin with, the writers of the show had plenty of opportunity to cherry pick killer concepts from the show. I've written about it before but in the comics, there is such a thing called the Inner Circle of the Hand, a group of priests dedicated to worshipping the Beast, the demonic entity known to take the forms of human vessels that the Hand are slaves to. The Black Sky would have made a great vessel for the Beast in the MCU. The endgame of the Hand would no longer be to score some dragon bones (a premise that should have been the central Hand arc for *Iron Fist*. The Hand scores the Black Sky in *Daredevil* Season 2 and they get the dragon bones in *Iron Fist*. **The Defenders** should be the culmination of all that) but to successfully summon the Beast now that they have the Black Sky. Heck, you could even rewrite Alexandra as the Beast herself, desperate to use Elektra as a vessel now that her body is dying. Not only does the stakes for this show improve but it also gives a worthwhile purpose to a plot device that **Steven DeKnight** set up 2 years ago. – **Charles Villanueva** (<https://mcuexchange.com/author/charles-villanueva/>)

## Dedicate a key sequence to the supporting cast

There was a massive missed opportunity when it came to the integration of the supporting cast of The Defenders. Seeing them participate in the action is a great idea, but they already set up a great way to keep them as part of the action without shoe-horning them into the final fight. Every supporting character was kept at the NYC police department to keep them safe. This wouldn't be something that would normally stop the Hand and Bakuto wanted his former pupil to return. It would've made sense for him to attack the police department to get to her. You could leave almost all aspects from the fight from the show in, such as Misty losing her arm and Colleen's sword fight with Bakuto. Still, the Hand just barging into a police station shows how dangerous they are, it would've made for an interesting set and the other supporting characters could've gotten involved. Seeing Foggy try to protect Karen or Trish showing off her martial arts. It would've felt more natural and could give other characters an opportunity to shine. – **Joseph Aberl** (<https://mcuexchange.com/author/joseph-aberl/>)

## Make Alexandra an ancient demon

The biggest problem I had with The Defenders involves one of the biggest stars the Netflix side of the Marvel Cinematic Universe has ever seen: **Sigourney Weaver**. To me, Alexandra – the character played by the pop culture icon – was a sorry ass excuse for an antagonist. We begin the show by figuring she's dying and the last time we see her, she gets Cottonmouthed, not really allowing for any development or a stand-out moment where the viewer sees how much of a villain she really is.

How would I have changed it, you may ask? I would have made Alexandra the human embodiment of Ch'i-Lin. Wait, who?

If you've listened to the pod, you'll know that I'm a big time Iron Fist fan and Ch'i-Lin is one of the most formidable opponents Danny Rand has ever gone up against in the Marvel Comicsverse. In short, Ch'i-Lin is a demonic creature that exists primarily to feast on the egg of Shou-Lao the Undying. Because of that, it's a character that often times has to kill the current Iron Fist to get to the egg. While the CGI to create a hideous demon beast more than likely isn't something in the budget of a Netflix show, the show could have tweaked the origins a bit and still made it work.

Prior to the show, there was plenty of scuttlebutt that Weaver would be portraying an otherworldly being such as The Beast or Mephisto, but they laid the groundwork so well for the introduction of Ch'i-Lin, I was actually quite surprised we never got the reveal. In *Iron Fist*, we saw Lewis Tan play a character named Zhou Cheng. Although a minor drunken role, Cheney actually serves as a disciple of Ch'i-Lin, helping the demon kill Iron Fists so they can feast on dragon eggs. Then in The Defenders, we find out during the first interaction between Danny and Alexandra that the latter has killed people that had taken up the Iron Fist mantle in years past. With The Defenders having so much story involving the lore behind K'un-Lun and the history of the Iron Fist, I think it's an easy enough change they could have made for a huge "wow" factor for the show. – **Adam Barnhardt** (<https://mcuexchange.com/author/adam/>)

## Change the showrunners

There's always a method to the madness in Marvel Studios and Marvel TV's selection process for creators. When you look back at the showrunners for the Netflix shows, they all somewhat make sense. We had **Steven DeKnight**, creator of the violent and gritty *Spartacus* to develop the violent and gritty *Daredevil*. **Melissa Rosenberg** worked on the female-oriented *Twilight* film adaptations, and thus created the first female superheroine MCU property, *Jessica Jones*. **Cheo Hodari Coker** is a black American television writer who had a hand in writing crime-focused *NCIS: Los Angeles* and *Southland*, so he was a qualified pick for bringing the first leading black MCU superhero *Luke Cage* to life. Finally, Netflix and Marvel got a mediocre writer in **Scott Buck** to create the mediocre superhero Iron Fist. Four showrunners from four different background to create four different shows- so why just get the two guys who made *Daredevil* season 2 to make the big crossover?

It was likely just the easiest option for **Jeph Loeb** – Marvel TV already had them on payroll, so might as well move them to the big stuff. However, something was lost by not hiring a separate, objective and impartial voice who could wrangle it all together, like **Joss Whedon** for *The Avengers*. Some potentially important plot details from *Jessica Jones* and *Luke Cage* were lost in all of the K'un Lun and Elektra mythology, and the *Daredevil* bias was clear by the final *Defenders* episode. Who could have been that objective voice? Perhaps **Drew Goddard**, who left *Daredevil* early on but still remained as an executive producer and writer for *The Defenders*. With his Oscar-nominated credentials and experience in television with J.J. Abrams, Goddard probably could have handled the multiple moving plot parts with more finesse than Marco Ramirez and Doug Petrie- no offense to the pair. – **Chris Compendio** (<https://mcuexchange.com/author/chriscompendio/>)

Any of these ideas sound good to you? Which of these do you like best and least? Let us know in the comments below!

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*I'm a professional slacker who spends most of my days designing, video editing, playing music. I can be found arguing with my friends to show how much of an MCU pundit I am. I'm also responsible for those darn MCU Supercuts.*

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 **STORM!** • 3 years ago • edited

It was a mediocre and poor show. Bad action scenes and cheap look.

I don't wanna even talk about THE DEFENDERS with my friends, and now I feel embarrassed to have forced them to watch DAREDEVIL and JESSICA JONES.

They will eventually watch THE DEFENDERS and say: WTF?

DREW GODDARD wrote 1 chapter, but he needs to be promoted to showrunner.

I'm losing my faith on MARVEL TV, and I'm completely worried about JJS2. She is my favorite tv character and my second in the entire MCU.

3   • Reply • Share**SmilodonsRetreat** • 3 years ago

All the single series were too long... Defenders was too short.

2   • Reply • Share**Karl Stromar** • 3 years ago

There was the kernel of a good idea in there but unfortunately the writers didn't embrace the characters or their lore. The idea of the Defenders coming together because of Iron Fist lore is a good one but it was set up poorly in Iron Fist and combining it with Daredevil and the Hand was not a good decision. Keep them separate in my opinion. In the Iron Fist Netflix series, Madame Gao should have been a former Iron Fist that's 400 years old and taken over Rand Enterprises secretly. They should have introduced Shang Chi to help Danny defeat her and her criminal empire. But in doing so, Danny gained the attention of the true power behind Gao and other former Iron Fists loose in the world. And that true power should have been a rogue dragon in human form from one of the other capital seven cities of heaven. The only way to defeat this villain would be to find a way to banish it from Earth. This would in turn set-up season 2 of Iron Fist where Danny returns to participate in the tournament of champions. Just some broad stroke ideas of mine own to improve both series.

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Kind of surprised to not see Rhiannon in the article

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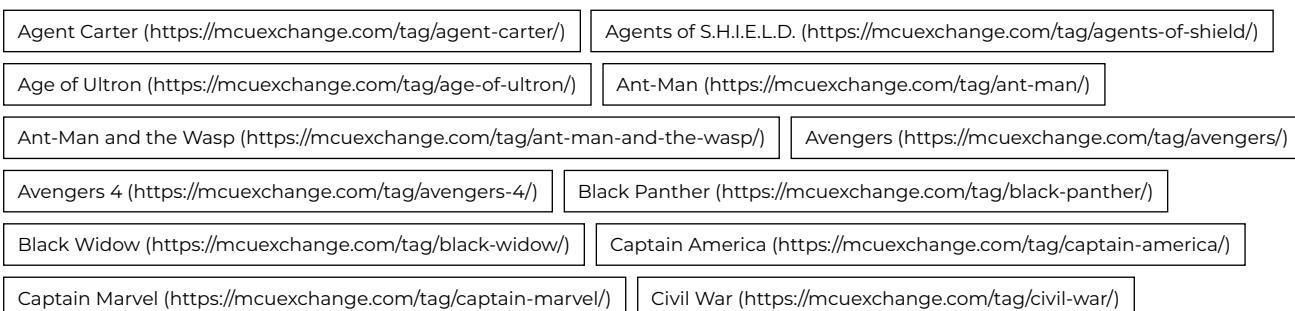
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