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Comic Book Encyclopedia: The Ultimate Guide To Characters, Graphic Novels, Writers, And Artists In The Comic Book Universe



Synopsis

A 4-color, illustrated best-of-the-best of the comic book world with writers/creators who launched an industry (Jack Kirby, Stan Lee), amazing graphic novels (Preacher, The Watcher), legendary artists (Jim Lee) and characters as wide-ranging as Archie, The Gay Ghost, Batman, Blue Devil and the Fantastic Four. Never before has there been a single volume of superheroes, graphic novels, strange comic icons, legendary writers and artists of the comic world. Comic Book Encyclopedia is the multiverse of comic legend and lore for every comic book fan, and for everyone who wants to understand the characters, history, and universal appeal of this world. Collected into a single volume, this is the best-of-the-best of comics. From the 1930s to today, it includes everything a young, budding comic reader or an experienced pro needs to know and/or read.

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Customer Reviews

Adult/High School—This entertaining guide is chock-full of trivia. Starting with the early 1900s, it is organized primarily by character or book title; hordes of heroes, villains, and the indefinable stride through its colorful pages. Although the contents lean heavily toward the superhero, the author includes a few independents like the hallucinogenic work of R. Crumb and Chris Ware's Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth (Knopf, 2000). Characters from children's humor make small appearances as well. Not surprisingly, the entries for the more iconic figures like Superman and Spiderman have significantly more detail than the others. Although comic-book trivia

encyclopedias are nothing new, this one stands out because of the excellence of the reproductions of the original art. Just casually flipping through the pages gives a startling and overwhelming sense of how much quality work artists and writers produced over the last 100 years. Goulart also includes some entries about the more influential writers, artists, and styles. These sections include interesting pointers for those looking for new or different material. This book will satisfy all lovers of comic books and comic-book history. Matthew L. Moffett, Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Ron Goulart is an award-winning mystery and science fiction writer who is also considered one of the leading experts on comics, both nationally and internationally. He has written numerous comics and published many books on the subject, including *Great American Comic Books* and *Comic Book Culture*. He lives in Connecticut with his wife.

My son has just turned 10. He is infatuated with anything DC or Marvel. I ordered a variety of books for his birthday and this book was one of them. Some nights we sit on my king size bed with all the books open around us and he is doing cross referencing, teaching his 49 year old mother how to appreciate the marvelous world of comics. We have spent more happy hours together pouring over these volumes than we have been able to do while watching movies or TV. This is why I insist on books for my kids - any book, as long as they read. The *Comic Book Encyclopedia* has been my key to my son's world and I no longer feel at a loss when these super heroes enter my dinner table conversation. I have a vague idea what the difference is between Marvel and DC and I think I have a crush on Batman!

This was in my mailbox so quickly, and I was excited to get it. It's informative, but it lacks several updated comic books. If you want newer information, I would buy a newer encyclopedia or guide.

love this item!

Whether you're a fanatic about comic book collecting, or just a casual reader, this is a good book to have in your library. From "A-1 Comics" to "Zorro", this "encyclopedia" is a comprehensive retrospective into the medium. Loved it!

The blurbs say that this is a book for both beginners and experts in the field. Well, actually it will probably be confusing for the beginner and somewhat irritating for the expert. The book is heavily oriented to the Golden Age of Comics and somewhat skimpy on anything from the last 25 years. For example, there are detailed entries on everyone who ever had their own comic shop in the 40s and entries for comics that lasted all of 6 issues in the 40s but nothing on Jim Shooter, who helmed Marvel for many years and also made major contributions at DC when a teenager, and nothing on the industry revolving around the character Wolverine - which is bigger than some entire comic book companies. Even within the Golden Age, the entry choices are rather whimsical. Lady Fair Play, who appeared all of 3 times anywhere and whose creators influenced no one, gets an entry; Mandrake the Magician, an icon of comics, does not. The omission of Mandrake (and Terry and the Pirates, and Prince Valiant) illustrates another problem. The proof-readers and editors of this thing should be shot. There are quite a few references in other articles bringing up Mandrake but the beginner will find no help in figuring them out because there's no Mandrake entry. For example, another magician character's sidekick is described as filling the place of Lothar. Who's Lothar? Well, he was Mandrake's sidekick but you can't find that out here. Similarly, the entry on Fantastic Comics mentions that "Stardust, Henry Fletcher's other contribution, is of sufficient unusualness to require an entry of his own." Very, very true - Stardust is like nothing else. Too bad the required entry isn't in this book. And let's not even get into the number of times "Stan Lee" is misprinted as "Stan Less". Still, I must thank the author for providing a lot of information on characters and creators who have long fallen into, sometimes undeserved, obscurity. The actual production values of the book are quite good too. Lavishly illustrated and good quality binding. I wish, however, that the credits for all those lavish illustrations were more specific. There's just a list at the end of the book of everyone who's art was in the book but nothing to say where any particular panel came from. I'd really like to know where some of those great strips came from.

Ron Goulart has written some of the earliest and most important histories on comic books (especially the Golden and Silver Ages) and frankly, it was high time that he took it upon himself to put together an encyclopedia. Unfortunately, the product he ended up with is less than stellar. The *Comic Book Encyclopedia: The Ultimate Guide to Characters, Graphic Novels, Writers, and Artists in the Comic Book Universe*, while it is lavishly printed and illustrated, will please newer comics fans with its attention to creators and series of the last 15 years, and will also placate those interested in comics of the early days of the industry, but will delight none because of its glaring omissions and poor editing. The Good: This book does a great job of bringing the information about

comic books up to date - most comic reference works and histories stop their coverage circa 1995 when the industry was circling the drain, and Goulart fixes this problem by bringing the published analyses of the rejuvenated medium into the new millennium. Here you'll find entries for more recent luminaries like Mike Mignola and Hellboy, Terry Moore, Danger Girl, and others. The book is also nicely produced on good, heavy, glossy paper in full color, and the fore- and end-papers feature an entertaining chart detailing the history of American comics. Related magazines and even some newspaper strips are also given mention in the book. The Bad: Boy oh boy. Unfortunately, while there is a lot of great information here, many opportunities were missed and most entries are either too short or omitted altogether. Art Adams (a favorite of mine) receives over a page, but the equally (if not moreso) influential and popular Alex Ross has no entry at all and isn't even listed in the index. Some juggernauts of the industry (too numerous to mention here) receive less than an entire page while other "newcomers" get 1+ pages all to themselves. It is the same with characters and comics series. It looks as though Goulart used a "pick a name out of a hat" method to choose who he would include. Also, this book could have used a good editor - there are a substantial number of factual and textual errors that just should have been caught: for instance, in the entry for the series "Preacher," one of the characters is misidentified as "Casey" (his name is "Cassidy"); and Fredric Wertham, the man held responsible for almost bringing down the comics industry in the 1950s, is blatantly misquoted. If this book was to have been the "ultimate guide," it falls shamefully short of that goal. This book may be a good place to start for those interested in comics; however, if you're looking for something more in-depth, the excellent behind-the-scenes encyclopedia *Comics: Between the Panels* will be more satisfying, while the *Marvel Encyclopedia* or *The DC Comics Encyclopedia, Updated and Expanded Edition* will probably be more entertaining.

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