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Watchmen



Synopsis

A New York Times Best Seller! Considered the greatest graphic novel in the history of the medium, the Hugo Award-winning story chronicles the fall from grace of a group of super-heroes plagued by all-too-human failings. Along the way, the concept of the super-hero is dissected as the heroes are stalked by an unknown assassin. This edition of WATCHMEN, the groundbreaking series from Alan Moore, the award-winning writer of V FOR VENDETTA and BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE, and Dave Gibbons, the artist of GREEN LANTERN, features the high-quality, recolored pages found in WATCHMEN: THE ABSOLUTE EDITION with sketches, never-before-seen extra bonus materials and a new introduction by Dave Gibbons.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you don't already know, the other reviews will fill you in on the Watchmen's story and its significance to the comic medium. I'm here to tell you about this edition of the book, which is basically an oversized version of the long out of print Graphitti Designs hardcover version complete with all of that edition's exclusive extras (which is fantastic since that out of print volume goes for major bucks on Ebay when it does rarely surface). Until now, that Graphitti Designs edition was the one to own... This tops it due to its oversized pages and superior quality printing. Want to see how this story was originally about about Captain Atom, Blue Beetle, and the Question (along with other Charlton characters) and how it changed to what it is? There is a very indepth look at the original proposal included here. Want to see early Gibbon's art? it's here. How about rarely seen teaser strips published long before the first issue? Again included. Alan Moore's script samples? You got

it. Bottom line, I can't think of anything that could possibly be done or included that would make a superior edition to this.

Comic book superheroes are basically fascist vigilantes, with Superman and his dedication to truth, justice and the American way being the exception that proves the rule. Both "Watchmen" and "The Dark Knight Returns," the two greatest examples of graphic storytelling, deal explicitly with the underlying fear the ordinary citizenry have of the demi-gods they worship. The one inherent advantage that "Watchman" has over Frank Miller's classic tale is that it requires no knowledge of the existing mythos of its characters because Dr. Manhattan, Ozymandias, Rorschach, Nite Owl, Silk Spectre, the Comedian and the rest of the former members of the Crimebusters. The brainchild of writer Alan Moore ("Swamp Thing," "V for Vendetta," "From Hell") and artist Dave Gibbons ("Rogue Trooper," "Doctor Who," "Green Lantern"), "Watchmen" was originally published by DC Comics in twelve issues in 1986-87. Moore and Gibbons won the Best Writer/Artist combination award at the 1987 Jack Kirby Comics Industry Awards ceremony. The central story in "Watchmen" is quite simple: apparently someone is killing off or discrediting the former Crimebusters. The remaining members end up coming together to discover the who and the why behind it all, and the payoff to the mystery is most satisfactory. But what makes "Watchmen" so special is the breadth and depth of both the characters and their respective subplots: Dr. Manhattan dealing with his responsibility to humanity given his god-like powers; Nite Owl having trouble leaving his secret identity behind; Rorschach being examined by a psychiatrist. Each chapter offers a specific focus on one of the characters, yet advances the overall narrative. Beyond that the intricate narrative, Moore and Gibbons offer two additional levels to the story. First, each chapter is followed by a "non-comic" section that develops more of the backstories, such as numerous excerpts from Hollis Mason's autobiography "Under the Hood" or Professor Milton Glass' "Dr. Manhattan: Super-Powers and the Superpowers," an interview with Adrian Veidt, or reports from the police files of Walter Joseph Kovacs. Second, almost every issue has scenes from "Tales of the Black Freighter," a comic-book being read by a kid near a newsstand, which offers an allegorical perspective on the main plot line. "Watchmen" certainly nudged the comics industry in the right direction towards greater sophistication and intelligence, although a full appreciation of its significance is always going to be lost on the bean counters. The Book Club Edition of "Watchmen" offers the teaser: "He's America's ultimate weapon . . . and he's about to desert to Mars." As a representation of the work as a whole that description is simply stupid, especially since it is followed by a glowing recommendation by Harlan Ellison that concludes "anyone who misses this milestone event in the

genre of the fantastic is a myopic dope." If you ever spent time reading and enjoying any superhero comic book, you will appreciate what you find in "Watchmen."

If you've ever read anything with the title "Comics aren't just for kids anymore", you've probably heard about Watchmen. So, is it really that good? Oh god, yes. It's hard to review the collection without resorting to cliches -- and I'll employ one now. It gets better everytime I read it. I see new layers and depth. "God exists. And he's an American." Most superhero comics take place in a world almost the same as our own. But surely, people running around in tights, people with god-like powers would make an impact. In Watchmen, they do. America won Vietnam -- thanks to a god-like hero. Electric cars exist. Classic comic books got cancelled when the real superheroes came along. Oh, and Richard Nixon is still president into the 1980s. (Too bad about those dead reporters, isn't it?) This is series a big ideas, human characters and personal moments. It looks at retired heroes (thanks to 1970s anti-superhero legislation) who investigate the death of one of their own. The book also features flashbacks, autobiography excerpts, comic book interludes and more. Truly engrossing writing by Alan Moore and art by Dave Gibbons. Oh, and comics aren't just for kids anymore. (g)

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