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Marvel: Five Fabulous Decades Of The World's Greatest Comics ([Marvel Comics])



Synopsis

Marvel Comics - full of cosmic battles and complex psychology - are the best-selling comics in America today. For generations, Marvel's moody heroes have captured the imagination of readers with their daring feats and iconoclastic wit. Relive the Marvel Magic in this lively history of the company and its heroes - both imaginary and real: --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Marvel Five Fabulous Decades of the World's Greatest Comics is a well-presented but incomplete volume that I would highly recommend for those interested in the history of pulp fiction and comic books, especially Marvel Comics. It is a brilliant summary of a large portion of the genres, formats, and marketing strategies of Marvel Comics, which dates back to the 1930s and 1940s. Even a reader who is not particularly a comics fan will likely find this book fascinating and enlightening. To me, this publication is a decent effort to document the history and development of the superhero fantasy. Introduced in this publication are highlighted stories and photographed covers of the various pulp fiction magazines, including Marvel Tales, The Spider, Weird Tales, etc., all of which were prevalent in American dime stores and contained various tales about time travel, unlimited atomic energy, ghosts, and alien invaders. Though these fantasies were popular, the pulp novel editors, most notably Martin Goodman, eventually needed to find a way to publish their stories at a pace in sync with an accelerating, thus increasingly demanding, society that was producing faster

machines, trains, planes, and automobiles. Thus was developed and introduced by Goodman, along with illustrator, Bill Everett, what would be the very first issue of Marvel Comics, which has its cover photographed in miniaturized form as displayed in this book. So according to the following pages, the cornerstone of Marvel Comics was laid, and there was to be no turning back. In *Five Fabulous Decades*, each page is glossy and contains several photographs in color of the various aforementioned pulp fiction works along with the very early issues that would lead to an expanding Marvel Universe.

Marvel: Five Fabulous Decades of the World's Greatest Comics is the most enjoyable comics-related history I've read thus far but it's not the best one. As with his similar volume on DC Comics (see *Reaction Paper #5*), historian Les Daniels fails to make clear where his allegiance lies: with unbiased history or corporate approval. Without making his intent clear, Daniels makes me suspect the truth and fairness of this detail-rich account of Marvel's history. Such suspicions are most glaring when controversies that have been well documented in other sources are mentioned only in passing, glossed over, or ignored altogether. For example, Jack Kirby's departure from the company in 1970 which some comic-book historians point to as one of the initiating events of the Bronze Age receives only a page and a few polite comments from Kirby and Stan Lee (p. 145); Daniels' account captures little of the acrimony other sources have suggested led to the split. The author also doesn't discuss Kirby's return to the company in the mid-1970s, subsequent re-departure, or extended, bitter battle with the company over original art; that last item generated many headlines in the industry trade press throughout the 1980s. A second example of potential whitewashing of controversy can be seen in Daniels' material regarding Jim Shooter, Marvel's editor-in-chief from 1978 to 1987. While acknowledging that Shooter may have stepped on a few toes, the author largely casts the former E-i-C as someone who was both business savvy and a friend of the creative talent (p. 206). Daniels writes: "He was concerned about conditions for artists and writers and he was convinced that making some changes would ultimately increase sales" (p. 183).

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