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Foul Play!: The Art And Artists Of The Notorious 1950s E.C. Comics!



Synopsis

Legendary publisher Bill Gaines is perhaps best remembered as the founder of MAD Magazine, but in the opinion of many dedicated comic book fans, his greatest achievement was E.C. Comics, a line of adventure, horror, and science-fiction comics whose influence on American graphic novels is undeniable, even today. Foul Play! is the perfect book for anyone wanting to understand the special place E.C. holds in the comic fan's heart -- or who just wants to read some real good comics! Foul Play! celebrates the fan-favorite creators of E.C. Comics, profiling their artists -- a veritable who's who of mid-20th century popular illustration -- and describing how they came to work with Bill Gaines and how their careers evolved after E.C.. Among the comics art legends profiled are Al Feldstein; Harvey Kurtzman; Johnny Craig; Jack Davis; Graham Ingels; Jack Kamen; Wallace Wood; Joe Orlando; Will Elder; John Severin; George Evans; Al Williamson; Reed Crandall; Bernie Krigstein; and more! Plus, the book includes a special bonus: a lost E.C. Comics story "Wanted for Murder!" originally intended to be published in 1956 but forgotten and unseen until now. When originally published, E.C. Comics titles like Tales from the Crypt, The Vault of Horror, and Weird Science became best-selling titles, embraced by readers for their macabre wit and stunning illustration. Eventually, E.C. Comics ran afoul of a full Senate Subcommittee investigating (but never proving!) the link between comic books and juvenile delinquency, but not before winning a legion of fans that still treasure E.C.'s output. Foul Play! demonstrates -- in glorious, gory detail -- exactly why these are among the most beloved comics stories ever published.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Driven out of business by self-appointed moral guardians a half-century ago, EC comics have acquired near-legendary status. EC scripts may have been several notches better than those of the competitors, but EC's stellar roster of artists is what makes fans so esteem the EC line. It is fitting, then, that this coffee-table tribute focuses on those illustrators. Geissman, coauthor of *Tales of Terror* (2000), an exhaustive overview of EC, provides informative, insightful biographical sketches of 14 leading lights; full-color covers, story pages, and panels (including rare pre-EC work) by the subject and photos and other memorabilia illustrate, and a complete story concludes, each sketch. Geissman's coverage extends post-EC, when such artists as Wally Wood and Al Williamson maintained successful careers in comics, while others, such as Jack Davis and Johnny Craig, moved to commercial art; one EC mainstay, Graham Ingles, disappeared altogether. A colorful, in-depth survey that will grab EC's many devotees, comics fans who have enjoyed its subjects' subsequent work, and generalist pop-culture vultures alike. Gordon Flagg

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• "A beautiful and long overdue art book, but more than that—a fascinating look at the artists behind the art." • (Michael Mignola, creator of *Hellboy*)

• Here's an easy review: If you have any interest in E.C. Comics, you need a copy of *Foul Play*.

• (Mark Evanier, author of *MAD ART*)

Three and a Half Stars: "A great introduction to E.C. history." • (Brent Frankenhoff, *Comics Buyer's Guide*)

• A colorful, in-depth survey that will grab EC's many devotees and generalist pop-culture vultures alike." • (Booklist)

• A fresh look at the story of Entertaining Comics, the company that brought you *Tales from the Crypt* and *MAD*." • (Asbury Park Press)

• A monument to the achievements and enduring influence of an American institution that briefly shook up the staid '50s." • (Charlotte Observer)

Grant Geissman hits another one out of the park with this book. *FOUL PLAY* is the perfect melding of good ol' gory EC fun and the EC research we've come to expect of Geissman. He provides fresh insights into the EC stable of artists, rather than just regurgitating what's already known. That's quite an accomplishment for subject matter that's 50 years old and already mined extensively. Geissman even dares to confound the traditionalists by not choosing "Master Race" as Bernard Krugstein's story example. My only quibble (and it's a tiny one) is his story choice for the criminally under-rated Johnny Craig. One would almost think "Touch and Go" was Craig's only masterpiece. It would've been nice to pick a different, under-appreciated gem such as "The Sewer" from *Crime*

Suspense stories #5 or Johnny's tour de force "Mausoleum" from Vault of Horror #29. The care lavished on this book, along with its quietly elegant production values, makes it a must-buy for any EC fan. Or for anyone who knows the idiom of comics can spawn work as timeless as any other art form. David Burlington

Such a beautiful book....For someone who doesn't know much about EC comics (or for that matter comics printed during the 50s-80s), this book was an eye-opener. It describes the art and lives of the artists and creators of EC in such a beautiful manner that once I started this book, I was hooked. What a shame that these very interesting comics were stopped from being published only after a short run at the printing press. The book is done in a beautiful manner with about 14 EC comics stories included. The whole package is very nicely done. Highly recommended, even if you are not a big EC comic fan. Buy it just for the art. If I had a choice I would give it ten stars, one of the best books I own.

If you have any interest at all in EC Horror, you simply must get this book. The production values exceeded my expectations and I would have easily paid three times the asking price. Highest possible rating and then some.

this is a real gem of a book. the coverage is very good as most of the great artists are profiled with nice samples of their artwork and stories. the book presentation style is easy to read and well structured. the illustrations are rare and good samples and the paper quality is superb. It is already hard to find and to manage to get such a nice new crisp copy was a really pleasant surprise

This is an excellent history and gives a good look at all of the E.C. artists who made those comics so famous and infamous. The work and the stories were way ahead of their time. Author Geissman deserves a large kudo for this treasure for all of us old "fan-addicts"! My only complaint is that too many of the illustrations are much too small, but the stories from the E.C. comics that are used are excellently reproduced.

This book is better than I anticipated! I always enjoyed comics and now love the Graphic Novel genre. This book has great pictures and really captures the feel of the times. I found a lot of comics I'd love to get my hands on and read. As one who also loves the noir genre, this is a must. I'm really enjoying it!

To be perfectly honest, I've spent all of 15 minutes looking at this book in a comic shop less than 20 minutes ago, but I can tell you it's good. Whole stories have been reprinted (photographed from printed comics rather than from original art, but the reproduction is good), as well as individual panels and examples from other aspects of their careers. Each artist is well represented with his best work, and the images are chosen with knowledge and taste. The biographies are well researched, giving an overview of each artist's career arc. I could lay in bed for hours looking at this thing, and I intend to.

unexpected surprise!

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