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Watchmen



Synopsis

SOON TO BE A FEATURE FILM! This Hugo Award-winning graphic novel 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. One of the most influential graphic novels of all time and a perennial bestseller, *WATCHMEN* has been studied on college campuses across the nation and is considered a gateway title, leading readers to other graphic novels such as *V FOR VENDETTA*, *BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS* and *THE SANDMAN* series.

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Customer Reviews

Has any comic been as acclaimed as Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons' *Watchmen*? Possibly only Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns*, but *Watchmen* remains the critics' favorite. Why? Because Moore is a better writer, and *Watchmen* a more complex and dark and literate creation than Miller's fantastic, subversive take on the Batman myth. Moore, renowned for many other of the genre's finest creations (*Saga of the Swamp Thing*, *V for Vendetta*, and *From Hell*, with Eddie Campbell) first put out *Watchmen* in 12 issues for DC in 1986-87. It won a comic award at the time (the 1987 Jack Kirby Comics Industry Awards for Best Writer/Artist combination) and has continued to gather praise since. The story concerns a group called the Crimebusters and a plot to kill and discredit them. Moore's characterization is as sophisticated as any novel's. Importantly the costumes do not get in the way of the storytelling; rather they allow Moore to investigate issues of power and control--indeed it was *Watchmen*, and to a lesser extent *Dark Knight*, that propelled the comic genre

forward, making "adult" comics a reality. The artwork of Gibbons (best known for 2000AD's Rogue Trooper and DC's Green Lantern) is very fine too, echoing Moore's paranoid mood perfectly throughout. Packed with symbolism, some of the overlying themes (arms control, nuclear threat, vigilantes) have dated but the intelligent social and political commentary, the structure of the story itself, its intertextuality (chapters appended with excerpts from other "works" and "studies" on Moore's characters, or with excerpts from another comic book being read by a child within the story), the finepace of the writing and its humanity mean that Watchmen more than stands up--it keeps its crown as the best the genre has yet produced. --Mark Thwaite

A Q&A with Dave Gibbons on the Making of Watchmen

Question: You were tasked with drawing new illustrations of key shots from the new Watchmen film. Was it a difficult challenge to re-imagine your work in this movie format? Dave Gibbons: I don't think that I actually did many key shots from the film. I had to actually imagine them rather than exactly recreate what was going to be in the movie. But as far as the drawings I did for the licensing purposes, accuracy was the real key so that they looked exactly like the movie. Whereas doing the graphic novel was creating stuff afresh and being very creative, this was more the case of interpreting something that already existed. So it was rather more a commercial art job than a creative thing.

Q: How many scenes from the original graphic novel did you redraw in the new "movie" format? DG: I kind of did them piecemeal, these licensing drawings. I did do a section of storyboarding for Zack Snyder. There is a part of the movie that isn't in the graphic novel and he wanted to see how I would have drawn it, if it had been in the graphic novel. So I redid the storyboards as three pages of comic on the nine-panel grid, also getting it coloured by John Higgins so it looked authentic. But I think there were probably only 3 or 4 scenes that I drew, which were from the movie.

Q: What was your working method for producing these new illustrations from the film? And how has it changed from when you originally illustrated Watchmen? DG: When you're producing things from existing material, you have to look at and assemble the references... you know, keep looking backwards and forwards to make sure what you're drawing is accurate to what's in the photos. I did have lots of photos from the movie and in some cases I had more or less the illustration I was going to do in photo form, which made it a lot easier. On others I had to construct it from various references: really just the usual illustrator's job of drawing something to reference. And on the original illustrations of Watchmen, I was free to come up with exactly the angles and exactly the costumes and everything that I wanted to. When you've designed a costume and drawn it a few times, you actually internalize it and you find you can draw it without having to refer to reference at all. So in some ways it's more creative and in some ways it's easier!

Q: In Watchmen: The Art of the Film, there are concept designs by other

artists of their visions of your iconic characters. What do you think of their versions and did you offer any guidance while they were working on these? DG: It's always really interesting to see versions of your characters drawn by other artists. You tend to see things in them that you hadn't noticed before. So I really enjoyed looking at those. I certainly didn't offer them any guidance. The purpose of getting those kinds of drawings done is to get a fresh perspective on what exists. I noticed actually that they really stuck more closely to my original designs than those, but I really enjoyed seeing them. Q: Watchmen: Portraits is Clay Enos's stunning black and white collection of photos of each character from the Watchmen movie. What was it like looking through this book at all the characters you had conceived years ago now being brought to life by actors? DG: It's rather interesting; you know if you look at the Watching the Watchmen book you can see these characters as fairly sketchy rough conceptual versions. Then when you look at Clay's book you can actually see them right down to counting the number of pores on the skin on the end of their noses! It's incredible high focus! It's like zooming in through space and time to look at the surface of some moon of Saturn or something. I thoroughly enjoyed his book... it had a real artistic quality to it that was really so good. And of course to see these actors who so much are the embodiment of what I drew, that it's a tremendous thrill to see them made flesh! Q: Watchmen: The Film Companion features some stills from the animated version of The Black Freighter. What do you think of the look and design of this animated feature? DG: It looks really interesting! Although I drew my version in the comic book in a kind of horror-comic style, these are very much in a savage manga style. I think they work really well... they've got the kind of manic intensity, which I think that work should have and I really can't wait to see the whole feature. I've seen the trailer for it and that looks great and again they've used a lot of the compositions that I came up with but just translated them to this kind of very modern drawn animation. Q: How much time did you spend on the set of Watchmen? Was it a surreal experience to see your work recreated like this? DG: I was on the set of Watchmen for a couple of days and it really was surreal to walk through a door and then suddenly be in the presence of all these people in living breathing flesh! I was there for what you would call the Crimebusters meeting where they were all there in costume in the same room, which was incredible. They had obviously planned that so I would get to see everyone. It was surreal though quite a wonderful experience to see it come to life. --This text refers to the School & Library Binding edition.

"A work of ruthless psychological realism, it's a landmark in the graphic novel medium. It would be a masterpiece in any." "TIME, TIME MAGAZINE's 100 best English-language novels from

1923 to the present

I tried reading through *Watchmen* when I was younger but stopped halfway through. Saw the movie a few years ago and decided to give it another try. It's a great story but the only thing I disliked was the Tale of the Black Freighter aspect. I didn't like the language used in that story-within-a-story and it felt like Moore was just trying to use the biggest words possible to describe a simple scene. I know the Black Freighter was supposed to correlate with the actual *Watchmen* story, but I just couldn't bear those parts of the collection. Other than that, loved this graphic novel.

Don't call me a comic book! I am one of Time magazine's top 100 "novels". And I won a Hugo. So there! Indeed. This 1985 graphic novel by comic book great Alan Moore is one of the most impressionable pieces of literature that I've read in years. Is *Watchmen* some comic book about superheroes? Wait! Who you callin' "comic book!?" And we'd prefer "costumed adventurers" instead of superheroes please...with the exception of one character in the book. The difference between superhero and costumed adventurer here is the difference between super-powers and plain old bravery and smarts. And just plain old bravery and smarts can't protect you from a bullet or a stronger man (or woman). So when one of the approximately five still practicing costumed adventurers is murdered, Rorschach, a tough, ink-blot mask wearing anti-hero makes it his business to find the killer and warn the other adventurers of a villain potentially bent on getting rid of the remaining "masks". I mentioned earlier "an exception" to the costumed versus super-powered adventurers...that exception is Dr. Manhattan. The question is not what can Dr. Manhattan do that's so special; the question is, what can't he do? So with a guy like Manhattan on your side...whether it's literally "your" side or say "your county's" side, ya can't lose, right? But what if Dr. Manhattan decided to skip town for a while? Yeah. Exactly. You guessed it. Like if Tiger Woods left golf for a season due to injury...who'd watch golf anymore? Who'd watch the *Watchmen*? Alan Moore tells a sensational tale here and Dave Gibbons brings the words to life. This novel is a must...not just for comic book and graphic novels fans, but for fans of Truth, Justice and the American Way! Add this to your cart. Side note: Speaking of bringing the words to life....It's no secret that Zack Snyder (300) plans to bring *Watchmen* to the big screen in 2009. Can't wait!

I never read comics when I was growing up, but the more superhero movies I see, the more I am interested in the full stories. I picked this up because it seemed manageable (instead of having to look for dozens of issues and volumes like some series). I like the artwork, and I like that we get

good background development on the characters. The flashbacks are really helpful in fleshing out the characters.

I know this is regarded by some as the best comic series ever but to me it felt a little anticlimactic. Yes, it looks great, the story is good and they use the medium in many clever ways. But even though I enjoyed it, the overall package just didn't live up to the hype.

I picked this up so I could read in prep for the movie. My first "graphic novel" other than "comic books" back in my younger days. Overall I found this a very good Sci-Fi adventure. Storyline is as noted, about a 1980's US in which Superheroes have been outlawed and Nixon is still the President. The story includes some very likable characters, as well as some pretty neurotic ones too. I'd recommend it if you've never read a graphic novel and want to try one out. It's a decent story for Sci-Fi buffs too, although maybe lacking a bit of depth you'd normally get in a full length novel. Some nice plot twist to keep you interested / guessing. Takes you back to the Cold War era and the brink of the ultimate showdown. This is definitely not a "comic book" meant for kids, teenagers perhaps. It's definitely a graphic novel with a mature storyline (murder, violence, gore, reference to rape, etc.). I docked it one star because, although the ending was good, it seemed to fizzle a bit and I found it lacking the power the rest of the novel exhibited.

As a young man growing up reading comic books, I always favored the heroes. The older I got, the darker the reading material got. I began to discover the importance of the evil perspective. Watchmen captures the reality of vigilantes who suffer P.T.S.D. & mental stress from doing good. I highly recommend this book to anyone who seeks a sense of reality in comic books.

This is a well writing piece of graphic art. The story was interesting from the beginning to the end. Unlike other mainstream comics books, this graphic novel get in detail in the ordinary life of the super heroes. From personal problems, love situations and the question of meaning of life. Absolutely I recommend this book. The motion picture movie do not get closed to this book.

This was the first comic book I ever read. Truly amazing. The art is great. The character building it perfect. That story was wonderful. I actually bought this copy as a birthday present for my sister who is going through a bit of a super hero kick and she loved it!

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