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Supergods: What Masked Vigilantes, Miraculous Mutants, And A Sun God From Smallville Can Teach Us About Being Human



Synopsis

NATIONAL BESTSELLER • What Masked Vigilantes, Miraculous Mutants, and a Sun God from Smallville Can Teach Us About Being Human • Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Iron Man, and the X-Men—the list of names as familiar as our own. They are on our movie and television screens, in our videogames and in our dreams. But what are they trying to tell us? For Grant Morrison, one of the most acclaimed writers in the world of comics, these heroes are powerful archetypes who reflect and predict the course of human existence: Through them we tell the story of ourselves. In this exhilarating work of a lifetime, Morrison draws on art, archetypes, and his own astonishing journeys through this shadow universe to provide the first true history of our great modern myth: the superhero. • Now with a new Afterword

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Who should buy Supergods? Some of the negative reviews below are from readers complaining that this book isn't what they thought it was. To clarify: Supergods is partly a history and critical analysis of the superhero concept and partly Grant Morrison's autobiography as an artist. There are dozens, perhaps a hundred pages in the book that analyze key superhero comic book classics (Watchmen, The Dark Knight Returns, various Golden Age and Silver Age classics), so if you haven't read those yet, start there. Also, in my opinion there's little point in reading a writer's biography if you haven't read some of their best works. For Morrison, the best to start with are Arkham Asylum, All Star Superman, We3, and

Grant Morrison, comic book luminary, presents a thoughtful dissection of the comic book industry, from its origins to the present. It's not what I was expecting, but it was very interesting, and an analysis worthy of a doctoral thesis. It is, in turns, the biography of the comic book industry, an examination of the sociology of the western world since the depression-era appearance of Superman, autobiography of Morrison himself, and review of how real life and the world of the superheroic are converging. Morrison begins his book, fittingly, with an examination of what made Superman and Batman iconic when they first appeared. For me, this was fascinating, recognizing that the Superman I knew had started not just as an archetypal hero of strength with bold colors of the daytime, but a symbol of the strength of the individual and middle-American farmers against industry and big business during the Great Depression. On the other end of the spectrum was Batman, a big-city, wealthy hero in the dark of night, whose intellect was his only power. Batman was tested by a series of villains inspired by psychiatric disorders, whom he would physically beat into submission. From there, the author broadens his scope to track the development of the industry as it is influenced by political and cultural changes such as McCarthyism, heroes from the age of science inspired by Kennedy's presidency, the rise of psychedelia and the drug culture, the gritty vigilantism of the 70s and 80s, the events and repercussions of 9/11, and expansion into the film industry.

Grant Morrison's saga of the superhero from its birth to its many tomorrows is a welcome breeze wafting from an endless summer somewhere in the future where we will all become superbeings. Welcome to me, at least, who, like the author, grew up absolutely enthralled by comic books. And like Morrison, I'm tired and bored with the dystopian, snarling pretenders in tights who masquerade as superheroes these days. I'm no Pollyanna or prude afraid of the dark - I've spent a fair share of my career writing about dark worlds present and future - but there's still that kid in me who grew up believing in Stan Lee's admonition that "with great power comes great responsibility." Too many superheroes have mistaken their shirking of responsibility for a punk rebellion against authority. The contrasts between the Green Lantern and Captain America movies highlight this problem. Hal Jordan allows himself to be convinced - all too easily - that he doesn't deserve the ring he's been given by a dying hero. His acceptance of his role finally comes rather perfunctorily, as a necessity for the final act, rather than from any real desire to live up to his destiny. Not so with Steve Rogers, who is untiring in his efforts to shoulder more responsibility than his weak frame can handle. Morrison thinks superheroes are archetypes of aspiration, untiring and, in the end, always

undefeated. His book chronicles the pop culture history of this archetype in many of its manifestations, not just in comics but also in similar trends in music and fashion. I've read many of the comics he calls upon as exemplars, and I loved reading another author's heartfelt and deeply illuminating appreciation of these works. Heartfelt is the key word for this book.

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