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Men of Tomorrow: Geeks, Gangsters, and the Birth of the Comic Book

Gerard Jones

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#680450 in Books 2005-10-11Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.00 x .88 x 5.251, .94 #File Name: 0465036570416 pages | File size: 75.Mb

Gerard Jones : Men of Tomorrow: Geeks, Gangsters, and the Birth of the Comic Book before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Men of Tomorrow: Geeks, Gangsters, and the Birth of the Comic Book:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. who would have guessed???By gailwith no interest in comic book

heroes, i wouldn't have thought this book to have been of any interest to me but it's turned out to be very much the opposite: at heart, it's a work of serious scholarship in American history--more narrowly, Jewish American history--from the early to the mid-twentieth century. But the author is such a fine story-teller that the reader forgets he's drawing on sources. Jones pits 2 naive mid-western comic book creators against 2 slick New York comic book businessmen (you can guess which side screws the other) to illustrate not only how Superman came into being but how members of a once-cohesive ethnic community exploited one/no two of their own.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Comprehensive history of the origins of DC ComicsBy Spider-BobMen of Tomorrow shows the industry and the men that built it in a less than faltering light, giving source to the rumors that I had heard for many years about the comics industry back in the day. Concentrates heavily on the origins of Superman and the fates of the men who created him.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An excellent, excellent history of the men and the milieu ...By Lou MouginAn excellent, excellent history of the men and the milieu of the Golden Age of Comics...Siegel, Shuster, Kane, Kirby, and more. Read it and you'll absorb the past.

Animated by the stories of some of the last century's most charismatic and conniving artists, writers, and businessmen, *Men of Tomorrow* brilliantly demonstrates how the creators of the superheroes gained their cultural power and established a crucial place in the modern imagination. "This history of the birth of superhero comics highlights three pivotal figures. The story begins early in the last century, on the Lower East Side, where Harry Donenfeld rises from the streets to become the king of the 'smooshes'-soft-core magazines with titles like *French Humor* and *Hot Tales*. Later, two high school friends in Cleveland, Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel, become avid fans of 'scientifiction,' the new kind of literature promoted by their favorite pulp magazines. The disparate worlds of the wise guy and the geeks collide in 1938, and the result is *Action Comics #1*, the debut of Superman. For Donenfeld, the comics were a way to sidestep the censors. For Shuster and Siegel, they were both a calling and an eventual source of misery: the pair waged a lifelong campaign for credit and appropriate compensation." -*The New Yorker*

From *The New Yorker*This history of the birth of superhero comics highlights three pivotal figures. The story begins early in the last century, on the Lower East Side, where Harry Donenfeld rises from the streets to become king of the "smooshes"soft-core magazines with titles like *French Humor* and *Hot Tales*. Later, two high-school friends in Cleveland, Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel, become avid fans of "scientifiction," the new kind of literature promoted by their favorite pulp magazines. The disparate worlds of the wise guy and the geeks collide in 1938, and the result is *Action Comics #1*, the dbut of Superman. For Donenfeld, the comics were a way to sidestep the censors. For Shuster and Siegel, they were both a calling and an eventual source of misery: the pair waged a lifelong campaign for credit and appropriate compensation. Copyright 2005 *The New Yorker*From *Booklist*The comic book's early days have received heightened attention in the wake of Michael Chabon's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *Kavalier and Clay*, about the cutthroat businessmen and naive artists who then populated the industry. Although Jones' history limns dozens of the young writers and artists, most from working-class Jewish neighborhoods and many still teenaged, and the bosses who exploited them, its central figures are Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, who launched the superhero genre by creating Superman, only to sell the rights to the character for a pittance and spend decades in obscurity and near-poverty. Jones continues the story through the censorship that nearly destroyed the industry in the 1950s to the 1960s superhero revival that continues today. Jones' experience as a comic-book scripiter, albeit decades after the period he chronicles, gives him the advantage over most previous writers on the comics milieu, and his vivid writing suits the subject. But it is his impressively thorough research that makes this one of the most valuable books on a distinctively American storytelling form. Gordon FlaggCopyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Jones provides a lively portrait of the talent, energy, and chutzpah that gave birth to the comic book industry." -- *Business Week*