



Stan Lee and the Rise and Fall of the American Comic Book

By Jordan Raphael, Tom Spurgeon

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Based on interviews with Stan Lee and dozens of his colleagues and contemporaries, as well as extensive archival research, this book provides a professional history, an appreciation, and a critical exploration of the face of Marvel Comics. Recognized as a dazzling writer, a skilled editor, a relentless self-promoter, a credit hog, and a huckster, Stan Lee rose from his humble beginnings to ride the wave of the 1940s comic books boom and witness the current motion picture madness and comic industry woes. Included is a complete examination of the rise of Marvel Comics, Lee's work in the years of postwar prosperity, and his efforts in the 1960s to revitalize the medium after it had grown stale.

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Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Stan Lee, the cocreator of pop cultural icons like Spider-Man, the Hulk and the X-Men, has long been the subject of debate within the comics community, and Raphael and Spurgeon aim to set the record straight in this well-researched and entertaining book. In the late 1960s, Lee elevated himself into the public eye as the face of Marvel Comics, adopting a colorful persona along the way. Left behind were his c-creators, artists Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko, who never received the credit they deserved. At age 17, in 19TK, Lee (n, Stanley Lieber) took a job as an all-purpose assistant at his cousin Martin Goodman's comic book company, Timely. A frustrated novelist, Lee remained at Timely, shielded by Goodman from the industry's mid-century tumults, and eventually he transformed the company into Marvel Comics, steering it and himself into pop culture history. The authors portray Lee as a constantly enthusiastic, slightly daffy figure who turned a Depression-era work ethic and real bursts of creativity into something special. For all of his faults, the authors give Lee proper credit for being a fast and exciting creator who gave superheroes real-world problems and anxieties and used this realism for its maximum potential. Raphael and Spurgeon also chronicle Lee's decades in the wilderness of Hollywood, trying and failing to get decent films made from Marvel properties. Writer Raphael and cartoonist Spurgeon have put together a solid narrative well interwoven with the history of comics. As they demonstrate well, Lee's story is the story of mainstream comic books and one that is important reading. 12 pages of b&w photos not seen by PW.

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School-Raphael and Spurgeon march readers through Lee's first 80 years, taking many compelling byroads along the way to observe the history of American comic-book development, distribution, and readership. Lee created a dynamic and somewhat charismatic persona for himself early in life, and was able to move from technical grunt work to a certain level of co-creativity with more sophisticated artists, and from errand boy to publisher to media mogul. He is, indeed, a part of popular culture with high name recognition. The authors use a variety of resources, including interviews with field specialists and unpublished writings, to substantiate their views of both the man and the medium's evolution. While there are source notes for each chapter, they appear in alphabetical order, making it impossible to find the specific reference to which some controversial declarations are attributed. This will frustrate those doing higher-level research but won't impede casual readers' enjoyment of a colorful man's story told through well-described vignettes.

Francisca Goldsmith, Berkeley Public Library, CA

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From Booklist

Stan Lee is probably the world's most visible comic-book creator, though he has retired from comics writing. His career in the industry dates from 1940, but he toiled anonymously until vitalizing the field in the early 1960s with Spider-Man, the Fantastic Four, and the other, groundbreaking Marvel Comics superheroes. As Marvel's line grew, Lee turned to overseeing the expanding roster of titles and was gradually eased into being company figurehead, traveling the country to shill for the firm. Recently his reputation has been tarnished by accusations that he tried to hog credit for creating Marvel's iconic characters by minimizing the contributions of the artists who worked with him. This well-researched biography usefully corrects Lee's self-serving memoir *Excelsior!* (2002) and also serves as a critical history of Marvel Comics as well as an overview of the rise and fall of the entire comics industry, now at a commercial nadir, selling a fraction of

the number of copies it once did and existing largely, it seems, to develop fodder for blockbuster movies.

Gordon Flagg

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Clarence Danner:

The event that you get from Stan Lee and the Rise and Fall of the American Comic Book is the more deep you excavating the information that hide within the words the more you get enthusiastic about reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to know but Stan Lee and the Rise and Fall of the American Comic Book giving you joy feeling of reading. The author conveys their point in particular way that can be understood simply by anyone who read that because the author of this guide is well-known enough. That book also makes your own personal vocabulary increase well. It is therefore easy to understand then can go with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We propose you for having this Stan Lee and the Rise and Fall of the American Comic Book instantly.

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