

Superman: The Complete History- The Life and Times of the Man of Steel

Les Daniels

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The super-powered trilogy that captured the world's greatest superhero triumvirate of all time is now available in paperback. Relive the adventures of Krypton's favorite son inside and outside the comic book world in Superman: The Complete History. Uncover the Caped Crusader's mysterious real-world origin and his evolution into a hugely

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.com While comic books trace their origins to the late 19th century, Superman, who debuted in 1938's *Action Comics* #1, is virtually synonymous with the medium. Yet, as *Superman, the Complete History* shows, the Man of Steel has also made a lasting impact in comic strips, film, toys, TV, radio, and even on Broadway. In this beautifully composed volume, Les Daniels collects rare and never-before-seen early artwork by Superman's teenage creators, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster (including a two-page doodle from 1936 featuring early Superman costume designs), and he chronicles the evolution of the character from an orphan alien comics hero to a complex multimedia icon. Entire pages are devoted to photographs of the various costumes worn by TV and film incarnations, of numerous action figures and related toys, and of movie poster and stills. Several comics stories are also reproduced in their entirety. Almost as impressive as the stunning art design is Daniels's narrative: covering the 60 years from 1938 to 1998, he collects interviews with several writer-artist teams that detail the changes in the Man of Steel and his relationships with Lois Lane, Jimmy Olsen, Lex Luthor, and Perry White. Daniels's examination of the "Death of Superman" story arc, in particular, is a fascinating study of Superman's commercial and archetypal appeal. The final pages preview Superman tales by Barry Windsor-Smith and Alex Ross (whose beautiful painted graphic novel *Kingdom Come* turned many heads), and the hardback cover holds a special surprise underneath its paper wrap. --Patrick O'Kelley
From *School Library Journal* YA-From the creation of "the man of steel" by teenagers Jerry Siegel and Joe Schuster through the decades of comic books, cartoons, movies, and theater productions featuring the prototype of the American superhero, this book serves fans, historians, and artists. Liberally illustrated with reprinted comic-book pages, full-color photos of licensed and unlicensed toys and other paraphernalia, costumes, and storyboard panels, the text is well researched and neatly elaborated. Various sidebars explore the concept of pulp fiction, the appearance of Superman on the *I Love Lucy* TV show, the collaboration between DC and Marvel in celebration of the nation's Bicentennial, and other elements of 20th-century popular culture that bear on the Superman story. Daniels clearly is a fan, but this work is not partisan. He demystifies complications arising from artistic contracts, personalities, and political weather. The format is excellent, with color reproduction accurate and placement of images either simply judicious or aesthetically appealing as well. With the exception of omitting how Christopher Reeve's career was changed by his accident, Daniels follows each person concerned with the Superman story through to a satisfying denouement. He does a credible job whether he is discussing drawing, writing, acting, or the business of entertainment and its promotion.
Francisca Goldsmith, Berkeley Public Library, CA Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From *Library Journal* Fans of the Man of Steel, students of popular culture, and budding artists and actors will be swept up by this liberally illustrated and well-researched book about America's prototype superhero. (Oct.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.