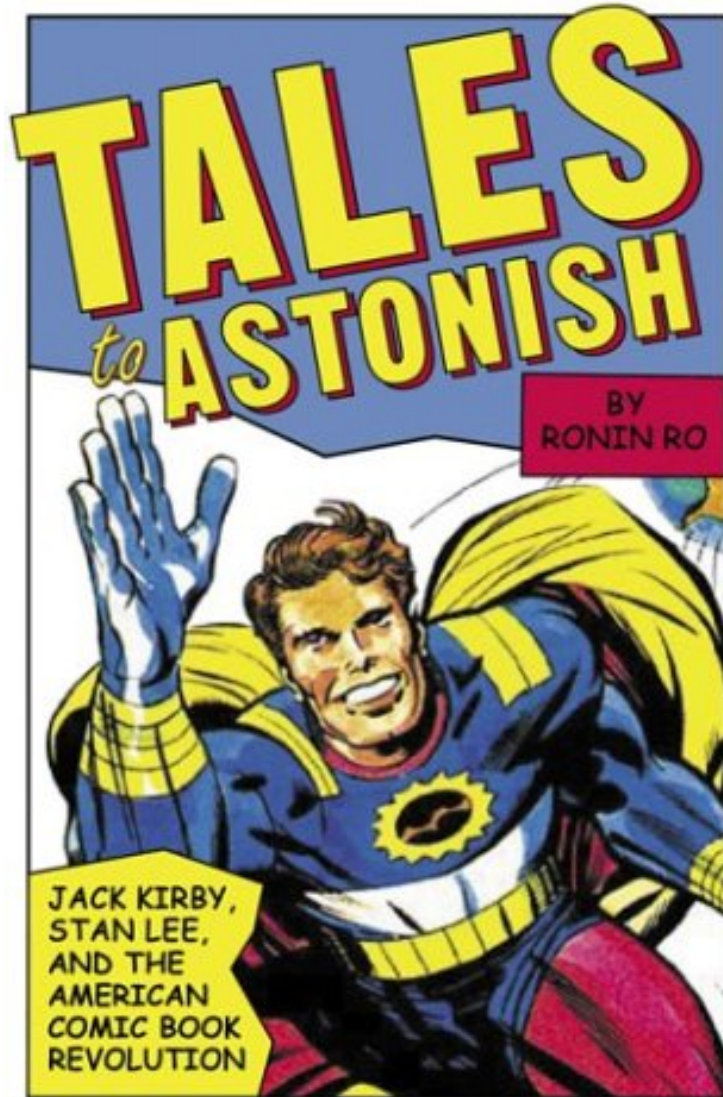


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Tales To Astonish : Jack Kirby, Stan Lee, and the American Comic Book Revolution

Ronin Ro

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Ronin Ro : Tales To Astonish : Jack Kirby, Stan Lee, and the American Comic Book Revolution before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Tales To Astonish : Jack Kirby, Stan Lee, and the American Comic Book Revolution:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. An Outstanding BookBy NemoI just finished reading this book. Now as anyone that has had even a passing conversation with me knows, I am a rabid comics fan. So, I read this book over

the last two days and simply marvelled, (pun intended), over how the industry got started and how it treated its creators. In the end, I feel this book was very fair to both Stan Lee and Jack Kirby. But, you just can't help but see how awful big business can be. I feel bad for people like Jim Shooter, who admittedly made Marvel a juggernaut, get the bum rush. Of course, to make Marvel big he had to screw over some people. Bob Kane (Batman), Jerry Seigel and Joe Shuster (Superman) are famous for being screwed out of their rights over their characters. But, they flat out sold their creations. Jack Kirby created Captain America (with Joe Simon), Spider-Man (with Stan Lee and Steve Ditko), The X-men/Thor/Hulk/Iron Man/Black Panther/Silver Surfer...well the list is too long to mention, but all with Stan Lee. Jack had to fight to get anything more than his base salary for these creations. Marvel dealt him a crappy hand and only with the support of a lot of help from 100s of big named creators did he even get some of his original work back (1900 pieces out of 9000 or so). Now as a guy born in the mid 70s. I loved and still love Stan Lee. His was the voice I heard and words I read in comics and cartoons. Jack was never a wordsmith and stayed in the background. It was only later in life that I even realized how amazing he was. My biggest regret in life to this point is never having met the man. Jack created the Marvel Universe. Jack created the New Gods. Jack influenced the design and creation of comic books for 70 years, and he will always be the King of Comics. 4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Very Readable History of Jack Kirby and the Comics By Kirk Groeneveld With some hesitation, I ordered a copy of the book "Tales to Astonish" because of both praise and concern in the comic fan world. I found it to be a very readable entertaining book that relates the highs and low points of the modern comic book, from its inception in the late 1930s through Jack Kirby's career. Criticism of this book are quite correct. There is no artwork, except for a Jack Kirby figure on the front and back. It is all text with no index. However, it is very readable, alternating between explanation, history and dialog between the major figures. This helps to make the story human, and show why and how things went wrong, how people felt, and what was done on both sides. There were many "a ha" moments for me in this book. The explanation of WHY there were only 8 Marvel comics initially distributed by National and WHY Marvel may not have made their initial superheros LOOK like tradition superheroes is very interesting. Also, the author has fleshed out some of the critical decisions to form partnerships and break-ups to explain more about the personalities involved. Example: Jim Steranko is a well known figure, but WHERE he came from, and WHY he fought with Stan Lee at the height of his success was very helpful. Jack Kirby's role in supporting this young master develop his form and then resentment at low pay for doing the majority of the layout work makes sense now. I spotted at least two simple factual errors: DC's Challengers of the Unknown is said to have debuted in Showcase # 7, 11, 12.... but wasn't it 6, 7, 11, 12? Similarly, the author describes the development of "Him" the last Kirby developed character for Marvel in Fantastic Four # 76, but I KNOW it was 66-67 because I bought them as they came out. These small errors make me wonder if the editing was done by a non-comic fan, or someone intentionally fed mis-information to the author. There is also a complaint that the same point or scene is repeated within a few pages of the book, over and over, being distracting cause you've just read that. I feel this is a linking technique when some additional information from research or interview has been inserted to flesh out a point, or illuminate another aspect of comics, and it derails the central discussion of Jack Kirby. Yes, annoying, but worked for me as it signals a return to the main theme. All in all, I must agree this is not the definitive work on Jack Kirby, but it is a very good overview of the development of the comic book industry and hits interviews or quotes from interviews from all the major players, from Stan Lee, to Mark Evanier, Gene Colan to Gil Kane, Carmine Infantao to Julie Schwartz, Gary Groth to Greg Theakston. In short, alot of ground has been covered.... and reasonably well. For a cheap price, this is a very quick, very readable over-view of Kirby's work, accomplishments, heartbreaks and legacy. I'd recommend it. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Tales to Astonish by Ronin Ro By mark gregory Tales to Astonish Overall rating of three stars; book contained only text and the author did not really go into detail about Marvel in the 1960's. Tales to Astonish did provide interesting points regarding the Lee-Kirby relationship.

Tales to Astonish relates the spectacular life and times of Jack Kirby, the legendary forefather of American comic books. In the 1960's, Kirby joined with Stan Lee to develop many of our best-known and most beloved superheroes, including the Fantastic Four, the Incredible Hulk, the X-Men, Thor, Iron Man, the Avengers, and the Silver Surfer. Ronin Ro chronicles Kirby's poverty-stricken origins in New York's Lower East Side, his early commercial triumphs and failures, his renowned partnership with Lee, and his revolutionary artistic innovations, tracing the comic book industry from its inauspicious beginnings to its sensational successes.

From Booklist Jack Kirby is arguably the most influential comic-book artist of all time: In the early 1940s he cocreated Captain America and drew dozens of other superheroes, essentially creating the template for the genre. But his best-known work comes from the 1960s, when he and writer Stan Lee created the Fantastic Four, the Hulk, and most of the rest of the innovative Marvel Comics cast. Kirby's rough-and-tumble Lower East Side childhood and maverick approach to his art must have seemed a promising subject to Ronin, whose previous books have been on rap music. He paints a colorful portrait--the real-life analog of Kavalier and Clay--of the comic book's early days, and his accounts of Kirby's acrimonious split with Lee and battle with Marvel over ownership of his original drawings show that the

industry remained cutthroat. Ultimately, Ronin's treatment is more dutiful than inspired (oh, for some of Kirby's fervor!) and marred by minor errors. The definitive Kirby biography is yet to come; until it arrives, Ronin's is a useful, readable stopgap. Gordon Flagg Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Compellingly depicts the codependent relationship between the charismatic Lee and the rough-edged Kirby. The story packs as much pathos as any of the duo's signature supersagas." (Entertainment Weekly) "Ro cleanly lays out Kirby's story. He does well by the facts." (The Onion) "Ro deftly handles Kirby's relationships. Tales to Astonish celebrates the stubbornness that kept Kirby, a superhero of comic books in his own right, creative as if against his will." (San Francisco Chronicle) About the Author Ronin Ro lives in New York City and is the author of Gangsta: Merchandising the Rhymes of Violence, the award-winning international bestseller Have Gun Will Travel, and the novel Street Sweeper. He has written for Vanity Fair, USA Today, the Los Angeles Times, the Boston Herald, Rolling Stone, and Spin.