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Prince Valiant, Vol. 1: 1937-1938



Synopsis

Nominated for a 2010 Will Eisner Comic Industry Award: The most stunningly gorgeous adventure comic strip of all time finally returns in its definitive edition, the first to boast superb restored artwork that captures every delicate line and chromatic nuance of Foster's original masterpiece. Universally acclaimed as the most stunningly gorgeous adventure comic strip of all time, Prince Valiant ran for 35 years under the virtuoso pen of its creator, Hal Foster. (Such was its popularity that today, decades after Foster's death, it continues to run under different hands.) The giant Sunday-funnies pages (Valiant ran only on Sundays) gave Foster a huge canvas upon which he was able to limn epic swordfights, stunning scenes of pomp and pageantry, and some of the most beautiful human beings—male and female—ever to appear in comics. And he matched his nonpareil visual sense with the narrative instincts of a born storyteller, propelling his daring young hero from one crisis to another with barely a panel to catch one's breath. Prince Valiant has previously been widely available only in re-colored, somewhat degraded editions (now out of print and fetching collectors' prices). Thanks to advances in production technology and newly available original proof sheets, this new series from the industry leader in quality strip classics is the first to feature superb restored artwork that captures every delicate line and chromatic nuance of Foster's original masterpiece. Comic strip aficionados will be ecstatic, and younger readers who enjoy a classic adventure yarn will be bowled over. Volume One is rounded out with a rare, in-depth classic Foster interview previously available only in a long out-of-print issue of The Comics Journal, as well as an informative Afterword detailing the production and restoration of this edition. Nominated for a 2010 Will Eisner Comic Industry Award (Best Archival Collection/Project: Strips). 120 color illustrations

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Medieval swordplay and adventure have never been as glorious as in Foster's Sunday-only comic strip. Although much reprinted (including an earlier version from the same publisher), this edition has been reproduced from pristine printer's proofs to give the gorgeous artwork its crispest version ever. The story takes young Prince Valiant, exiled heir to the conquered kingdom of Thule, from a witch's evil prophecy to adventure at the court of King Arthur, with stops for heroic rescues, conniving foes, beautiful maidens, Viking invasions and even a broken heart or two. Narrated in captions rather than told in speech balloons, Foster's script is literate and full of vivid characterizations, like the headstrong but cunning Val and carefree Sir Gawain. But nothing surpasses his artwork—rich with details of armor, weapons and dress, the story comes to life with a palpable sense of magic and danger. Each drawing is a flawless illustration, perfectly composed; even a battle of 20 men comes alive in a tiny panel, with every action clearly delineated. Prince Valliant is one of the best-drawn comics ever, and this new edition does ample justice to its achievement. Bonus material includes an interview with Foster and an afterword by editor Kim Thompson for context. (Aug.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

“Prince Valiant was a comics-page colossus—one of the most celebrated of all comics—the presentation does justice to Foster’s classic creation. - Gordon Flagg, Booklist

“The release... of Prince Valiant, Vol. 1: 1937-1938, the first in a new series of gorgeously printed, hardcover Valiant collections from Fantagraphics Books, served as a bittersweet reminder of the century-long rise and eventual decline of a great American art form, the comic strip. - Tirdad Derakhshani, Philadelphia Inquirer

“This is one of the greatest works of American art of the past century—one of the greatest comics of all time—the greatest adventure comic—[Foster’s] drawings are heartbreakingly beautiful. He understands powerful forms and delicate lines—Prince Valiant has been reprinted before, but this book uses his color engraver’s proofs and it’s a world of difference—it’s so beautiful. - Nick Gazin, Vice

“Who knew that Prince Valiant, a comic strip I always assumed appeared next to the word

– boredom –, in the dictionary, was so vibrant, colorful, action-packed and gosh-darned fun?... This new edition ups the ante not just through the fancy hardcover, but via state of the art technology that allows for a pristine detail and rich color – In a world where too often most art turns out to be exactly as shallow as first glance suggests, it’s nice to discover that something like Prince Valiant is capable of surprising, and even enthralling, the modern reader. – Comic Book Resources – It’s difficult to laud Foster too excessively; he was one of the undisputed masters of the craft. – A handsome oversize volume... [T]he comic strip’s otherworldly setting and taut characterization keep this an evergreen favorite for readers of all ages, an American epic born of a tale of European romance. – Aaron Ragan-Fore, Eugene Weekly – “The strips in Prince Valiant Vol. 1: 1937-1938 are merely the first installment of a massive, groundbreaking, and thoroughly exciting adventure saga that was better than nearly anything during its time, and remains better than nearly anything on the shelves today. – Michael C. Lorah, Newsarama – “It’s much more fluid and enjoyable than I would’ve guessed – a beautiful work. – Timothy Hodler, Robot 6 – “A real thing of beauty – the reproduction is as crystal clear as it can be – [[Foster’s] exquisite delicate renderings have influenced so many artists who have come after him and it’s not hard to see why so many people are such huge fans of this master of visual story. – Joel Meadows, Tripwire – “Foster is justly hailed for his stupendous full-pagers, full of panorama and carefully-researched settings.... We moderns are fortunate that – superb reprint editions of these classics are readily available. – Brenda Clough, Book View Cafe Blog – “This first collection of Hal Foster’s Prince Valiant strips has to be seen to be believed – it’s a lovingly crafted, tabloid-sized book with the highest production values. The artwork has been recreated from Foster’s own engraver’s proofs, providing better quality than even the original newspaper run would have got.... a real treat for fans of the original or new readers looking for some classic medieval adventure. – Grovel – “The new Prince Valiant crackles from the page with an energy and enthusiasm that positively dares anyone to deny this strip’s rightful place in the history of the form. Yes, this is another great day for comics history and most definitely a venture worth supporting into the future. – Guttergeek – “There was no comic strip in the 1930s or today that is as visually striking as Prince Valiant with its attention to detail and brilliant narrative. Foster presented a panoramic view of Arthurian times and he laid out his strip in film director fashion, beautifully staging his panels – [This is graphic storytelling at its finest and a true treasure! – Brian Lumley, Mania – “Magnificent reproductions, done in a sturdy

hardcover with oversized pages and entirely restored colors and shadings (indeed, those of us who've seen Prince Valiant reprint editions in the past will need some mental time to adjust to how much we've been missing). - Steven Donoghue, Open Letters

Monthly - "For the first time ever, we're able to see just how detailed and elaborate Foster's art really was. The number of fine lines that went into each drawing is impressive, providing a fine texture and grace to every single panel. - Greg McElhatton, Read About Comics - "The art is painstakingly detailed. I was struck by Foster's expert use of speed lines in the fight scenes - there was one panel where I could see how Val's foot was sliding sideways and digging into the dirt for balance as he was fending off an enemy.... Fantagraphics' production quality is stellar as usual. -

Tangognat.com - "Universally acclaimed as the most stunningly gorgeous adventure of all time, Prince Valiant ran for 35 years under the virtuoso pen of its creator, Hal Foster. The giant Sunday-funnies pages gave Foster a huge canvas upon which he was able to limn epic swordfights, stunning scenes of pomp and pageantry - he matched his nonpareil visual sense with the narrative instincts of a born storyteller, propelling his daring young hero from one crisis to another - Comic strip aficionados will be ecstatic, and younger readers who enjoy a classic adventure yarn will be bowled over. - Rick Klaw, The Geek Curmudgeon

How long was the publication delayed for ?.. i dunno.. seems ages.. but the quality of the book can not be faulted and the Love the publishers have for the work is clearly evident from the cover page to the end page. .. and after all it is Forster at the (growing) heights of his art work and writing. All too soon the second World War would impose restrictions on the size of the strip and Forster would have to stick to the more conventional grid layout. With the long delay between order and fulfillment on this book it makes me hesitate to order the next volume. I want to wait and see if it will come out on time.. still, whatever the case.. it will be well worth the wait.

It is Hal Foster's premier work, in my opinion, so that pretty much sums it up. I remember waiting for the Sunday morning paper just so I could read the next installment to this wonderful story. This particular volume is very impressive in terms of size, coloring and clarity. I am going to buy all the remaining volumes. I highly recommend this series to anyone that remembers and enjoys the Prince Valiant saga.

Volumes 1 and 2 are excellent quality reproductions of this continuing novel with a new chapter

every Sunday. Hal Foster put his heart and soul into developing the concept and creating new and fresh stories each Sunday. The Sunday stories are each a reasonable short story that is an integral part of the whole. The same thoughtful care was the standard when he found people who would continue the beauty, the story and the traditions. Anyone who would think a comic strip is preoccupied with the vehicle and sadly misses the beauty. I hope they will take some time to study at least one of the several books in this series as the art of painting and story telling that they find there. I have only started to collect the books but I have read the story longer than 60 years, and always look forward to a new gem every Sunday.

Fantagraphics has always enjoyed a reputation for publishing cutting-edge, quality newspaper strip collections. In the past, they were the first to publish the complete sequence of Hal Foster's medieval strip PRINCE VALIANT. Quality in both color and reproduction varied, however; and those of us who revere this VALIANT continued to wait for the ultimate reprint. Now, with this hardcover PRINCE VALIANT: 1937 - 1938, Fantagraphics has launched a series which hopefully will equal the quality of their COMPLETE PEANUTS reprints. Line detail is superb, and the strip's original mind-blowing color is there on the page for all to see. Background information is superb, particularly when the editors explain how difficult it has been for them to find pages of requisite quality. The price of the book, especially when one purchases through , is also amazing. This one's for dreamers and devotees of true comic art. You cannot do any better.

The work speaks for itself. Foster did for fiction what most authors don't: the reader comes out of the story empowered and craving more of life. I love fantasy, but sheer fantasy, even when it's good and relevant, makes one regret the story is over. For some, a listless feeling from being too dependent on the world created by its author. (I have been a little sad after reading The Lord of the Rings for this reason. It takes me so long to read, however, that I can just about turn around and start over again after I've finished. Better example of my sis telling me that she was bummed after seeing Star Wars because her life wasn't like that. But it's a great movie- and fun! I think people who play video games go through withdrawal if they attempt to stop playing for a period of time. Though not as well conceived, Avatar gave many people what they stated as depression because the fantasy world was not real.) Prince Valiant is different because it is not so much escapist fantasy. Foster strove for authenticity and made his story a sort of a how-to guide on life. No surprise since Foster lived his example, being an adventurer himself. Val was an adventurer but never stopped using his wits: optimistic and resourceful, often relying on his own two hands to gain a solution to

challenges. Val had faith and believed in honor. There was nothing to Prince Valiant that isn't possible in the real world. Not too shabby for fiction and I would like to see an equivalent work today. I am not the only one to say this but, Foster was the best.

Though I am not old enough to have started with the 1937 comic strips, I used to read about Prince Valiant every week in our local paper. When these archive volumes caught my eye last year I knew I would eventually have to purchase one. Well, I guess I'll be collecting the whole series! Volume One was great, I can't wait to see what happens next!

One review for all of Hal Foster's work is sufficient. Genius artist and story teller, and as a graphic artist/cartoonist for dozens of years there was no one better. I am aiming to own his complete collection.

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