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Marvel Encyclopedia: The Hulk



Synopsis

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Customer Reviews

Some people just won't listen to good advice unless they hear it from hundreds of different people. I myself am very dubious of online reviews. So here's one more for the pile of negative reviews of this truly awful publication, just in case you weren't already convinced. I wish I could say I can't figure out what Marvel was thinking when they published this... but it doesn't take much of a guess. I'm inclined to say that this book is little more than an extended ad for the current runs of the Hulk. But it might be more accurate to say that it is NOTHING more than an extended ad for the current run of the Hulk. Why would a person be curious about this book? Well, speaking for myself... 1. You enjoy the Hulk already, and would like some "encyclopedic" knowledge at hand. (That would be MY reason.) 2. You don't know much about the Hulk. Maybe you've read recent issues or seen the movie and would like some background history on the character. Both are legitimate reasons to want a Hulk Encyclopedia. This book, however, will help you with neither. The Hulk's history as a character is barely touched on. Long periods such as the gray and merged (or "professor" for Jenkins fans) hulks are barely addressed. Long-standing characters are hardly mentioned, even such characters as Rick Jones, who has been with the book since the beginning! However, this is nothing compared to the history of the Hulk's writers and artists, which is downright insulting. Many

of the long-running creative teams are barely if at all mentioned. Peter David, the writer who received acclaims for his original and innovative 10+ year run on the Hulk is mentioned TWICE. And the second time is both indirectly and degradingly (with a comment to the effect of "the Hulk during the nineties is best forgotten"). Unfortunately, Peter David's frequent and public conflicts with Marvel President Bill Jemas show through here. One can only wonder why else only one of his acclaimed stories made the top ten Hulk comics of all time... But even setting PAD aside, nearly every creative individual who worked on the book is exceedingly shortchanged. What DOES the book cover? Full issue reprints of Bruce Jones recent (and current) run on the Hulk, along with an issue of "The Ultimates." Please don't get me wrong -- I love Bruce Jones' style. Jones is the only thing that brought me back to the book after Peter David left. But the time spent praising his works is excessive to the point of absurdity. Also, pages upon pages of praise are heaped upon the AWFUL Banner mini-series, which completely misjudged the use of each of its characters. Also, much time is again spent on "The Ultimates", and a surprising amount of time is spent on the as-yet-unreleased (as of 8/1/03) Hulk: Gray mini-series. At last check, this series is not even on the Marvel Comics release schedule. Is there ANYTHING the book gets right? If you're looking for movie coverage, you certainly will find that here. Also, it has some intriguing information on the Bill Bixby/Lou Ferrigno Hulk series from the 70's/80's. Unfortunately, this is the extent of the book's redeeming qualities (as far as I could see). So, again, if you're looking for a reference to the Hulk, you've come to the wrong place. Instead, look for Tom DeFalco's excellent book, "Hulk: The Incredible Guide". It feels as if the two books have mysteriously switched names, as DeFalco's book is far more encyclopedic, although only Marvel would consider their own book "Incredible", but I digress... but I think you get the point by now anyways. Just in case, here's your final warning: STAY AWAY FROM THIS BOOK! This has been a public service announcement.

It's times like this that I wish allowed people to issue a zero rating. This book is so poorly researched and written that I can't believe that Marvel gave it the go-ahead. It's not only an insult to the readers intelligence, but it's insulting to writers like Peter David who barely rates a mention. David spent many years writing The Incredible Hulk for Marvel and did what many thought was once impossible...he turned the title into a critically acclaimed and commercially successful comic book. David isn't the only creator given the cold shoulder in this revisionist and ultimately useless "encyclopedia" from Marvel, and this leaves a very bitter taste in the mouth of fans and creators alike. If you want a decent factual book about the Hulk, check out Tom Defalco's Hulk: The Incredible Guide, found elsewhere on . At least Defalco has respect for his fellow creators and the characters

he writes about. Avoid this book at all costs. It made me angry...and you wouldn't like me when I'm angry!

The author, Kit Kiefer, begins by professing (in his own words) "The below-average fanboy's pet monkey's ear mites IGNORE more about the Hulk than I know." My question is, if his knowledge of the subject is so lacking-- which he proves several times over-- just why he was given the job of writing this so-called Hulk Encyclopedia? This is without doubt the worst "guide" to the Hulk ever produced. There are so many inaccuracies, I can't possibly list them all here. But just as an example: The author repeatedly claims that originally the Hulk would appear whenever Bruce Banner fell asleep. Actually, Banner's transformation into the Hulk was triggered by nightfall originally; it was never caused by Banner falling asleep. Reprints of Hulk #1 are not all that difficult to find. (In fact, this book contains a reprint of Hulk #1, which adds a bit of irony to Kiefer's mistake.) Hulk isn't the only character Kiefer proves he's unfamiliar with. He refers to Black Bolt as a "deaf, dumb, and blind kid" who "plays a mean pinball." Black Bolt is not deaf, dumb, blind, nor a kid. No idea what the pinball part's about. I guess it's supposed to be... funny...? Other characters receive similar treatment. It's as if Kiefer was given a list of names and told just to make up something. When Mr. Kiefer isn't getting the basics of the characters wrong, he spends much of the book making irrelevant comments, such as comparing George Bush's IQ to that of an armadillo. Instead of spending so much time trying-- and failing-- to be witty, perhaps the author should have researched the subject of the book. With the wealth of information readily available online, from fansites to message boards, there's no excuse for how inaccurate this book is. Infuriatingly, a number of the Hulk's more notable creators are disrespected by being given little if any mention. Sal Buscema, who was the penciler of Hulk for over 100 issues isn't mentioned even once. Peter David, who wrote 130+ issues, is mentioned by name once... and Kiefer later takes a shot at David's run by saying it was "not the Hulk" (although he makes it vague so that only the fanboys and their pet monkeys would know who the jab is directed at). On the flip side, Bruce Jones, the then-writer of the comic, gets a ton of hype from Kiefer. I understand why this is-- Marvel was seriously pushing the book at the time with the movie (which stunk) about to be released. But still... seeing such praise heaped on a run that I consider by far the worst ever while Peter David and Sal Buscema get disrespected left a bad taste. In all fairness, it'd be wrong to lay the blame entirely at Kiefer's feet; Kiefer credits a number of people for "aiding" him and Marvel didn't prevent it from being printed. I gave this a rating of 1 Star. I'd give it a lower rating if it were possible because it really and truly deserves it. Marvel should not have allowed this to be published. If anyone is interested in

purchasing a guide to the Hulk, I recommend Tom Defalco's Hulk: The Incredible Guide. It's not perfect but, unlike Mr. Kiefer, Tom Defalco's knowledge of the Hulk exceeds what is ignored by a monkey's ear mites.

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