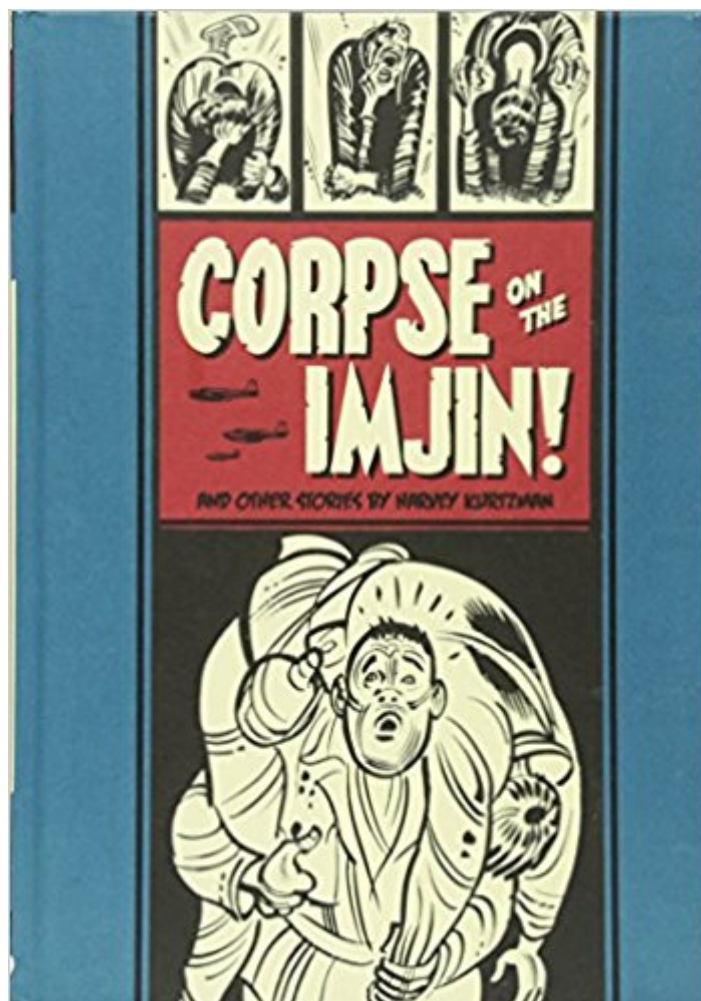


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"Corpse On The Imjin" And Other Stories (The EC Comics Library)



Synopsis

EC reprint series kicks off with war-story masterpieces from the legendary Harvey Kurtzman. The creation of MAD would have been enough to cement Harvey Kurtzman's reputation as one of the titans of American comics, but Kurtzman also created two other comics landmarks: the scrupulously-researched and superbly-crafted war comics Two-Fisted Tales and Frontline Combat. Here were finally war comics without heroic, cigar-chomping sergeants, wisecracking privates from Brooklyn, or cartoon Nazis and "Japs" to be mowed down by the Yank heroes, but an unflinching look at the horror and madness of combat throughout history. Kurtzman employed some of the finest of the EC artists including Jack Davis, John Severin, and Wallace Wood, but his vision came through clearest in the dozen or so stories he both wrote and drew himself, in his uniquely bold, slashing, cartoony-but-dead-serious style ("Stonewall Jackson," "Iwo Jima," "Rubble," "Big Self," and Kurtzman's own favorite, "Air Burst") as well as his vividly colored, narratively-dense covers, all 23 of which are reproduced here in full color in a special portfolio. "Corpse on the Imjin!" is rounded off with a dozen or so stories written and laid out by Kurtzman and drawn by "short-timers," i.e. cartoonists whose contributions to his war books only comprised a story or two including such giants as designer extraordinaire Alex Toth, Marvel comics stalwart Gene Colan, and a pre-Sgt. Rock Joe Kubert... and such unexpected guests as "The Lighter Side of..." MAD artist Dave Berg and DC comics veteran Ric Estrada as well as a rarity: a story by EC regular John Severin inked by Kurtzman. Like every book in the Fantagraphics EC line, "Corpse on the Imjin!" will feature extensive essays and notes on these classic stories by EC experts as well as Kurtzman's stories, as vital, powerful, affecting, and even, yes, modern today as when they were created 60 years ago, are what makes this collection a must-have for any comics reader. Black & white throughout

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review Before he created MAD, Harvey Kurtzman, who began as an artist with EC Comics, edited a couple of the publisher's war comics. Compulsorily hands-on, he made editing include writing and drawing. When all those tasks overloaded him, he called in other artists but held them to fully developed pictorial layouts that he created. In separate contributions, R. C. Harvey and Jared Gardner recount very well Kurtzman's early career and working procedures, including his research to assure that uniforms, weaponry, vehicles, settings, and slang accurately reflected the Korean War, in which most of the stories were set, and the occasional battle from another conflict. Kurtzman's favorite hired hands became MAD stalwarts, but the others represented in this book include such established and future comic-book masters as Reed Crandall, Russ Heath, Joe Kubert, and though he didn't truckle to Kurtzman, Alex Toth. Indeed, the two Toth aviation pieces here are artistically superior to everything else except, perhaps, the 11 Kurtzman-drawn entries, in which he practices a powerful expressionistic realism. Kurtzman's scripts, though verbose and corny, represent war as all-but-unavoidable but brutally death-dealing, necessary but inglorious. Comics fans, connoisseurs, and historians all rave about EC's war comics; this collection potently demonstrates that they ain't just whistlin' Dixie. --Ray Olson

[Kurtzman's] best tales are often narrated by a single soldier, the protagonist's grasp limited by the danger in front of him, with his main hope being to get out alive. Not so much the blood and guts of battle here although Kurtzman had a wonderful ear for sound and the unique talent for putting it into words as the psychological state of warriors, the terrors and recurring sense of futility they experience. --Paul Buhle"

Nice quality throughout this book! The cover is interesting, as it's a hybrid of direct printing on the cover material for spine and back, but with the front graphics printed on a wide paper band that is

wrapped tightly and glued in behind the interior endpaper. Creates a nice texture difference and a slightly raised effect for the front art. All 24 of the interior stories are reproduced in crisp black & white on a quality uncoated paper stock that is off-white rather than bright white, so it's easy on the eyes. In the back, there's a four color section that reproduces 23 of Kurtzman's published covers for Two-Fisted Tales and Frontline Combat at full page size, as well as an interview with Kurtzman, some biographical info about various E.C. creators/artists, and a condensed history of E.C. itself.

This EC collection does an excellent job in portraying Harvey Kurtzman as an artist, a writer and as an editor. Each role Kurtzman tackled for his two war books ("Two-Fisted Tales", "Frontline Combat"), he performed to his elevated standards. It shows in the quality and timelessness of the work; unfortunately, it also shows in the bio and interview segments. It appears that his obsession with detail cost him financial success, as well as limiting the number of artists he could work well with. Some of the text reads like a warning to the Type A personalities among us. Ultimately, the proof is in the printed page. And the pages Kurtzman gave us are raw and filled with humanity. More than a couple of tales will leave the reader feeling sad, angry, frightened...sometimes the ending is so powerful it leaves you lacking a particular feeling, just an uncomfortable numbness. War and conflict are treated with realism and awe within a Kurtzman piece; neither flag waving rah rah nor flower power preaching. It is and always will be a necessary evil for peace. Pretty meaningful philosophy for a 60+ year old comic book, eh?

Another great Fantagraphics book. Excellent Black and White art with great war stories. Not one of the Fantagraphics books of the '...and other stories' series have failed to impress me yet and I highly recommend all of them. All of them also have good researched biographies on back pages of the featured author and or artist. The old style vintage burlap covers are a plus too and look great on a bookshelf!

This terrific collection of Harvey Kurtzman's war stories showcases both stories he wrote for other artists, and stories he drew himself. The real treat here is having the stories he drew collected in one book as well as the pages of the covers he did for both Frontline Combat and Two Fisted Tales. The text pieces are a nice additional as well and make for informative and enjoyable reading. If you never read any EC comics before this a great introduction and a must for any fan of great visual storytelling.

What can possibly be said about his war stories that hasn't already been said over the past 50+ years? They hold up well to today's comic standards, and the messages in them never gets old. These (Frontline Combat, and Two Fisted Tales) are two EC books that should have survived into the New Trend and beyond!

While this book does not present Kurtzman's stories in the colorized versions which they originally appeared, it does, nevertheless, constitute the best & most economical collection of those classic EC tales available to date.

Another great EC book full of the drawings and/or scripting of Harvey Kurtzman. He was a genius, in my opinion. One of my favorite MAD artists, but much more than an just artist. It's just amazing what those guys did! I love this book!!

I have read plenty of EC comics stories; Tales From the Crypt, Weird Science, Shock Suspense Stories, all the other horror and science fiction titles, but I had never read any of their war comics because the subject matter didn't appeal to me. I wish somebody would have told me that this is arguably the best (at least in story) material EC ever produced. Kurtzman's stories are gripping and visceral, and they mostly avoid the somewhat formulaic feel of ECs horror and sci-fi titles. I was surprised at how realistic and tragic these stories are, with art not only from Kurtzman, but from half a dozen other of the greatest artists in comics including Toth, Severin, Kubert, and the immaculate Russ Heath. I have several volumes in this EC series and this volume has so far been by far the most surprising and enjoyable.

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