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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

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Customer Reviews

Hal Foster was forty four years old when he lauched his first Prince Valiant comic strip in February 1937. Little could Foster know that he would still working on the strip until February of 1980. Nearly three decades have passed since Hal Foster's retirement and new Prince Valiant stories continue to be produced. How does one account for a seventy two year old weekly adventure strip that is still going strong?I think the secret to the longevity of Prince Valiant can be found in the strong foundation Hal Foster built in the first two years of the strip. From the very beginning, the strip showcased Foster's extraordinary skills as an illustrator. As a young man, Hal Foster was deeply influenced by the great artists of the Golden Age of American Illustration. By the late 1930's, Golden Age had come to a close but Hal Foster was able to keep the heroic sensibilities of Howard Pyle and N.C. Wyeth alive. Looking back at these seventy year old illustrations, I am struck by their vitality and continued relevance.From 1984 until 2004, Fantagraphics Books joined the Danish Publisher Interpresse in publishing a fifty volume run of all of Hal Foster's Prince Valiant strips. I have collected most of the volumes but some are difficult to find and when they are located, the volumes are often times very expensive. So it was with great pleasure that I learned Fantagraphics Books was going to start republishing the series. This first volume is hard bound and includes a short biographical essay and an insightful 1969 Hal Foster interview. But what really makes this volume so enjoyable is the high quality production values that were used to produce this volume.

This book is astounding. For years I have waited for a decent collection of Prince Valiant. Previous editions were either printed too small or recolored, or were just cheaply reprinted. Fantagraphics, after publishing the whole collection in a smaller (and re-colored) size, have finally gone back and re-printed the series the way it should have been done the first time around.It took me some time to actually read Prince Valiant when I was a kid. I liked the artwork, but hated the way the character looked (what with the Louise Brooks haircut, Val didn't look masculine enough!). I finally read the series as an adult, and boy, was I in for a surprise. Not only is the art gorgeous, the stories are just as good. Really! The first year is just an experimentation, but from the second year onwards (included also in this new edition), it just keeps getting better. And if you have never read PV, you are in for a surprise. The characters actually evolve with the years, they age, Val marries and has kids of his own who also grow up, etc. I mean, there's all you can want in a story: romance, battles,

friendship, love, more fighting, etc., plus Foster's glorious artwork. It took him a whole week to complete just a page of art, but it was worthwhile! And he never used models!!!The color for this new reprint was taken from the engraver's proofs kept in the University of Syracuse, so now we are finally seeing PV the way it should have always been seen and printed.My only complaints (all right, here I go again, but had Fantagraphics gone the extra mile, there would have been no need for complaints) are:- The size.

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