

Contract With God *by* Will Eisner



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Author: Will Eisner

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â?Eisner was not only ahead of his times; the present times are still catching up to him.â?John Updike

A revolutionary novel, *A Contract with God* re-creates the neighborhood of Will Eisner's youth through a quartet of four interwoven stories. Expressing the joy, exuberance, tragedy, and drama of life on the mythical Dropsie Avenue of the Bronx, *A Contract with God* is a monumental achievement, a must in the library of any graphic novel fan.



Reviews of the *Contract With God* by Will Eisner

Malalrajas

I wanted to better acquaint myself with the "graphic novel" genre, so chose this title from a recommended list. I expected prolonged "comic book reading," but got engaging stories. The sepia colored illustrations added to the 1930's feel. Did not expect the nudity after reading the first story, nor domestic violence or rape.

Andronrad

The stories are painfully honest and the artwork full of rich detail. If you don't know Eisner's work, this an outstanding introduction to the master at the height of his talents.

It isn't for kids—it deals with adult subjects and the art doesn't pull any punches.

Mustard Forgotten

I don't like the term Graphic Novel, because I believe it was invented as a marketing tool to somehow elevate modern comics up and away from their predecessors. And really, most of them aren't novels, they are memoir. So if you're going to adopt some fancy literary term, get it right. That said, if you want to know the origins of a great literary art form, you need to know the great Will Eisner. This is an amazing work, from an amazing cartoonist who taught those who came after him all they needed to know. Read and learn.

fetish

Very interesting book to read. Had to get it for a class, after reading it I wanted to find more books by Will Eisner. If you are looking for a quick read then I suggest taking a look at this book.

Maman

Amazing graphic novel. I can't emphasize enough the "novel" aspect, as the (ever universal) themes and the stories reminded me of short stories read in non-graphic novel books.

I just love Eisner's style, graphically. It is full of life.

Living in NYC myself, I can't help thinking I am getting a glimpse of what life was in the Lower East Side at the time.

Fearlessinger

R. Crumb calls it comix. Jules Feiffer called it junk art. Will Eisner gives it the ugly-sounding title of sequential art. A popular name for it now is graphic fiction. What DOES one call the genre in which Eisner was such a pioneer?

Eisner tells us that his goal in *A Contract with God*, a book that has become famous for being the "first" graphic novel, was to create an art work in which there is "no interruption in the flow of narrative because the picture and the text are so totally dependent on each other as to be inseparable" (preface). This is a hard trick to pull off. Equally difficult is the task of telling a coherent story that many readers will (unfavorably) judge using the standards that they apply to novels or short stories. Whatever else a graphic novel is, it doesn't fall in either of those genres. The graphic novel is much more impressionistic, more minimalistic, than even a short short story can afford to be.

Eisner takes the bull by the horns in this ground-breaking book, and puts not one but four separate stories between one cover. His artwork truly is breathtaking, pretty nearly succeeding in the uninterrupted flow he's aiming at. The stories themselves are uneven in quality, and each of them, with the possible exception of the last one ("Cookalein"), tend toward the maudlin in places. Moreover, the most ambitious of them, the title story, seems especially underdeveloped. It may be that the potential depth of the story simply can't be expressed in this genre. At the same time, though, each of them captures, in a way reminiscent of the stories of Isaac Bashevis Singer, something of the flavor of Jewish city life in the 1930s.

All in all, Eisner's book is both an historical landmark in the evolution of junk art, sequential art, graphic fiction, or whatever we eventually call it, as well as a collection of stories that are still very readable and artistically commendable.

Vetalol

One of my life regrets is that I was out of the loop in the early days of the graphic novel. I went from comics to word-only novels and missed out on so much.

A friend of mine has an original of this and told me its history which is why I bought it. I did love it - - and I am not a pro graphics novel person!

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