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The League Of Extraordinary Gentlemen, Vol. 1



Synopsis

London, 1898. The Victorian Era draws to a close and the twentieth century approaches. It is a time of great change and an age of stagnation, a period of chaste order and ignoble chaos. It is an era in need of champions. In this amazingly imaginative tale

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Customer Reviews

Proving that mainstream comics could be infused with past literary/cultural ideals and still be bestsellers, the America's Best Comics imprint took the dilapidated superhero genre and created three vastly entertaining hybrids with Tom Strong, Promethea and Top Ten. Now, a stunning coup de grace is delivered with this masterful pairing of Victorian adventure fiction's greatest characters and the old war-horse of the super-group. With the stunning *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, it would be no exaggeration to say that Alan Moore has produced a near-perfect piece of adventure fiction that is clever, literate, rich with excitement and hard to put down. It's 1898 and at the behest of M, the mysterious head of the secret Service, Champion Bond is dispatched to procure the services of Miss Mina Murray (nee Harker), adventurer Allan Quartermain, "Science-Pirate" Captain Nemo, Henry Jekyll (and his monstrous alter ego) and Hawley Griffin (a.k.a. the Invisible Man). Together, they must combat an insidious threat that will decide supremacy of the London skies, but their success may unleash a far greater threat. With no shortage of action, Moore and O'Neill sustain a high level of suspense, intrigue, mystery and terrific wit that all contribute to an indispensable read. O'Neill's art, so memorable in *Marshal Law*, produces a London filled with vivid,

magnificent architecture and a malevolent atmosphere ripe with thrills and danger. An unmitigated triumph--pure and simple. --Danny Graydon

Acclaimed comics author Moore (*Watchmen*) has combined his love of 19th-century adventure literature with an imaginative mastery of its 20th-century corollary, the superhero comic book. This delightful work features a grand collection of signature 19th-century fictional adventurers, covertly brought together to defend the empire. The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen comprises such characters as Minna Murray (formerly Harker), from Bram Stoker's *Dracula*; Robert Louis Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll (and his monstrous alter ego, Mr. Hyde); and Jules Verne's Captain Nemo, restored to the dark, grim-visaged Sikh Verne originally intended. There's also Hawley Griffin, the imperceptible hero of H.G. Wells's *The Invisible Man*, and Allan Quatermain, the daring adventurer of *King Solomon's Mines* and other classic yarns by H. Rider Haggard. It's 1898, and these troubled adventurers are spread around the globe, in the midst of one pickle or another. Quatermain is found near death, delirious in a Cairo opium den; the perverse Griffin is captured terrorizing an all-girls school (leaving behind a series of mysterious pregnancies); and the gruesome Mr. Hyde is rescued from the mob set to kill him at the end of Stevenson's classic novel. This collection of flawed and gloomy heroes is recruited to fight a criminal mastermind (a notorious 19th-century literary villain) intent on firebombing the East End of London. The book also includes "Allan and the Sundered Veil," a rip-snorting, prose time-travel story starring Quatermain and written in the manner of the 19th-century "penny dreadful." Moore and O'Neill have created a Victorian era *Fantastic Four*, a beautifully illustrated reprise of 19th-century literary derring-do packed with period detail, great humor and rousing adventure. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

The Edwardian return to the League of Extraordinary Gentle is heavy on atmosphere and on characters who have profound effects, but are ultimately incidental to the comic arc. Jinni Nemo's story line involves a somewhat cliched arc turning in the Private Jenny of the "Three Penny Opera", and the background story around Hebbo (who is an obvious incarnation of Aleister Crowley) begins in a fairly obvious manner. The League is much more sedate and, frankly, ineffective compared to its earlier incarnation with more obviously brutal personalities like Hyde and Griffin. Mina's tracing of Mac the Knife is interesting and states true to the idea that she is more or less the only truly useful member of the League. This story seems to more ground work for the two issues, but the it is stylistically very interesting. O'Neill's art is sardonic with just enough hints of the period to carry the

book. Moore's critique of the personalities in pulps continue, but in this more obscure volume it seems to just make the adventures of the league that reported off-page seem unlikely. Those critiques aside, this is still a very interesting comic and better than most that gets released, but it doesn't seem to have same pull as some of Moore's other works on the topic.

In many ways, this feels like the League is running out of steam. Setting the story as an apocalypse in contemporary times, the plot device used to separate Mina from the Orlando and Quartermain does not seem to really work. Quartermain's return to narcotics use is prompted largely off-the-page. Finally, the *dues ex machina* and the Habbo's anti-christ are profoundly disappointing. The League just seemed to work out of steam and actually make less and less sense in the context of itself. The characters outside of Orlando, Allan Quartermain, and Mina Harker seem more tangential. Even the critique of the pulp settings and the British empire seem to fade into a commentary on Acons that seems like weak-tea Thelema. A frustrating book by Moore is given, and Moore's bombs are still better than many comic writer's main runs, but this is a very frustrating book. The contemporary setting does not do much for O'Neil's art as he has less to work with outside of fairly conventional comic art. After 1969 Century book picked the run up a bit, this seems to let it down. IT does mirror some of the New Wave Science Fiction in its concern for flawed characters, but even that length of the comic book really doesn't have time to explore. Hopefully, few League books will have more to say. This feels like Moore wrote himself into an arc that he didn't to which he did not really enjoy the inevitable outcome.

This graphic novel did not translate very well to e-book, in large part because so many pages contained page-wide cells that could not easily be separated for enlarged viewing. My bifocals were barely up to the task of reading the dialogue balloons. Yes, I am that old. Despite that, I enjoyed the book. The story and artwork were good, just painful to view.

Alan Moore begins his Century series in 1910, and the League, while not what it once was, is still a powerful organization of the British Government. They investigate murders and a shadowy cult they believe is planning a global catastrophe. The highlight of 1910 is the coming-of-age tale of Janni Dakkar. Seeing her evolution as a character was a thrill. In addition to her, Moore has written a ton of music into this novel through his side-characters that do a good job of illustrating the themes of the novel, though they can be a bit heavy-handed. And while the literary references have started to get more obscure, they're still fairly recognizable. The main problem with 1910 is that it's too short.

And I don't just mean that as 'I wanted it to go on forever'. I mean it as 'Moore rushes through several plot points too fast for them to be satisfying'. Like Watchmen and the other League novels, Moore ended this story with a companion piece called 'Minions of the Moon'. This piece provides plenty of interesting back story on the characters, along with it's own worthwhile League Adventure in it's own right. Unfortunately, Moore decided to write it at a Nathaniel Hawthorne level of overly-complicated-and-pretentious writing. Still I wouldn't recommend that you skip it. All in all, I thought this book was enjoyable and worth the money, but they were downhill afterwards, so if you don't like this one, don't bother with 1969 and 2009.

Alan Moore finishes the LOEG for now. They find the bad guy, but rather than win, a more powerful character comes along. As you read, it's evident that Moore didn't like Harry Potter. The first volume in this series was good. It sets up the story, leaving room for sequels in the hunt for Haddo, the Anti Christ. 1969, rather than being much of a sequel was more of a parody of 1960s sexual revolution. 2009 picks the story up again, we get a story largely settled on Orlando, and a conclusion that doesn't make much sense. Don't get me wrong, this is much better than 1969 in the trilogy of this story. But it still is missing whatever that intangible is that made the first two LOEG story lines so good. For me, I think Allan Moores heroes are just best in the 1900s. But it's Moore so if he releases further stories, I know I'll buy it

This is my first stab at reading a graphic novel (I'm considering using it for a class I teach but wanted to see what it was like). I found it easy to read, enjoyable, and stimulating as a NeoVictorian novel. As a newbie, I didn't know all the conventions and sometimes didn't know how to interpret the pictures, but overall I enjoyed it--and I think my students would love it.

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