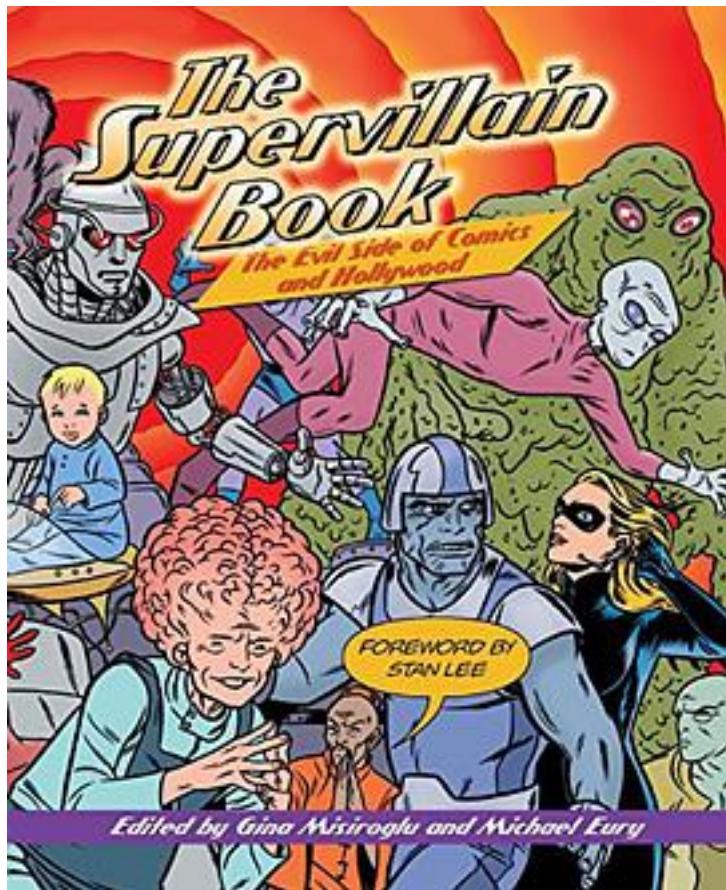


# The Supervillain Book



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Superhuman strength. Virtual invulnerability. Motivated to defend the world from evildoers. A secret identity. And a penchant for looking good in long underwear. These are the traits that define the quintessential superhero whose impossible feats graced the pages of comic books during comics' Golden and Silver Ages. They are Batman,

Captain America, Captain Marvel, Spider-Man, Superman, Wonder Woman, and dozens of others--with names like Ant-Man, Daredevil, Hawkman, the Human Torch, the Spectre, the Spirit, and Sub-Mariner--whose death-defying acts and altruistic motives have come to characterize heroism for generations of fans. By the end of the twentieth century the real world had become a darker place, necessitating a new kind of hero. Popular heroes of yesteryear were reinvented to meet the demands of a new age. The popular culture witnessed the rise of the anti-hero, the fresh breed of brazen, gritty adventurer that includes the likes of Elektra, the Punisher, and Wolverine. Heroes that aren't typically defined as super--Buffy, Hellboy, Sandman, and Spawn--became associated with the word because they possessed superhuman qualities. But they were often nearly paralyzed with angst, doubt, and disillusionment, identifying with their audience in a way reminiscent of existential sixties superheros like Spider-Man. With 150 full-color illustrations, including dozens of classic comic covers, "The Superhero Book is the ultimate A-Z compendium of everyone's favorite superheroes and their mythology, sidekicks, villains, love interests, superpowers, and modus operandi. Almost 300 entries cover the best-loved and historically significant comic book, movie, television, and novel superheroes--mainstream and counterculture, famous and forgotten, best and worst--including classics like Green Lantern and Plastic Man, cult favorites like the Rocketeer and Madman, and timeless entities like the X-Men. Each significant era of the superhero is explored--the Golden Age (1938-1954), the Silver Age (1956-1969), the Bronze Age (1970-1979), and the Modern Age (1980-present)--providing the reader with a perspective of the hero over the twentieth century and beyond. With "The Superhero Book, you'll be reminded why you love them (Who wouldn't want to get their hands on Wonder Woman's lasso (or just one day?)), why they were chosen to save the world ("We shall call you Captain America, son. Because like you--America shall gain the strength and will to safeguard our shores"), what they do for their day jobs (world traveler Oliver Queen...Hollywood star and America's sweetheart Linda Turner...billionaire industrialist Bruce Wayne...college student and free-lance photographer Peter Parker), and their very human "faux pas (As the Flash, he could outrun the wind, but as alter ego Harry Allen he was hard-pressed to show up for a date on time). In an uncertain age, what we need is a superhero. Use our book to find the right one.

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