Hulk: The Incredible Guide by Tom Defalco

A Great Guide

Hulk: The Incredible Guide captures the full legend of this Marvel Comics superhero, who has been thrilling fans for more than 40 years. Discover the secret of the Hulks superhuman powers, and of the weird multiple personalities lurking within Bruce Banners fractured Psyche.

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My Personal Review:

With the release of the Incredible Hulk this year, the Hulk looms larger than ever. DK, in their popular character guides, has updated the Hulk files for our time frame. Based on the 2003 edition, this book includes Hulk in the Late 200s, from Hulk Gray to Planet Hulk. Exactly what does the book hold for Hulk-o-philes?

DeFalco and Manning give us a look at our favorite changling decade by decade. As an introduction, we are treated to an examination of his origins, his supporting cast, and powers. The 1960s saw the Hulk first appear in print (March 1963), disappear after 6 issues, then reappear in Tales To Astonish and never look back. Including good quality scans of classic covers (Fantastic Four 12, Hulk 1, Incredible Hulk Special 1, and Amazing Spider man King Size Special 3), the sections focus on characters, biographies, and short summaries of story lines. The 1970s gives us the Defenders, and Hulk 200. Of course, we cant forget the Rampaging Hulk black and white magazine or the Bill Bixby TV show either. The 1980s found She Hulk 1 appearing for the first time, and Betty Ross marrying Bruce Banner in 1986. The 1990s found the Hulk changed, and Betty Ross/Banner dying. John Byrne and Ron Garney revamped the character late in the decade. The Hulk in the 2000s emerged under the hand of Bruce Jones and John Romita Jr and Tom
Palmer. The `new Hulk was more savage, and the book was ended in 2002 until the House of M, Planet Hulk and the Red Hulk burst onto the scene.

For Hulk fans who want to see the continuity from decade to decade, this is a good book to read. Each major villain/character is profiled alongside pertinent storylines. Art by Trimpe (gotta love that styel), Romita, Kirby, Ditko, Perez, Buckler, Jae Lee, Jim Steranko, Lee Weeks, and Sal Buscema knock readers out. The real game is identifying the art used and the issues they come from! To make it more fun, call it a drinking game...

I do have one complaint about the art though. There are certain pages (139, cover, 106, 41, 34) with art that just doesn't sit right. Perhaps it's the cartoony/over exaggerated style, or just that the Hulk seems too powerful. The Hulk varies from a strong looking individual by Kirby to a massive individual as drawn by Steranko and Weeks. Which one do you like?

Good book, but perhaps it's just hard to pigeonhole a man who turns green when he's angry that inspires a wide range of representations. I guess we just have to read the comics and magazines.

Tim Lasiuta

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