An American storyteller, like Ray Bradbury, like O. Henry.—Neil Gaiman

With an unparalleled eye for stories and expressive illustration, Will Eisner, the master and pioneer of American comics art, presents graphic fictions' greatest celebration of the Big Apple. No illustrator evoked the melancholy duskiness of New York City as expressively as Eisner, who knew the city from the bottom up. This new hardcover presents a quartet of graphic works (New York, The Building, City People Notebook, and Invisible People) and features what Neil Gaiman describes as tales as brutal, as uncaring as the city itself. From ancient buildings barnacled with laughter and stained with tears to the subways, humorless iron reptiles, clacking stupidly on a webbing of graceful steel rails, Will Eisners New York includes cameo appearances by the author himself; several new illustrations sketched by Eisner, posthumously inked by Peter Poplaski; and three previously unpublished out-takes—a treasure for any Eisner fan, and sure to become a collectible. Introduction by Neil Gaiman.

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**My Personal Review:**
Will Eisner (1917-2005) is considered one of the most influential writers establishing the graphic novel as an art form. This volume collects four of Eisner's major works about New York: New York: The Big City, The Building, City People Notebook, and Invisible People.

Neil Gaiman who wrote the very good Introduction calls Eisner a "remarkable observer of life in the Big Apple". Gaiman adds that this is by no means a Valentine to the city. "Eisner's eyes are wide open to the tragedies of city living -- just as they are to its glories. It's no Valentine, but
it is, perhaps, a love-song to a city that he loves for its ups and downs, its terrors and its wonders."

This is a book that rewards looking more than reading (the text is sometimes quite leaden). But the images! Delinquent teenagers pulling a fire alarm for kicks are caught in a building fire on the very next page. Eisner's human characters play exaggerated roles, but they seem alive. The buildings also seem to have a life of their own.

Eisner writes: "The big city as it is seen by its inhabitants is the real thing. The true picture is in the crevices on its floors and around the smaller pieces of its architecture, where daily life swirls."

In "The Building", Eisner describes a landmark building that is torn down, and a new structure that is erected in its place. He tells the stories of four people whose lives were linked to the old building; its demolition leaves "an ugly cavity and a residue of psychic debris". But, of course, the new building will accumulate its own stories in time.

A happy ending in Eisner's world. And, for me, an entirely different way to understand one of my favorite cities.

Robert C. Ross 2008

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Will Eisners New York: Life in the Big City (Will Eisner Library) by Will Eisner - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!