

EXHIBIT D

LEAVE 'EM WANTING MORE

BY JOHN MORROW

The volume you hold in your hands presents stellar work by two of my favorite artists of all time. Just the same, it's a bittersweet experience to pen the introduction to this book, because I had to go back and re-read the stories—and they always leave me wanting more.

The first artist represented is Jack Kirby, who, together with Stan Lee, ushered in the Marvel Age back with *Fantastic Four* #1 in 1961. But Kirby's career had flourished long before that, and his first big hit was in co-creating (with partner Joe Simon) Captain America in 1941. Prior to his 1960s run, Kirby had only drawn the first dozen of the Star-Spangled Avenger's appearances in the 1940s, but the course was set. Kirby came back to the character two decades later without missing a beat, taking a hero who could've easily been seen as passé in those socially-relevant 1960s, and injecting a new sense of vitality to him. But not long after penciling the stories in this collection, Kirby left Marvel, and left me, and countless other readers, wishing for just one more 1960s Kirby *Cap* story.

The other artist here is Jim Steranko; musician, magician, designer, publisher, escape artist, and not least of all, comic book artist. While the actual number of comics stories he's drawn is few compared to a prodigious creator like Kirby, his innovations in the field are many, and several are on display here. One thing that's always stuck in my mind is the way Steranko portrayed the Hulk in issue #110. The character's essentially there just as a vehicle to get Rick Jones into the storyline, but in only 20 panels, Jim manages to convey the wild, rampaging nature of ol' Greenskin better than any other artist to this day, including Kirby. (Note his use of rear views, severe angles, and cropping on the Hulk to keep the reader off-balance as the city gets destroyed; it's really disconcerting that we never get a good straight-on shot of the character until he finally departs. Steranko kept us wanting to see more the whole time.)

On the surface, these two comic book legends would seem to be polar opposites of one another—Kirby's all about power, Steranko's all about atmosphere. But upon closer inspection, it's clear these two gents actually work well together in this collection, even if they're not in the same issues. (Although sharp-eyed readers will spot some Steranko faces on the Nick Fury figures in the Kirby stories—probably done to carry through the look that Steranko had established in his popular S.H.I.E.L.D. series running around the same time.)

Here are two men, separated by decades in age, but both with similar storytelling sensibilities, if not similar styles. Both men really know how to tell a story well. They don't do it the same way; with Kirby, it's effortless and transparent. You get the sense that it just flows out of him, like water from a faucet. With Steranko, it's much more labored, more intentional, but equally as potent. Sit and read any issue in this volume, and see if you aren't totally absorbed in the story by the last page. And see if reading one story doesn't (you guessed it) leave you wanting more.

There is an unintentional pairing of the two presented here. Sandwiched in between Steranko's second and third story is a Kirby fill-in (issue #112). Legend has it

that Jim was running late with the final installment of the tale, and as insurance against missing the deadline, Stan Lee called up Kirby and asked him to pencil an issue that'd fill 20 pages, without actually advancing the plot. Steranko swears he got his pages in by deadline, but I guess Marvel didn't want to waste a Kirby story they'd already paid for. So, the Kirby story ran in #112, complete with some admirable last-minute inks by George Tuska, and Steranko left the strip after the following issue, never to return. Once again, we got just a taste—this time, of Steranko on Cap—and were left wanting more, more, more.

Of course, we shouldn't overlook the contributions of the inkers on the stories presented here—and what a mixed bag Marvel used! Golden Age great Syd Shores, who worked on the original 1940s incarnation of Cap, continued his inking run from the previous two issues. His fussy, heavily rendered inks seem to be in direct opposition to Kirby's bold, powerful, in-your-face penciling, but after removing him from the book for a few issues, Stan Lee reassigned him, no doubt due to fan response. In between Shores' stints was Dan Adkins, who turned in inks very faithful to Kirby's pencils of the period. Then, in #106, we're treated to the lush work of Frank Giacoia, with (in my opinion) just the right balance of spotting blacks and slick brushwork. But it's only for one issue; once again, I wanted (and didn't get) more Giacoia, who, to my mind, supplied the finest inking Kirby gets in this volume.

It's not, however, the finest inking in this book; that honor has to go to Joe Sinnott. It's here, inking Steranko's first two Cap tales, that you get, for my money, one of the best pairings of penciler and inker in comics history, ever. While Tom Palmer did a fine job on the final Steranko story, Sinnott's inks add an extra degree of polish to Jim's inventive layouts. After seeing Joe ink the first two installments of Steranko's story arc, I couldn't wait to see him ink the final one. True to form for this collection, it didn't happen.

Add Stan Lee's quick, snappy patter to all this visual wonderment, and you've got one heck of a collection of stories. Sure, there's a few plot holes big enough to drive a Hydra vehicle through, but this is arguably the best run the good Captain ever had in his 65 years of existence—and unfortunately, the end of the line for both Kirby and Steranko on the strip.

Don't get me wrong, I'm thankful for the fabulous stories I *did* get to read here. But if you're like me, once you've finished this book, you'll still want more.

Kirby's no longer with us; if someone could just convince Steranko to do one last Cap story...



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John Morrow founded TwoMorrows Publishing in 1994 with the release of the first issue of The Jack Kirby Collector, his magazine celebrating the life and career of the prodigious comics creator. Still going strong after 45 issues and five softcover collections, the Kirby Collector is the flagship of the TwoMorrows magazine line, which includes Alter Ego, Draw!, Write Now, and Back Issue, all dedicated to bringing new life to comics fandom.