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Hark! A Vagrant



Synopsis

FEATURED ON MORE THAN TWENTY BEST-OF LISTS, INCLUDING TIME, , E! AND PUBLISHERS WEEKLY! Hark! A Vagrant is an uproarious romp through history and literature seen through the sharp, contemporary lens of New Yorker cartoonist and comics sensation Kate Beaton. No era or tome emerges unscathed as Beaton rightly skewers the Western world's revolutionaries, leaders, sycophants, and suffragists while equally honing her wit on the hapless heroes, heroines, and villains of the best-loved fiction. She deftly points out what really happened when Brahms fell asleep listening to Liszt, that the world's first hipsters were obviously the Incroyables and the Merveilleuses from eighteenth-century France, that Susan B. Anthony is, of course, a "Samantha," and that the polite banality of Canadian culture never gets old. Hark! A Vagrant features sexy Batman, the true stories behind classic Nancy Drew covers, and Queen Elizabeth doing the albatross. As the 500,000 unique monthly visitors to harkavagrant.com already know, no one turns the ironic absurdities of history and literature into comedic fodder as hilariously as Beaton.

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Customer Reviews

• [Beaton's comics] are witty reinventions of literary and historical figures navigating modern times . . . A high-minded version of The Far Side that is at once of-the-moment and timeless. •

• DEBORAH VANKIN, The Los Angeles Times on Kate Beaton • Simply put, this is the most well-drawn, funniest comic that I've read in a while. • • ADRIENNE SO, Wired on Kate

Beaton • [Beaton's] neat linework and terrific grasp of simple caricature and facial expression sells

a lot of the best strips, including Sasaki Kojiro meeting an undignified end, Jane Austen and Nikola Tesla being pestered by their fans, and Lord Byron muttering "Bitches, man" to a grieving Percy Bysshe Shelley. A-â • â •The Onion, The A.V. Club on Kate Beaton

KATE BEATON grew up in Nova Scotia, Canada. She earned a bachelor's degree in history and anthropology at Mount Allison University. She presently resides in Brooklyn, New York.

Hark! A Vagrant is by far one of my favorite webcomic series. It is engrossing and very entertaining, the characters always seem to reflect who you'd expect them to be except they don't take themselves too seriously. Another plus is you don't even need to know the historical figures, in fact I enjoy it more when I don't! Much like XKCD, a strip from Hark! A Vagrant frequently sends me to wikipedia to read the full bio of historical figures. I feel I've learned more about history from this webcomic than my 7+ years of history classes in school. I sincerely hope many people buy Kate Beaton's book in support of her comic.

I am not as knowledgeable about history as some of Kate Beaton's readers, but I know a great deal about the literature she references. I must say, she hits all the most ridiculous points -- from Charlotte and Emily Bronte's love of screwed-up men, to the absurdities of King Lear, to the war between Watson, Stupid Watson, and Gay Watson. To be sure, Beaton's comics have often led me to look up historical figures about which I knew little or nothing, particularly those whose race or gender cut them out of the traditional narrative. For instance, I wouldn't have known about Rosalind Franklin's work on the structure of DNA, or Matthew Henson's contribution to the first (white) expedition to the North Pole, without Beaton -- not to mention several stories which only came to my attention upon reading other Beaton comics which do not appear in this book. In short: while most of these comics are available for free on the interwebs, I think it's totally worthwhile to send Kate Beaton some cash moneys for her work in disseminating history and literature to the masses.

I've been pointing at Kate Beaton's awesome comics -- usually about historical/literary topics, often with unexpected contemporary topical references, always with a smart, feminist sense of humor -- for a few years now, but I don't think I've actually written about her at length. (If you've completely missed her work, it's no shame -- but just go google for her name and this title, and you'll find her website, where you can read dozens of her awesome webcomics. Then you can come back and buy this book, which you'll want to own.) This is the second book of her work, after the

self-published "Never Learn Anything From History" last year, but it's much larger (168pp vs 68pp), contains a bunch of notes on the comics from Beaton, and is vastly more widely available, so **HARK! A VAGRANT** is definitely the book-length Kate Beaton object of choice. (If you're confused about the title of the book; it's also the title of her website, and derives from one of her early comics. That still doesn't make a lot of sense -- it's not obviously something to raise up as the centerpiece of a webcomic -- but randomness and serendipity is always important in both humor and comics.) You should read Kate Beaton comics -- and buy this book -- because she's smart and witty and deeply knowledgeable about a lot of random literary/historical stuff, and she's wonderful at combining those three things in unexpected and entertaining ways. And because her loose, expressive drawings are nearly as much fun as her jokes. And because she's one-third of the brain trust behind *Strong Female Characters*. And because, if this book is a success, we should see her do more with her other kinds of comics -- the slice-of-life strips with her family, the bizarre *MS Paint* strips, the sullen *Mystery Solving Teens*, and especially the rare, sweet strips about talking to her younger self.

Author's sense of "humor" is childish and simply NOT funny at all. It's been a huge waste of my money and time, even if I only managed to force myself to read half of the c--p!

This book is great. Not only is it an exhaustive collection of a very funny webcomic, but the book itself is high quality and well printed. One of my favorite things about *Hark! A Vagrant* is the thinking and personal growth that it stimulates. Though most of the jokes are enjoyable without knowing details of the historical topic, they have on many occasions encouraged me to do a bit of research to get the full story. The author's humor writing style is superb as well, as she smoothly slips from straitlaced to crass and back, all to great comic effect.

Much of this is rather amusing, though some of it missed the mark for me. Have to be honest, I did want more Napoleon. Ah well.

Kate Beaton's comics are so wonderful that they should probably be illegal. You will fall in love with her drawings--especially the finely nuanced facial expressions. Beaton's characters range from the ridiculous to hilarious interpretations of historical characters and events. Pretty much everything about this book is completely awesome. If you put it on your coffee table, you will probably live a happier life and have more friends (or at least cooler ones with more a sophisticated sense of humor). You will have precisely zero regrets about buying this book. I have not been paid or unduly

influenced to write this review... I genuinely love Kate Beaton's work this much.

Bought this as a gift. Great condition! He loved it!

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