

[PDF] Superman: The High-Flying History Of America's Most Enduring Hero

Larry Tye - pdf download free book

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Description:

A Letter from Author Larry Tye

Larry Tye's previous books include , , , and the bestselling .

What does America's choice of heroes say about them and about us? What better way to understand modern-day heroes, I thought, than to look at Superman, who tapped into the American psyche more effectively than anyone and has lasted longer than all of them.

I had grown up reading Superman comics and Superman remains comfort food for my spirit, but there was clearly a serious story here. To understand why the Man of Tomorrow is as popular today as in my boyhood I did what any journalist would: I interviewed hundreds of historians, clerics, and

psychologists. I read the unpublished memoirs of Jerry Siegel and Jack Liebowitz, Superman's creator and patron. I reviewed yellowing coroner's reports on George Reeves, the TV Man of Steel. I began by worrying if I would have anything new to say. I ended by worrying how to fit into a manuscript all I have to say on this hero who is as much a part of our communal DNA as Huckleberry Finn.

What surprised me? For starters, there was the wrenching story of his nurturing at the hands of a parade of young creators yearning for their own absent fathers. The first was Jerry Siegel, a child of Lithuanian immigrants who was devastated when his dad died during a robbery. While there was no bringing back his father, Jerry Siegel did bring to life a hero able not just to run fast and jump high but to fend off a robber. Who would publish this fanciful tale? How about Jack Liebowitz, a hard-headed comic-book entrepreneur whose own dad died just after he was born and who needed a champion? Not just Superman but his rivals, too, were more than they seemed. Superman stood up to Hitler, Stalin, and the Ku Klux Klan long before America did. And even his most fervent fans may not know this about the Man of Steel: He is Jewish.

Superman's enduring power starts with the simplicity of his story. Little Orphan Annie and Oliver Twist remind us how compelling a foundling's tale can be, and Superman, the sole survivor of a doomed planet, is a super-foundling. The love triangle connecting Clark Kent, Lois Lane, and Superman has a side for everyone, whether you are the boy who can't get the girl, the girl pursued by the wrong boy, or the conflicted hero. And he was not just any hero, but one with the very powers we would have: the strength to lift planets, the speed to outrun a locomotive, the gift of flight. Superpowers, however, are just half the equation. More essential is knowing what to do with them, and nobody has a more instinctual sense than Superman of right and wrong. He sweeps in to solve our problems, no thank-you needed. He descended from the heavens to help us discover our humanity. Superman has always embodied our best selves and our collective aspirations. The more jaded the era, the more we have been lured back to his elemental familiarity.

Review "Engaging, fun, inspiring—like the Man of Steel."—The Huffington Post

"Powerful . . . wonderfully readable."—*The Plain Dealer*

"A story as American as Superman himself . . . The best origin story pulsing through *Superman* is not the one about the Krypton-to-Kansas alien baby, but rather the one about the superhero's mortal and sometimes star-crossed creators."—*The Washington Post*

"Fun, enlightening pop-cultural history."—*Kirkus Reviews*

"A rich history full of lively heroes and villains, much like a comic book. Essential for Superman fans."—*Library Journal* (starred review)

"[A] comprehensive, definitive history."—*Publishers Weekly*

"Action and adventure . . . comedy . . . tragedy . . . mythology . . . Larry Tye captures it all! As complete a history of the Man of Steel as ever published, this book is a deeply documented yet anecdotally told tale that transports us from the bedroom of a daydreaming teenager in 1930's Cleveland, Ohio, to the collapsing towers of the planet Krypton, from the wheatfields of middle America to the hearts of every American, with a story that is entertaining, revealing, and shocking, yet crammed with historical information. If you liked reading *The Amazing Adventures of Cavalier &*

Clay, wait till you read Larry Tye's true story behind it all!"—Michael Uslan, author of *The Boy Who Loved Batman* and executive producer of seven Batman movies

"I only wish I had the good fortune of reading Larry Tye's book before I made *Superman*, the problem being that if I had, then the motion picture part of Superman's history would not have been in Mr. Tye's book. Having said that, the reason I found Tye's book incredibly informative is his sense of my bible in making the film—that is, verisimilitude. Reality overcame everything."—Richard Donner, director of *Superman*

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