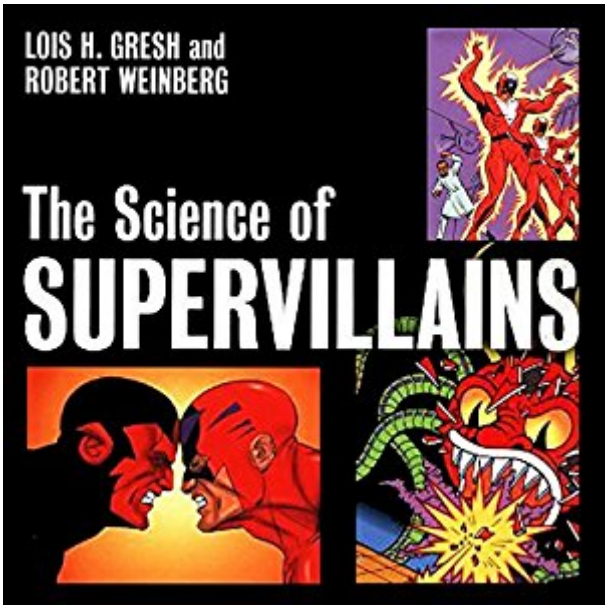
The Science Of Supervillains



Synopsis

The authors of The Science of Superheroes now reveal the real genius of the most evil geniuses. Ever wonder why comic book villains, such as Spiderman’s bionic archenemy Dr. Octopus or the X-Men’s eternal rival Magneto, are so scary and so much fun? It’s not just their diabolical talent for confounding our heroes, it’s their unrivalled techno-proficiency at creating global mayhem that keeps comic book fans captivated. But is any of the science actually true? In The Science of Supervillains, authors Lois Gresh and Bob Weinberg present a highly entertaining and informative look at the mind-boggling wizardry behind the comic book world’s legendary baddies. Whether it’s artificial intelligence, weapons systems, anti-matter, robotics, or magnetic flux theory, this fun, fact-filled book is a fascinating excursion into the real-world science animating the genius in the comic book world’s pantheon of evil geniuses. Lois Gresh (Scottsville, NY) and Bob Weinberg (Oak Forest, IL) are the authors of the popular Science of Superheroes.NOTE: Some editorial changes to the original text have been made with the author’s approval.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Reviewer: Brian Wilkinson, for ComiX-Fan.comOverall Rating: Great!In a book that bills itself as the Science of the Supervillains readers have to feel right from the first page that this is an all-or-nothing kind of book. Thankfully writers Robert Weinberg and Lois H. Gresh have stepped up to the plate to deliver a funny and insightful look into the mind and heart(less?) of some of the greatest villains that have graced the pages of our beloved funny book medium for more than 70 years.This is a project that could have easily gone astray or been caught up in the many nuances of cunning and deceit

that the countless villains have put our heroes through. Instead they take the cream of the crop, including baddies like Magneto, Lex Luthor, Doc Octopus and several others to show some of the more interesting attempts they've made to make the world a worse place to live.The Luthor chapter starts the book off with a decent look at the man who would become Superman's main villain. That's really saying a lot if you think about it considering how powerful and unstoppable the Man of Steel really is. Yet everything Luthor has tried has failed. Instead of really getting into why Luthor sucks or how Superman may have just gotten lucky, Gresh and Weinberg dissect the science the villains used in the books.Intentionally or not, this may be a bit of a nod in the direction of the writers and editors behind the book. Back in the day, the two major companies, Marvel and DC, both had their own approaches to how science was used in the comics. Julius Schwartz over at DC maintained that the science had to be believable no matter what. It didn't necessarily have to exist, but so long as an attempt was made to reveal how things were being done, that seemed enough.

Last year, I reviewed Gresh and Weinberg's previous book, The Science of Superheroes and I wasn't all that impressed with it. Which, as I noted in the review, is weird. As I'm pretty sure you're aware by now, I am a big fan of science and I loves me my superheroes. Putting those two things together should, by all rights, be just the book for me.Unfortunately, I was less than thrilled with it. I found it kind of clunky, dry, and generally dismissive of comic books due to their misuse of science. I couldn't fault them for the topics they chose - they were interesting enough. Things like the problems with characters who grow and shrink, or why the original origin for Superman made no sense - these were the things that are valid targets if you're looking for bad science, but Gresh and Weinberg were really only looking for bad science.I got this book, and I had hoped that they'd learned from their previous one. Unfortunately, they haven't learned all their lessons. To their credit, they did stop focusing on comic book history, which was a big part of why the first book dragged the way it did, but their overall attitude towards comic books and science is pretty much the same. Only this time, they're looking at the supervillains.As much as I've always wanted to be a superhero, there have been plenty of times when I've wanted to join the other side as well.I mean, how many times have you wanted to don some goggles and a lab coat, stand on your parapet (you do have a parapet, right?), backlit by lightning as you scream, "The FOOLS! They called me mad? I WILL SHOW YOU MADNESS! HA! HAHAHAHA!! HAAAAAAHAHAHAHAHA!!"Or something like that.

In theory, The Science of Supervillains, the sequel to Lois Gresh & Robert Weinberg's 2002 The Science of Superheroes, is the perfect formula: Nefarious comic book baddies explicated by

real-world physical laws - Mad scientists with real science. In theory, on paper, it’s a lock. Of course, in theory, on paper (chapter one, to be exact), time travel is also entirely possible; it is just a matter of actually creating something that can do the job. That’s where things get tricky, both for time travel and The Science of Supervillians: creating a concrete object to live up to the theory.To be fair, fans of Superheroes will not be disappointed by Supervillains. A number of notable, nasty nemeses are named and needled, from Magneto to Lex Luthor to the Anti-Monitor to Dr. Doom (whom they have the bad habit of continually calling "Dr. von Doom," as if he will insist they stand on ceremony). But, those readers who require more of the books they read - those for whom the style of thing such as, say, alliteration is empty without substance to back it - will find the book a little erratic. At one moment, it treats the characters and the pseudo-science behind them quite carefully and insightfully; at another moment, though, the writers will brush off compelling aspects of a given villain and simply go for what in baseball is called "the easy out." It is as if, in the case of something like their fourth chapter, the collaborators said to each other, "Let’s do a bit on aerodynamics and flight. Is there an easy villain we can use as a segue?" And so, the Vulture gets his own chapter.There is an inconsistent love for the comic book medium and superhero/villain genre fueling this enterprise.

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