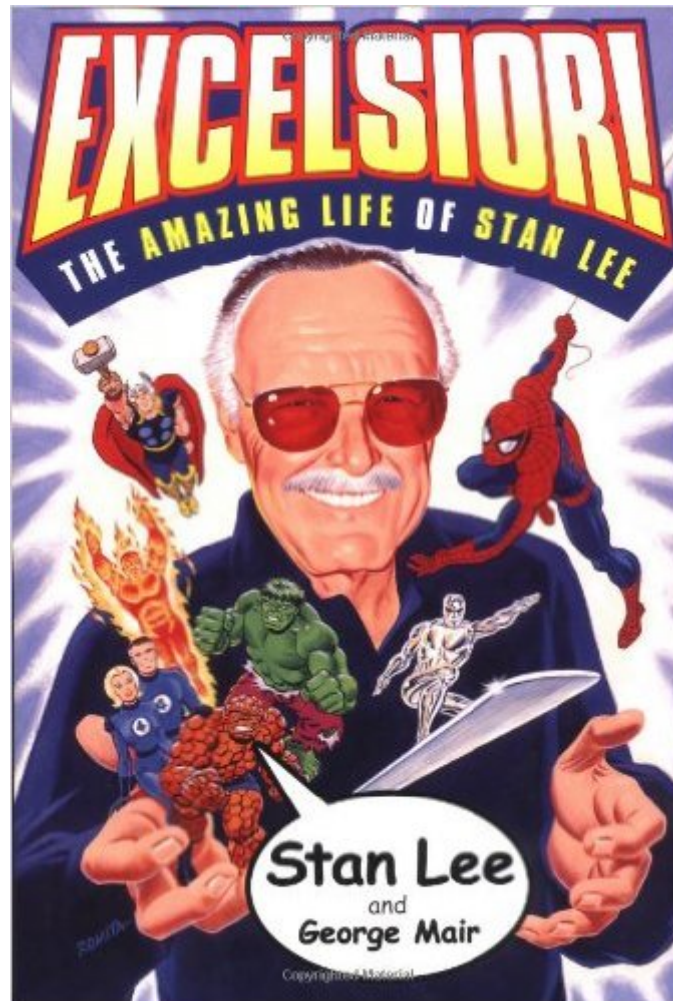


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# Excelsior!: The Amazing Life Of Stan Lee



## Synopsis

The man behind Spider-Man, The X-Men, The Incredible Hulk, and a legion of other superheroes tells his own amazing story in a book packed with punch, humor, anecdotes, and a gallery of never-before-seen photographs. Stan Lee is the most legendary name in the history of comicbooks. The leading creative force behind the rise of Marvel Comics, he brought to life some of the world's best-known heroes and most infamous villains. His stories, featuring super-heroes who struggled against personal hang-ups and bad guys who possessed previously unseen psychological complexity, added wit and subtlety to a field previously locked into flat portrayals of good vs. evil. Lee put the human in the super-human. In the process, he created a new mythology for the twentieth century. In this treasure trove of marvelous memories, Stan tells the story of his life with the same inimitable wit, energy, and offbeat spirit that he brought to the world of comicbooks. He moves from his impoverished childhood in Manhattan to his early days writing comicbooks, followed by military training films during World War II, through the rise of the Marvel empire in the 1960s to his recent adventures in Hollywood. The story of a man who earned respect by blazing new creative trails in a storytelling form once dismissed as just for kids, *Excelsior!* is an inspirational story about following one's vision, no matter the odds. Yet it's also the story of how some of the most exciting and memorable characters in the pop-culture universe came to thrill a generation.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Excelsior! The Amazing Life of Stan Lee" has a cover with Lee surrounded by some of his famous Marvel comics creations (or co-creations depending on where you stand on the whole Lee/Kirby

debate), but you may be surprised and/or dismayed to find that only six of the twenty-one chapters are devoted to the glory years at Marvel. Much of what is contained within Lee has talked about before, which means that by now the stories of how the Fantastic Four, Spider-Man, the X-Men and the rest came to be born have been refined and polished to the point you really wish he would provide more of the details. "Excelsior!" starts from Lee's childhood in Manhattan to those early days when he stumbled into writing comic books, his work as a "playwright" in World War II, and then through the rise of the Marvel empire and beyond. The focus of the book is on the narrative recollections of Lee and if you have ever had an opportunity to hear Stan "The Man" Lee do a lecture or speak at a convention, then you are familiar with his conversational style (I liked it when Stan would pretend to be Clark Kent, take off his glasses and have people wondering where Clark went--plus, the man's autograph is always legible). One thing that struck me was how much Lee was affected by the Great Depression, especially since he often laments over the value of the comic books he created but never bothered to collect. Yet it is also clear that Lee is not driven by money but more by love of family and work, two subjects he talks about with equal passion. He does take pains to try and address the issues of his infamous rifts with artists Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko, and whether you believe his side of the story or not he certainly bears no animosity towards either man.

4.5 stars, really, I wish there were more examples of his work. I am one of those people who loved the Marvel Age of Comics. While many people say they read Spider-Man, the Hulk or the Fantastic Four, even as a kid in the sixties, I would say I read Stan Lee, Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko...and a few others. When they left, I left. Though the years I had heard about and read about many behind the scenes stories about Marvel. It was hard to give credence to many of them and I always wanted to find out Stan Lee's story. Here it is. Here Stan Lee tells his story. And what an enjoyable story it is. Mr. Lee tells of his early years, his years in the service during WW2, how he meet his wife and how he started working for Martin Goodman, owner of Timely (later Marvel) Comics. The major part of the story is the creation of the Marvel Age of Comics. Stan Lee, born Stan Lieber, describes how he almost left the occupation of writing comic books. An occupation that was not well respected. But Stan stayed and broke the conventions of book characters. Stan discusses such stories, how he "snuck" his first Spider-Man story into Amazing Fantasy #15 after the publisher turned it down. We learn what was in his mind when he created the Fantastic Four, Hulk, and Thor. For me the most important parts involved the Marvel Method of creating comics and his relationships with Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko. For years I have heard stories that, frankly, cast Mr. Lee in a bad light. Here, Stan Lee describes how he came up with the character of Spider-man and, at first, gave it to Jack Kirby

to draw. Dissatisfied with Kirby's take, Stan turned it over to Steve Ditko. Stan goes out of his way to give co-creative credit to the artist.

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