



The EC Archives: The Vault of Horror, Vol. 1

Al Feldstein (Editor), R.L. Stine (Foreword)

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Legendary publisher Bill Gaines provided the forum and creators like Al Feldstein, Johnny Craig, Wally Wood, Harry Harrison, Jack Kamen, Harvey Kurtzman, Graham Ingels, and Jack Davis provided the mayhem. Six full issues and 24 complete stories are collected in this full-color, deluxe volume.

The EC Archives: The Vault of Horror, Vol. 1 Details

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From Reader Review The EC Archives: The Vault of Horror, Vol. 1 for online ebook

wildct2003 says

Excellent collection of the first 6 issues of the series. I skipped the ads, letters and prose sections. Good writing and illustrations.

Sylvester Kuo says

There was basically at least 1 werewolf tale in every issue... The first volume of the Vault of Horror was fun but lacking in creativity.

Brett says

I'm borrowing these from my father in law because they're out of print though I'd love to have them in my collection. You can see in this first volume the great leaps in daring the publishers make with graphic content and horrific imagery. The covers are all gold even if one or two stories per issue is a clunker. I also forgot how much fun the pun-filled hosting of the Vault Keeper is and the rivalry between him, the Crypt Keeper, and the Old Witch. E.C. Horror Comics are the best damn thing in the world.

Ryan says

Most of the time when I read an anthology collection some of the stories bored me. Not the case with this title. While some of the stories were better than others, I didn't want to miss a thing. My favorite artists in this collection would be Al Feldstein, Johnny Craig and Wally Wood.

Timothy Boyd says

If you want classic comic horror before the Comic Code Authority watered everything down then EC comics was the publisher to goto. In addition to their excellent writing their comics were where some of the greats artists of the industry started or polished their work to master's level. Great read and visually stunning. Recommended

Michael says

One of the greatest ever pop culture injustices is the ridiculous 1950's fearmongering by Estes Kefauver and Fredric Wertham regarding comic books. By instilling fear into the hearts of parents, these men laid the

blame for juvenile delinquency squarely at the feet of comic books. So, the industry agreed to self-regulate, forming the Comics Code Authority. Many of the Authority's regulations forbade the use of words like Horror, Fear, and Terror in comic titles, and heavily censored violent stories and images. By strange coincidence, some of the most popular titles of the early 1950's were EC Comics' horror comics, which greatly outsold the comics of their competitors.

Faced with releasing watered-down product, William Gaines and Al Feldstein folded the horror titles (Tales from the Crypt, The Haunt of Fear, and The Vault of Horror).

What a shame for comic fans, because the EC horror titles were fantastic--scary, gruesome, funny, at times disturbing, and filled with some of the greatest comic art of all time.

I've read the Tales and Haunt collections previously, but just finished reading the black and white reprints of Vault of Horror. This is great stuff, and well worth tracking down.

Michael says

EC's horror line remains my least favorite of their titles, but I still enjoy enough of the twists and all of the artists on display to make these volumes worthwhile. Ingels and Kamen really blow me away every time, and Jack Davis (making his EC debut in the final issue collected herein) and Johnny Craig are both excellent as well. Jules Feiffer actually pencils a story in this book as well. Artistry has never been Feiffer's draw, but his work with inker Harry Harrison is actually pretty solid.

Stephen says

The following review has **NOT** been approved by the **Comics Code Authority**

Remember the good old days when horror comics had absolutely no redeeming value except that they were completely awesome. Back before Dr. Fredric "**UptightaDouche**" Wertham got his panties all sweaty and bunched up and went accusing the comics industry of *seducing the innocent*. Back before the funny book publishers had their spines surgically removed and "voluntarily" adopted the CCA...which sounded the death knell of the "golden age" of comics.

Well here comes a breath of rewind because the **EC Archives** series is a time-machine back to a bygone age. Back to a time when kids could steal candy from the local drugstore, play hooky from school and sit around smoking their parents' cigarettes (which were healthy back then) while they read the "good stuff."

This first volume includes complete, full color reprints of the first 6 issues of the *Vault of Horror* published between April 1950 and March 1951. 24 stories in all (30 if you include the bonus vignettes which I do). This is pulp horror at its most pure without a shred of social conscience. Just nasty things happening to nastier people for no other reason than because. For example, you've got:

-- A double dealing flesh stain acid-melting an artist's face so he could steal his work and pass it off as his own;

--An evil wifey and her homicidal boy toy killing hubby and then being terrorized by his

boomerang corpse;

--An anatomy professor's nefarious corpse-snatching scheme going completely FUBAR and ending with him as school supplies; and

--A freaky monster boy breaking out of his in-home dungeon so he can turn daddy's face into a Scooby snack.

Yes, these stories are the very good stuff.

All of the stories were written by the legendary Al Feldstein based on story concepts conceived by Al and EC publisher, Bill Gaines. Oh...and did I mention the artwork by greats like Wally Wood and Johnny Craig?. Expressive, in your face and a perfect compliment to the stories. Just superb.

Bottom-line, this collection is definitely worth your time. So grab a copy, turn off (or at least down) your moral compass and just enjoy **whoring horroring** with tasty tales with plots like:

--Mind-shattering premonitions of a double homicide haunt a motel clerk;

-- Eager beaver scientists try pulling a Frankenstein deep in the swamp and end up...doing just that;

-- A cuckolded husband rains down voodoo vengeance on his strumpet wife; and

--A werewolf hunter turns out to be the last man standing...upright.

EC Archives: Vault of Horror #1.

6 complete issues...

30 complete stories...

1 complete **HORRORgasm** of happy.

4.0 TO 4.5 stars. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!!

Russell Grant says

EC had gotten most of the kinks out of their horror tales with "Tales From The Crypt" by the time "Vault Of Horror" appeared on the shelves, and as a result this 1st volume of stories is pretty great. The artwork is amazing, and on the whole, there are no clunker stories in this one (other then one that gets a retread...). It's a shame these archives seem to be stalled out and not getting published, I want the rest of this run!

George says

Yearrrggggghhhhh!!!!!!

Mark says

While the Humor and War titles at EC Comics were edited by Harvey Kurtzman, the Horror and Sci-Fi titles were in the capable hands of Al Feldstein. Although "Tales From The Crypt" is best known today, (mostly because of the TV series), "The Haunt Of Fear" and "The Vault of Horror" were equally well read in their time.

In the early issues featured in this volume, classic elements of the genre: Voodoo, Vampires, and a preponderance of Werewolves, are featured. Overtime the horror titles increasingly relied on "morality tales" wherein a killer or other baddie gets their comeuppance through some plot twist or supernatural means. This led to the more gruesome depictions of violence that eventually caught the attention of alarmed parents.

In Vol 1, it's still mostly in good fun without the graphic depictions later shown. Wonderful art by the talented stable at EC, including stories and covers by Johnny Craig and Al Feldstein, as well as (at the time) newcomers Graham Ingels and Jack Davis. By the final issue of this volume, the triumvirate of hosts, The Vault-Keeper, The Crypt-Keeper, and The Old Witch, are shown on the cover. A trademark that would make the EC horror titles instantly recognizable on the comics rack.

Cameron Chaney says

Ever since TNT announced they'd be returning the Cryptkeeper to our TV screens, I've been in the mood for some...

Sigh I'll never forget being 8 years old, buying a *Tales from the Crypt* VHS, and putting the tape in to see a woman being hacked up with an ax while in a restroom stall. Oh, and let us not forget that ghastly little Christmas story called "And All Through the House..."

Needless to say, I was a little too young to watch *Tales from the Crypt* at the time. So I settled for the children's animated version until I was a little older and less prone to being traumatized at the hands of HBO.

That being said, I think even as adults we're still traumatized at the hands of HBO... Anyway, when I was old enough, *Tales from the Crypt* wormed its way into my heart. I can't tell you how happy I am to know it's coming back to TV. Even though it is courtesy of M. Night Shyamalan... but we won't focus on that. Instead, I am celebrating by digging into the EC Archives and reading the original 1950s comics which the HBO show was based.

This is volume #1 in *The EC Archives: Vault of Horror* line. It is a big beautiful hardcover book combining the first six issues with newly produced colors. These editions are a little pricey, but totally worth it. You boils and ghouls get a great quality book with essays on EC's history and plenty of stories that are not for the faint of heart. Well... I guess the first few stories are innocent enough, but I could definitely see the slow progression of heightened grotesqueness from beginning to end.

For those who don't know, EC caused quite a bit of controversy in the 50s with these comics. Parents were outraged by the violence, gore, and dark subjects their kids were reading in these books. And while I love these comics and don't agree with censorship, there are some instances later in the books where I can kinda see where those parents were coming from...

(view spoiler)

The series did go a little far at times, but this first volume of the Archives is mild compared to those later stories. This is simply where EC began, using a lot of basic plot points like werewolves, vampires, and ghouls. Still, the stories are quite enjoyable, especially the last few issues in this book. The improvement of art and story was clear as I read along. Johnny Craig, the main contributor to *The Vault of Horror*, definitely improved as an artist and storyteller as he went along. Comparing his clean art in issue #1 to his darker, inkier art in issue #6 is quite a turnaround. The other artists who contributed to the *Vault* did great work as well.

I'm excited to read the later volumes in the EC Archives where EC was in its prime, creating unique stories and fiendish artwork. I'm so happy the publishers of the EC Archives has made the original comics so much easier to access with these amazing editions. Can't wait to collect the rest! This book gets my highest 5-star rating.

And to M. Night Shyamalan... do not disappoint me.

Sarah Crawford says

This is another in the EC Archives series, consisting of the first six issues with some of the letter pages. There is also one page per issue that goes into a discussion of the stories and artists. R.L. Stine writes the foreword to the book.

The stories vary in quality. I think sometimes the play on words that are used in introducing the stories and concluding them get to be a little boring. Some of the stories have very moralistic endings, evil being repaid with death.

Ron says

While on the edge of a storm of controversy, EC Comics were quite over-rated and appealed only to the juvenile tastes of the sort of people who worship all of the bad kitsch from the 50s (you know, the ones who went on to found the punk rock movement and loved bad B-Movies and boring rockabilly). The crime comics and the science fiction work at EC was often the best, and the horror work often appealed to the lowest common denominator.

Jennie Rigg says

If you want to know where a lot of the visual clichés for horror started, you need to pick up one of these EC archive books; they didn't start in film or television, but comics that film and television directors read.

Aficionados of the genre will find a lot of old favourites in here. The artwork is beautiful, especially given the limitations of comic printing at the time these were originally out. The stories have that little twist of sick humour we all know and love. It even has an intro by RL Stine - if that doesn't tell you what you are in for

them nothing will.

A very enjoyable nostalgia trip.
