



# Into the Volcano

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## Into the Volcano Don Wood

Caldecott Honor Illustrator and international bestseller Don Wood creates his first full-color graphic novel, filled with action, drama, and adventure.

Sumno and Duffy pugg (brothers) are told they must travel to a volcanic island to help an aunt they have never met. When they arrive on the island, they soon discover that their mysterious auntie is up to no good. They are sent on an expedition that take them on a wild boat ride straight into an erupting volcano. Facing extreme danger, they hike inside the volcano and eventually escape--after Sumno saves Duffy's life. Here is an action adventure that will immediately hook young readers.

## Into the Volcano Details

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Author : Don Wood

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Genre : Sequential Art, Graphic Novels, Adventure, Young Adult, Childrens, Fiction

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# From Reader Review Into the Volcano for online ebook

## Joe says

The starred review in *School Library Journal* captured my eye: here was a graphic novel that didn't look comic-booky and that would appeal to the male reluctant readers in my school.

That appeal may hold true, but there are so many problems with the story, its plot, and the illustrations, that it's hardly something I could recommend with enthusiasm.

First of all, the story is paper-thin and, in the spirit of most treasure-hunting tales, the plot mechanizations exist only to propel the characters closer to a central mystery that only barely makes sense. (In the case of *Into the Volcano*, the "mystery" involves green, magma-produced gems that will either make you very rich or be extremely helpful in pointless experiments - one of which alters your taste buds. If you're scratching your head, welcome to the club.)

The Pugg boys (stuck with the insipid names Sumo and Duffy) are pulled from school to join their estranged aunt on a Pacific Island nation. Their father, who delivers this news, doesn't seem terribly concerned about leaving his boys in the hands of their meaty, vaguely dangerous-looking cousin, Mr. Come-and-Go. (Again, with the asinine names.) Upon arriving, the boys are almost immediately put in harm's way by being plopped in the middle of an expedition into an active volcano, neither of them aware that they're being used as bait to lure their mother out of the volcano's bowels. (Are you scratching your head again? Good. It gets better.) Turns out the boys' mother has been looking for the aforementioned green magma gems in order to conduct experiments... but it's never really revealed *why*, and the experiments are so unbelievable that it winds up not even mattering. The tension that exists between mother and the expedition never materializes - in fact, it seems neither have any particular animosity toward each other, which completely obviates the story. In the end, everything comes together with mushy sentimentality.

Married to this absurd plot are the illustrations, which, while colored beautifully, are busy and confusing. Action sequences are blurred with splashes of color and distracting text (e.g. **ROARRRRROARRRR!**, **EEEEEEEEEEEE!**) that meld panels together in nightmarish washes that obscure meaning and comprehension (p. 66 is an excellent example of this). The characters themselves are doughy, and their lack of vibrancy make them less believable. Because of this, the reader gets very little sense of who these people are and why this adventure is so important to their livelihood. Wood's only incredible illustrative sequence involves the specter of death visiting one of the Pugg boys as he descends into an abyss.

*Into the Volcano* was clearly a labor of love for Wood, who worked on it for five years, but its sloppy details and pointless storyline will not send it into the annals of brilliant graphic novels. Pity.

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## Nicola Mansfield says

This started off pretty rough and I almost put it down but since the author is a Caldecott winner I decided to keep going. The dialogue is pretty bad, unrealistic and painful to read at the beginning. Sumo is such a whiny, moany, lazy crybaby that he is a painful character at first also. However, as the story gets over its initial hump the action starts and it is pretty much non-stop from that point on. The point of the story is that Sumo's character changes; he gains more confidence in himself as he faces life & death situations and finds

he is able to rise to the occasion changing his whole outlook. Belief needs to be suspended as the outlandish adventure unfolds but danger and action keep the story quite riveting and fast paced. While the island and volcano setting/theme ends up imparting quite interesting information along the way too. For a Caldecott winner I thought the art was just ok. Fast-paced, action adventure.

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## **Alyssa Peters says**

Alyssa Peters  
Graphic Novel

This book is 22 chapters of wonderful graphics! It is about two brothers Duffy and Sumo Pugg. The two boys are pulled from their classroom and introduced to their cousin Mister Come-And-Go. The boys cousin came to invite the boys back to the island of Kocalaha to visit their Aunt Lulu while their mom finishes her research. The boys then find themselves on this island with their crazy Aunt, her Winnebago, and a treehouse that may have stinging centipedes lurking in it. The boys then embark on an island adventure. They go snorkeling, get caught in a flood, and travel through a volcano! This novel is really interesting. It is the first graphic novel I have ever read and I did enjoy it! It is ideal for young adults!

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## **Betsy says**

Look, I hate to burst your bubble but not every picture book illustrator born is necessarily cut out to write his or her own graphic novel. It's an entirely different set of muscles, after all. Melding text and image well enough to sustain a story means having a firm grasp of what does and does not work as a comic. So I know you might have gotten all excited when you heard that Don Wood had written a graphic novel, but don't be happy because a great Caldecott-winning illustrator has dipped his toe in a new format. Be happy because the man is good at it. Crazy good. He may have amused you with King Bidgood's in the Bathtub or entertained your children with his The Napping House but sister you ain't seen anything like to compare to his breathtakingly beautiful *Into the Volcano*. The past ten years have seen incredible strides in graphic novels for children. *Into the Volcano* appears to be the next logical step in the process. A full-color adventure with double crosses, death-defying escapes, and personal growth, it has no equal.

The Pugg brothers Duffy and Sumno are just sitting in their classroom in the dead of winter one moment and the next they're being whisked off to the island nation of Kocalaha. It seems their Aunt Lulu has been longing for a visit from her nephews and Duffy, for one, is thrilled. Sumo's far more reticent and likely to complain, a quality that doesn't serve a person well in Kocalaha. Soon they meet their cousin Mister Come-and-Go who disappears and reappears without a warning. They meet the beautiful Pulina, her boyfriend Kaleo, and Mango Joe, a fellow in the witness protection program. But not all is right on this beautiful island. Why won't Auntie let the boys talk to their dad on the phone? Why is everyone so gung-ho certain that the boys should go on this "expedition" that they're told is done for all the tourists but seems to mask a sinister plan. Before Duffy and Sumno know it they're dodging lava streams and spelunking in dangerous territory. But in a world where no one is what they seem, people of seeming weakness can find the strength to do what must be done.

I've been saying for a while that at some point an artist is going to create a graphic novel so visually stunning that the American Library Association will either have to start handing Caldecott Medals over to comic books or create an entirely new award for them. We've come close in the past. *Mouse Guard* was beautiful,

but the story didn't hold up its end of the bargain. The Arrival would have been ideal, but the book wasn't originally published in America. *Into the Volcano*, though... now here's a title with potential. The entire enterprise is so lush you find yourself just poring over the images for long periods of time. Honestly, I could see a real push put to have this considered as the very first graphic novel worthy of a major children's award. Yet in many ways, it may come down to the way in which it was drawn. According to Scholastic's press material, Mr. Wood drew AND colored this entire enterprise on the computer. No fully computer created children's book has ever won a Caldecott, and perhaps none ever will. If there was a candidate, however, this would be it.

At the beginning I found Wood's boy heroes off-putting. With their snub noses and blunt faces, they resemble nothing so much as a pair of kids that could have jumped out of a Maurice Sendak book. Maybe *We Are All in the Dumps* with Jack and Guy. Wood utilizes the grotesque in a variety of ways. Sumno is a dislikeable character in a lot of ways so the book makes him the more unattractive of the two, both personally and physically. Aunt Lulu's sheer mass, weight, and injured foot will focus on her entirely one moment and then close in on her long grotesque toenails. Yet everything that I initially found off-putting in this book eventually grew on me. My resistance must have fallen apart entirely when I got to Chapter Seven: Lava in the Water. Trust me.

It takes skill to build the kind of excitement and tension Wood conjures up here. I wish I could get a sense of what comics Mr. Wood looked at before writing *Into the Volcano*. He's said in the past that he's a Carl Barks fan, but that doesn't explain what I see here. How did he learn to draw these action sequences? Who were his other influences? His references? Because when push comes to shove and people are fighting nature (lava, earthquakes, tides, and waves) you can't help but be sucked in. Reading *Into the Volcano* you have no sense that this is the man's first book of this kind. Clearly there are years and years of work in this pup. The biography in the back says five. It shows.

And take a close look at Wood's style here too. The sheer range of artistic styles and impressions... I mean this man has scope. There's a weight and a breadth to his art that we just haven't seen in graphic novels for young readers before. And just look at his ability to play with light and textures. As one of a million examples, take a close look at the sequences where the small boat is trying to navigate the rapids past streams of hot lava. Wood has managed to draw or illustrate the effect of hot orange light beneath water and steam. Now look at Aunt Lulu in all her full fleshy glory. You can practically feel her sweat and smell her moist possibly perfumed body. I mean this woman has a physical presence that seems to extend beyond the page. And look at how he changes angles in his panels. We're constantly looking at each scene from every possible viewpoint. It's as if Wood had a camera and he's using it to swing around his action, now below in the water, now up above.

I should probably talk about the story too, eh? Certainly *Into the Volcano* hits on all cylinders in terms of visuals but how does the writing itself stand up? Well, it's complicated. The story concerns the boys Sumo and Duffy and we watch as Duffy accepts and enjoys everything new while Sumo cowers and questions. For much of the first half Duffy is clearly the stronger, braver kid but as time goes on Sumo's suspicions appear to be well founded. Some younger kids may have a hard time figuring out who's a good guy and who's a bad guy from moment to moment. Sometimes you think you're rooting for the heroes and the next minute they appear to be villains. The plot requires a close reading, but it holds up (particularly on subsequent re-readings, which is crucial). In a way, this title is perfectly positioned to appeal to younger kids in terms of its danger and heroes and to older kids who need a complex story to bite into.

I'm the kind of person who wants to label everything. To slot every book into a neat little category, even if I didn't know the category existed before I read the book. For example, name me the greatest children's book

out there about volcanoes. They exist. I know they do. But until now I've not seen or read a book that really worked factual information with a breakneck plot as seamlessly as *Into the Volcano*. And more to the point, I've never seen a graphic novel written with a child audience in mind that was as out-and-out beautiful and gripping as this puppy here. Read it cover to cover and you will find a title like no other that is sure to make a few waves when it hits bookstore and library shelves. A true original.

Ages 9 and up.

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### **River says**

Into The Volcano Is A Really Good Story, It Has Graphics And Dialogue That Seem Like An Adventure Movie. It Contained Such An Amazing Backstory And Everything. This Graphic Novel Was Pretty Good, But It Would Have Been A Bit Better If It Was At Least 200 Pages, But I Can Understand Making A Masterpiece Takes A While. Recommend This To People Who Love Graphic Novels And Mystery! ???

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### **Brandy says**

Brothers Duffy and Sumo Pugg are a little confused when they're sent to stay with Aunt Lulu and their cousin Come-and-Go (that's really his name) for 10 days while their parents are away on business, but that's nothing compared to how confused they'll be later on. Amid earthquakes and volcano eruptions, the boys are forced to evacuate with trusted family guides into the maze of tunnels under the volcano itself. It's soon evident, though, that the guides are looking for something... and the boys are the bait they need to find it. With the volcano about to blow any minute, it's a terrible time for the boys to get separated from the group—but how else will they find out for themselves what their family is searching for?

The art is nice to look at, and the story could be interesting, but it jumps around too much. Parts of the narrative are disjointed, leading this reader to wonder if pages or panels had been edited out and the information not replaced. Chapter transitions are weak—the beginning of a chapter is the same scene and conversation as the end of the previous chapter, or there's an unexplained shift from one place to another so the reader spends several panels trying to catch up on the action. The brothers are twins, presumably (they're in the same class at school), but one is written far younger than the other.

Wood has won several illustration awards, but the ability to illustrate a story is not necessarily related to the ability to tell a story in pictures. Wood's author bio says that he was "fascinated by the possibilities of the graphic novel" and that he worked on this book for five years—but his strength is not in sequential art narrative. Had he collaborated with a writer instead of doing it all himself, it could have been a much stronger book. It's pretty to look at and the adventure can be compelling, but overall the story doesn't make a whole lot of sense. Recommended for collections where boys are clamoring for more adventure books.

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### **Cynthia says**

Very fun storyline with a great character-growth arc for the main character, Sumo! The art is great!

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### **Emily Ross says**

The anti hero and unlikeable protagonist journey is not my favorite type of story but this graphic novel gripped me and sucked me into the volcano, literally! Well drawn and a great story, I didn't want it to end!

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### **Garrett says**

It's JGN, but it doesn't have to be. The underlying plot involves dysfunctional families, Pacific island culture, scientific innovation, and treachery, both for profit and of bloodlines. The art is evocative of stuff like Asterix & Tintin, but also Wallace Wood and old Dick Tracy/Phantom-type stuff. It's pretty and the story is good, and the focus on just who exactly is the 'main' character evolves over the course of the story. A quick read, and something I enjoyed the hell out of, actually. Perfect for a slow-moving Sunday morning.

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### **Flossmoor Public Library (IL) says**

3 stars

- Ms. Jenn

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### **Monica Edinger says**

Just rewrote this for my blog.

Wow. Don Wood's Into the Volcano is one powerhouse of a graphic novel that you won't want to miss. In fact, as far as missing goes, I almost missed my bus stop so engrossed was I in this totally wild adventure in and under and around an erupting volcano. The word gripping is completely apt for this (here comes another trite but accurate word) roller coaster of a read. Wood grabs you on the first page as brothers Duffy and Sumo are called out of their classroom to meet their father who immediately turns them over to a cousin they have never met before, the burly Come-And-Go. Before any of us can take a breath, the two boys (who appear to be between 8 and 12 years of age) are flying off to their just-learned-about mother's home island of Kocalaha. Once there they and we are thrown into an extraordinary adventure involving questionable people (are they good or bad?), an erupting volcano, secrets (of every sort), life and death circumstances, heart-stopping moments (many of them!), and family ties. A truly brilliant work. It is due out in October; be sure to look out for it!

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### **Elena Lydon says**

It's action-filled. I like it because they find their mom.

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### **Kimball says**

I love comic books and love the action is the book i read it a 1000000 times it is awesome awesome awesome awesome awesome yaaaaaa!!!!

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### **Olivia says**

I love this book because I love adventure and mystery books. My favorite part of this book is when the kids find their mom and see the glowing green pearls because it got me more interested in what happens.

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### **Lars Guthrie says**

A powerful kids' graphic novel that adults will enjoy, too. Beyond the full color panels that often carry the impact and excitement of an action movie, Don Wood has concocted a complex and involving story with multiple themes.

Two brothers are pulled out of their dreary classroom in a dreary American suburban school on a dreary winter's day by their father. One boy, Duffy Pugg, is a small, wiry, and ready for adventure. His brother Sumo is larger, bulkier, cynical, and worried.

Both have darkish skin, due to their mother, a native of the Hawaii-like Pacific island of Kocalaha. She is supposed to be in Borneo, and their father is off on a mysterious mission to Norway. So he is sending the boys off for ten days to Kocahala with their cousin Come-and-Go, by way of limo and private jet.

Hey, if that set-up doesn't draw you in, I don't know what will. Maybe motor boats battling surf and lava flows to land inside a volcano, underground cities, an encounter with death himself? A crazy old aunt? A beautiful surfer girl? Surprising reserves of personality and resilience in the unassuming Sumo?

Lots to look at and talk about for fourth graders on up as they read this thrilling adventure.

Highly recommended.

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