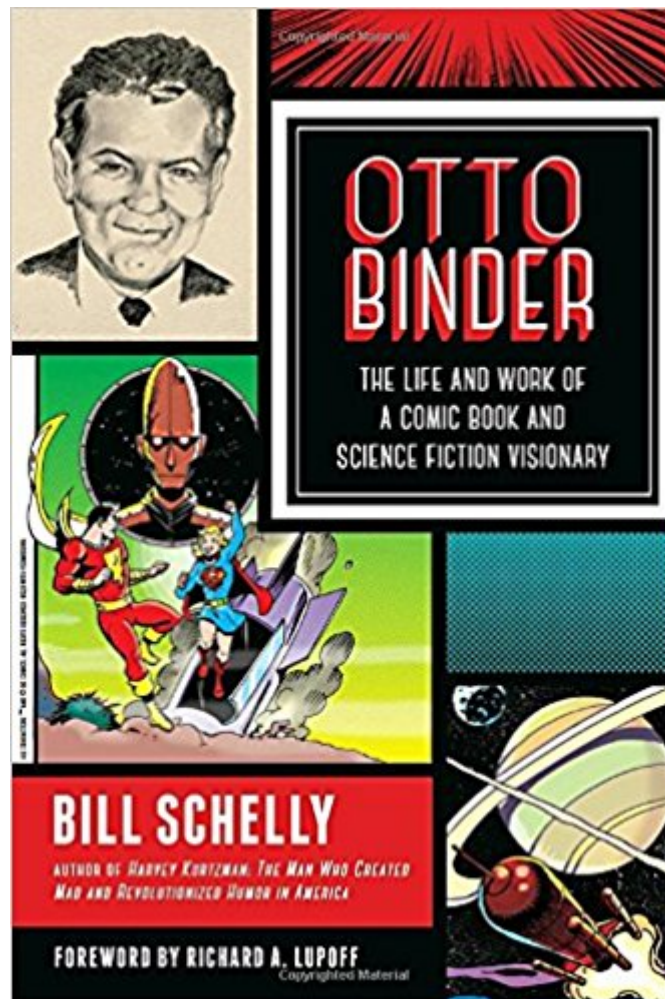


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Otto Binder: The Life And Work Of A Comic Book And Science Fiction Visionary



Synopsis

Otto Binder: The Life and Work of a Comic Book and Science Fiction Visionary chronicles the career of Otto Binder, from pulp magazine author to writer of Supergirl, Captain Marvel, and Superman comics. As the originator of the first sentient robot in literature ("I, Robot," published in Amazing Stories in 1939 and predating Isaac Asimov's collection of the same name), Binder's effect on science fiction was profound. Within the world of comic books, he created or co-created much of the Superman universe, including Smallville; Krypto, Superboy's dog; Supergirl; and the villain Brainiac. Binder is also credited with writing many of the first "Bizarro" storylines for DC Comics, as well as for being the main writer for the Captain Marvel comics. In later years, Binder expanded from comic books into pure science writing, publishing dozens of books and articles on the subject of satellites and space travel as well as UFOs and extraterrestrial life. Comic book historian Bill Schelly tells the tale of Otto Binder through comic panels, personal letters, and interviews with Binder's own family and friends. Schelly weaves together Binder's professional successes and personal tragedies, including the death of Binder's only daughter and his wife's struggle with mental illness. A touching and human story, Otto Binder: The Life and Work of a Comic Book and Science Fiction Visionary is a biography that is both meticulously researched and beautifully told, keeping alive Binder's spirit of scientific curiosity and whimsy.

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Customer Reviews

•An Interesting Look At One of The Giants of the Comic Book Industry. •Growing up during the

so-called Golden Age of the comic books, I never thought about the men and women behind the comic books I was reading. I discovered Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman when my parents moved to the big city when I was seven years old; these and others became my escape from reality. My real discovery, however, was Captain Marvel and later, The Marvel Family. As a kid, it was enough that they entertained me, and became a huge part of my reading. I read comic books off and on until 1980 (age 40), when I no longer felt any interest in them. But looking back on my youth, and a media that was so important at the time, I couldn't pass up this book. Bill Schelly gathers letters and interviews from many of those in the comic book industry who knew Otto Binder, one of the main writers for Captain Marvel and The Marvel Family, and put this biography together. I believe it is an updated reprint of a previous edition, with added material. Whatever the case, the author gives us a behind the scenes look at the man and his craft, the good times and the bad, and not only what the industry did to him, but what decision he made that proved disastrous, as well. Otto Binder entertained millions of kids for over thirty years. Beginning his writing career in science fiction pulp magazines, where little was published of literary quality, it sparked his ambition to become a writer. Not many of his pulp stories rose above the rest of the early junk being published, but his Adam Link stories certainly fascinated the readers and other media of the day. Going into comic book writing was better pay for less work, and his output became a herculean affair.

If you are a Captain Marvel fan, it's possible that you already have this book. Along with artist CC Beck, Otto Binder's name is very closely associated with the heyday of Captain Marvel. And, while not necessarily the first name you'll think of in connection to Superman, Binder helped add or develop many "Marvel Family" -style touches to the Superman comics of the 1950s which included Supergirl, Krypto the Wonder Dog, Superboy, Brainiac, and a fleshed-out cub reporter named Jimmy Olsen. If you're not a Captain Marvel fan but are interested in lowbrow popular American fiction from the mid-20th Century, there is a lot in this book you're going to love. Otto Binder started his career writing science fiction for the same weird pulps that HP Lovecraft and Robert E Howard lorded over in the 20's and 30's. Then, in the wake of the seismic pop culture shift that Superman began, Binder moved over to comic books. After working throughout the Golden Age and much of the Silver Age of Comics mainly in superhero and horror comics, Binder reinvented himself as a popular science writer (mainly for children). And as the 60's progressed, Binder hitched his paperback writing wagon to the flying saucer craze by writing both straightforward documentary about UFOs and wilder speculative stuff cut from a "Chariots of the Gods" cloth. While most of this book is a loving and affectionate portrayal of a popular writer with a very long commercial career,

author Bill Schelly is not afraid to paint his subject in a fair and evenhanded light even if what he writes is sometimes unflattering. Schelly pulls few punches in describing Binder's alcoholism, and is not afraid to offer negative critical opinion regarding much of what Binder wrote outside of the comic books.

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