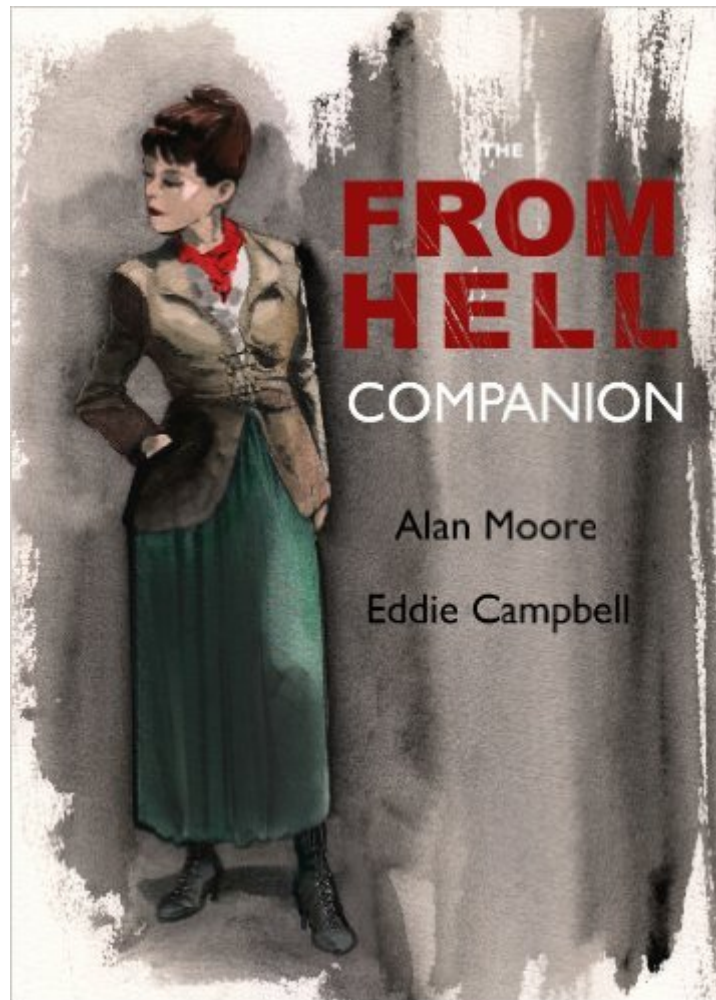


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The From Hell Companion



Synopsis

FROM HELL occupies a monumental place in the history of the graphic novel: a Victorian masterpiece of murder and madness which has won numerous awards, spawned a major Hollywood film, and remained a favorite of readers around the world for over two decades. Now, Top Shelf Productions and Knockabout Comics present THE FROM HELL COMPANION, an astonishing selection of Alan Moore's original scripts and sketches for the landmark graphic novel, with copious annotations, commentary, and illustrations by Eddie Campbell. Here for the first time are a set of pages, including some of Moore's greatest writing, which have never been seen by anyone except his collaborator. Joining them are Campbell's first-hand accounts of the project's decade-long development, complete with photos, anecdotes, disagreements, and wry confessions. Arranged in narrative order, these perspectives form a fascinating mosaic, an opportunity to read FROM HELL with fresh eyes, and a tour inside the minds of two giants of their field.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you plan on reading the graphic novel FROM HELL, I would strongly recommend getting the FROM HELL COMPANION. This is the first graphic novel that I have ever read; but so far, I must say that I am absolutely fascinated with this particular book because the story of the novel, FROM HELL, is a theory speculating upon the identity and motives of Jack the Ripper. This unsolved serial

murder case has always enthralled me through the years; so when I casually picked up the book and perused the copy it piqued my curiosity. Having never read a graphic novel, I initially found it difficult to understand and make inferences about what was taking place in the story; however, located next to the copy of the FROM HELL book was the FROM HELL COMPANION; so I began to analyze the information the companion covered. This book is a MUST purchase if one decides to read the graphic novel. Why ?, you ask. Writer Alan Moore and artist Eddie Campbell conducted ten years of research and traveled thousands of miles through three countries on a collaborative journey in an attempt to collect, investigate, and coalesce copious amounts of information specifically related to the Whitechapel murders. The result is a graphic novel of daunting complexity; the FROM HELL COMPANION contains a selection of the original writings, notes, artwork and photographs as well as additional information to assist the reader work their way through a mesmerizing narrative of madness, murder, deception and life in the dark Victorian world.

Eddie Campbell, the artist of the original comic, FROM HELL, takes us on a chapter-by-chapter analysis of the creation of the comic by presenting commentary, art, and long excerpts from Alan Moore's legendary scripts. This book is "script-heavy," which is a good thing. We get to see Moore's descriptions for most all of the key scenes from the book, and we often get Campbell's explanations for why he sometimes chose to depict things differently. One of the ongoing pleasures lies in seeing Moore occasionally call for emotional or dramatic images only to be replaced by Campbell's more restrained, matter-of-fact style. The contrast is fascinating, and by the end you get a good sense of Campbell's artistic philosophy. Honestly, for anyone with a serious interest in FROM HELL, this should be your first supplemental purchase. I will add, for what it's worth, that I ordered the Kindle for Mac version. There are many illustrations in the book, but I was not able to enlarge them to a readable size. (I'm not sure if it's possible to do so or not.) However, I simply read it with my original hard copy of FROM HELL nearby and enjoyed it immensely. [I should add that I finally was able to try the book on an iPad and the pictures enlarge to full size perfectly, so my problems with the Kindle for Mac version may just be my own ignorance.]

Eddie Campbell is a great talker about comics. From Hell is one of the novel-length comics works of lasting significance from the 1990s. This book, combining excerpted pages from the work along with Campbell's commentary and Alan Moore's original script, is a great way to explore the creation, publication, and reception of From Hell. I don't know how many of Moore's scripts for any of his works are readily available to read, so it's fascinating here to see how much thought he puts into the

world he imagines--conjures--even if there's no hope of the artist including every detail. Also included are some of Moore's original rough layouts (which Campbell didn't see until much later), numerous photos of the actual locations, and a few relevant stills from the film. This is a very thorough and entertaining look at the decade-long production process of the novel. It earns five stars from me. However, I read this on the Kindle for (1st gen) iPad app. I found it to be a disappointing experience. The reproductions of the comics pages do not look nearly as good as the same pages from the digitized novel available through at least one popular digital comics sales website. Those pages with this version are usually slightly blurry and the lettering is difficult to read. Additionally, the captions for individual photos and drawings don't always appear on the same page as those photos and drawings, so you have to flick back and forth to see all the information. (The e-book edition from a leading competitor has similarly bad comics images, but the captions do appear alongside the photos and drawings at least.) So one star removed for a disappointing experience reading this on Kindle for iPad. It's possible a later version of the iPad or a real Kindle may provide a better experience for you.

While the script (and thumbnails) are by Alan Moore, the text otherwise is by Eddie Campbell, an artist-writer in his own right (interviews with Alan Moore are included). Moore's scripts *are* only written for the comic book artists he collaborates with, and reading them is a bit of a chore, perhaps made easier if you've already read comic book or movie scripts. Campbell's commentary is light but interesting reading -- I wish he wrote more and more in-depth -- and his inclusion of a mini-comic his daughter (now a taxidermist) written while she accompanied his drawing this series (!) was quite the joy to read, so to speak. While the epilogue was more entertaining, the companion is certainly more insightful.

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