PDF | The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay (with bonus content): A Novel

by Michael Chabon
WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE

The beloved, award-winning *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*, a Michael Chabon masterwork, is the American epic of two boy geniuses named Joe Kavalier and Sammy Clay. Now with special bonus material by Michael Chabon.

A “towering, swash-buckling thrill of a book” (*Newsweek*), hailed as Chabon’s “magnum opus” (*The New York Review of Books*), *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay* is a triumph of originality, imagination, and storytelling, an exuberant, irresistible novel that begins in New York City in 1939. A young escape artist and budding magician named Joe Kavalier arrives on the doorstep of his cousin, Sammy Clay. While the long shadow of Hitler falls across Europe, America is happily in thrall to the Golden Age of comic books, and in a distant corner of Brooklyn, Sammy is looking for a way to cash in on the craze. He finds the ideal partner in the aloof, artistically gifted Joe, and together they embark on an adventure that takes them deep into the heart of Manhattan, and the heart of old-fashioned American ambition. From the shared fears, dreams, and desires of two teenage boys, they spin comic book tales of the heroic, fascist-fighting Escapist and the beautiful, mysterious Luna Moth, otherworldly mistress of the night. Climbing from the streets of Brooklyn to the top of the Empire State Building, Joe and Sammy carve out lives, and careers, as vivid as cyan and magenta ink. Spanning continents and eras, this superb book by one of America’s finest writers remains one of the defining novels of our modern American age.

*NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER*
Finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Award, National Book Critics Circle Award, and Los Angeles Times Book Prize

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Named one of the 10 Best Books of the Decade by Entertainment Weekly

Amazon.com Review

Like the comic books that animate and inspire it, The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay is both larger than life and of it too. Complete with golems and magic and miraculous escapes and evil nemeses and even hand-to-hand Antarctic battle, it pursues the most important questions of love and war, dreams and art, across pages brimming with longing and hope. Samuel Klayman—self-described little man, city boy, and Jew—first meets Josef Kavalier when his mother shoves him aside in his own bed, telling him to make room for their cousin, a refugee from Nazi-occupied Prague. It’s the beginning, however unlikely, of a beautiful friendship. In short order, Sam’s talent for pulp plotting meets Joe’s faultless, academy-trained line, and a comic-book superhero is born. A sort of lantern-jawed equalizer clad in dark blue long underwear, the Escapist “roams the globe, performing amazing feats and coming to the aid of those who languish in tyranny’s chains!” Before they know it, Kavalier and Clay (as Sam Klayman has come to be known) find themselves at the epicenter of comics’ golden age.

But Joe Kavalier is driven by motives far more complex than your average hack. In fact, his first act as a comic-book artist is to deal Hitler a very literal blow. (The cover of the first issue shows the Escapist delivering “an immortal haymaker” onto the Führer’s realistically bloody jaw.) In subsequent years, the Escapist and his superhero allies take on the evil Iron Chain and their leader Attila Haxoff—their battles drawn with an intensity that grows more disturbing as Joe’s efforts to rescue his family fail. He’s fighting their war with brush and ink, Joe thinks, and the idea sustains him long enough to meet the beautiful Rosa Saks, a surrealist artist and surprisingly retrograde muse. But when even that fiction fails him, Joe performs an escape of his own, leaving Rosa and Sammy to pick up the pieces in some increasingly wrong-headed ways.

More amazing adventures follow—but reader, why spoil the fun? Suffice to say, Michael Chabon writes novels like the Escapist busts locks. Previous books such as The Mysteries of Pittsburgh and Wonder Boys have prose of equal shimmer and wit, and yet here he seems to have finally found a canvas big enough for his gifts. The whole enterprise seems animated by love: for his alternately deluded, damaged, and painfully sincere characters; for the quirks and curious innocence of tough-talking wartime New York; and, above all, for comics themselves, “the inspirations and lucubrations of five hundred aging boys dreaming as hard as they could.” Far from negating such pleasures, the Holocaust’s presence in the novel only makes them more pressing. Art, if not capable of actually fighting evil, can at least offer a gesture of defiance and hope—a way out, in other words, of a world gone completely mad. Comic-book critics, Joe notices, dwell on “the pernicious effect, on young minds, of satisfying the desire to escape. As if there could be any more noble or necessary service in life.” Indeed. --Mary Park

Product Description

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