

America's Got Powers

Jonathan Ross

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Jonathan Ross : America's Got Powers before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised America's Got Powers:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Unoriginal offering
By S. Penrose
Jonathan Ross blends a bunch of concepts together to come up with a half-baked idea that lacks originality and depth. While there are a couple concepts that are worthwhile, most of those aren't original. I'm not sure if this was designed to be a limited series because it definitely felt cramped and might have been better served to be longer so characters could be less one-note. Bryan Hitch is Bryan Hitch so there are a ton of double page spreads and big scenes. Sometimes it works, sometimes it misses. Overall, I just think the book lacked individuality. I felt I've read better versions of it.
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An interesting premise disappointingly executed.
By Moniker Shmoniker
I started reading this comic when the first issue was released just recently got around to picking up the six remaining issues. The story definitely has a promising start, which builds momentum until somewhere around issue four. The problem is that from that point on, the plot (along with character development) stagnates. The Palin (McCain?) lampooning is funny if you lean the other way, but most of the cast is provided with little characterization, making it fairly difficult to sympathize with any of them, including the protagonist, when they begin to break character act/sound alike (I don't mind cursing, but felt it was overused in parts to ill effect, drawing me out of the story). Many decisions made by the characters (one in particular) seem nonsensical appear to occur solely for the sake of driving the plot to a disappointing, if slightly tantalizing, ending.
3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. This really didn't work for me
By S. Robert Katz
I'm disappointed. The premise isn't particularly original, and it doesn't really get better from there. Long story short: Seventeen years ago a mysterious crystal fell to earth in San Francisco, causing all the pregnant women in a five mile radius to give birth, and all the babies ended up with super powers... except for one, of course. This could have gone several different ways, but the centerpiece here is a reality TV show featuring the children in arena-style death matches, and apparently the cream of the crop end up on a super team that also serves simply to entertain. What follows are some predictable turns and a pretty formulaic story, much of which either consists of total chaos or makes

no sense at all. One major problem from the very start is that the set-up for what's supposed to be the biggest television show in the world doesn't really work. The show apparently just consists of hordes of super-powered teenagers battling each other and/or giant robots in a completely disorganized melee. File this in the "total chaos" department. Reading the book, it makes no sense how this would translate to an actual show. There's basically no structure to it whatsoever, just a massive battlefield of a lot going on. It would have been much more convincing if the show were scaled down and more organized. Even in a WWF Royal Rumble, you may have ten different wrestlers going at it, but there's a level of organization and choreography involved to keep it from completely devolving into a confused mess. That's sorely lacking here, and it took me out of the story right away. The story is largely centered on Tommy, the aforementioned only kid among the group who has no powers. It's a cliché, and there's actually a pretty significant missed opportunity therein. Tommy has a twin brother who has powers, and in fact was one of the more prominent special kids, and it could actually be a pretty interesting and personal angle to focus on how he's not special like his brother, only his brother is dead when the story starts. I really think that was a misstep. I don't think it's very compelling or original to have the one kid who's not special like the hundreds of other nameless, faceless characters in the story; it might not be much more original to contrast him with his brother, but it's at least more compelling. Unfortunately it's a missed opportunity. We see a flashback to his relationship with his brother, but it would have been a much stronger introduction to the setup and these characters to contrast him with his brother, then have his brother die in real time. I might have liked the whole thing a lot better if that's the way it unfolded. Instead, we have the clichéd one kid who's not special. I won't spoil anything else that happens, if this review manages not to scare someone away from picking this up, but overall it was pretty underwhelming. I'm not too familiar with Jonathan Ross, but I understand he's a pretty prominent figure in British entertainment, which explains how he was able to get this published, and also explains why it's all kind of pale and flat. The characters are pretty generic and uninteresting. And you have these droves of super-powered characters, but very few of them stand out in terms of personality or even creative/distinctive powers. It took until midway through the fourth chapter (of seven) to even get to a particularly enjoyable, cohesive action sequence where both the action and the characters' motivations were clear. That's too long to wait, and the story had pretty much lost me by then. Suffice it to say, when the action ramps up towards its predictable climax, everyone who's driving the story is basically a crazy person and it ends the only way it possibly could. There's a vaguely interesting answer as to why this all happened, but of course it's explained to the reader in a very "tell, don't show" fashion. As for the art, it's exactly what you'd expect from Bryan Hitch. Unmistakably above average, maybe even miles above average, but not as good as he used to be. He was one of my absolute favorite artists back when he was on Ultimates, but he was one of the slowest artists in the business and had legendary scheduling issues. So he modified his style and is able to produce work at a reasonable pace, but the trade-off is that his work just isn't the same. He's not quite top notch. Maybe I'm a stickler. You might not be able to tell the difference. But it's a slight disappointment given how good he was when he was working at a snail's pace. I'd happily wait forever for that level of quality. Okay, maybe not "happily" but I'd still wait. It's probably worth noting that I might have rounded up to three stars based on the objective quality of the art, which is still quite good-- good enough to sincerely elevate the material-- and has some legitimately awesome moments, but I'm grading on a curve based on the fact that there are other places to see Hitch's work, looking much better and illustrating a far superior story.

Welcome to AMERICA'S GOT POWERS! It's the biggest TV show on Earth, where the chance to win fame, fortune and get laid are dangled in front of a generation of super-powered teens. All they have to do is WIN. Who is the fastest, the strongest or the greatest? Who survives? 18 years ago, a strange crystal touched down in San Francisco and every pregnant woman in the area gave birth. These were no ordinary children, though, as each but one was gifted an extraordinary power. Used by society for entertainment, these special children live in a form of slavery with no rights, except the ability to compete in the Games. Growing up powerless, Tommy Watts is the only one of these children not to have any special gifts, but when he accidentally steps into the arena it might just fall to him to save the world.

From School Library Journal Gr 10 Up Broadcasting live from San Francisco's Powers Arena and Training School, America's Got Powers is watched by over five billion people worldwide. Seventeen years ago, a massive crystal from space crashed to Earth in the heart of downtown San Francisco, inducing every pregnant woman in the city to give birth immediately. Instead of causing complications due to early births, the event instead imbues these children with powers the Powered Generation. Tommy Watts is the only baby who doesn't receive powers. Previously, some of the superpowered led a riot through San Francisco, which the U.S. Government used as a catalyst to enforce the internment of these individuals. The teens have a choice between performing in the reality show or enduring medical tests at the hidden facility where Professor Syell works to discover the secrets behind their abilities. However, everything is about to change because the government has lost interest in maintaining the public facade and Syell's research. Now the games are getting more dangerous than ever, and soon Tommy Watts will have to find the strength within himself to help guide the Powered Generation through the oncoming storm. Ross and Hitch's work collects the first seven issues of the comic in one volume. Because of the mildly graphic language and images, this title is more

appropriate for older teens. VERDICT An exciting new take on a popular genre and format for fans of "The X-Men" and Suzanne Collin's "The Hunger Games" (Scholastic). Ryan F. Paulsen, New Rochelle High School, NY