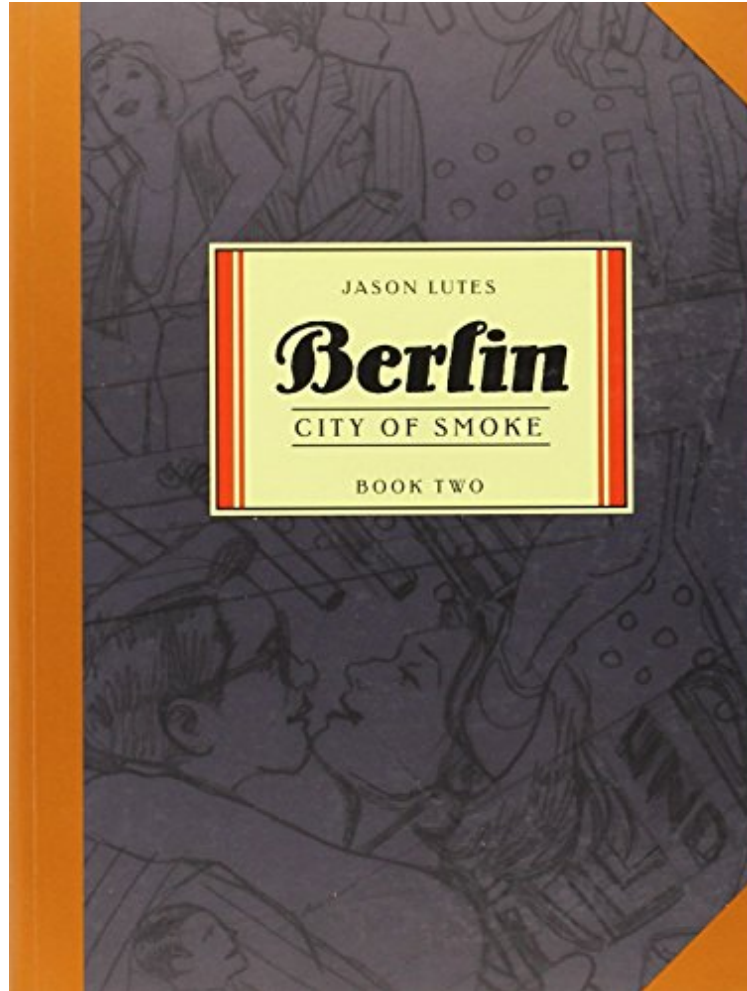


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Berlin Book Two: City of Smoke (Bk. 2)

Jason Lutes

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#718277 in Books Drawn Quarterly 2008-09-16 2008-08-19Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 254.76 x 16.13 x 7.56l, 1.34 #File Name: 1897299532200 pagesDrawn Quarterly | File size: 77.Mb

Jason Lutes : Berlin Book Two: City of Smoke (Bk. 2) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Berlin Book Two: City of Smoke (Bk. 2):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A comic for adultsBy TeaAn extremely interesting comic of an extremely interesting era.I'm fascinated with the use of comics for historical fiction because the addition of visuals can do so much towards giving us the flavor of an era, something that's hard to hold in our minds since our own era is so different. It's has the maturity of a novel, but with the added dimension of visuals, and I'm hungry for exactly that type of comic (something you find often in Japan but that is all too rare in this country).I don't know where the story is (or, stories are) going, but I hope Lutes finishes it. (With its leisurely pace, I'm not sure anyone has that much stamina.) This is one of the few comics in this country that are truly written for adults, without the escapes of fantasy or superheroes or the like. It's ordinary adult life and it's fascinating,6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. "What is the fate of the Weimar Republic?"By doc petersonPicking up immediately following the May Day, 1929

demonstrations, Jason Lutes continues his story of journalist Kurt Severing and student Marthe Muller in the waning days of the Weimar Republic. As with in *Berlin: City of Stones: Book One (Part 1)*, the voices of other Berliners weave in and out of the narrative - including a sub-plot involving some American jazz musicians that I particularly enjoyed. The story is bitter-sweet, not only in terms of the relationships between Kurt and Marthe, but for the city of Berlin itself. Again Lutes creates both a sympathetic view of Berlin in the late 20s and early 30s (as one character puts it, "It's a madhouse - things are on the verge of collapse! Can't any of you feel it? The air is thick with imminent disaster, and we spend our time doodling the days away like children") showing how Germany's post-war republic gradually dissolved into a fascist dictatorship. A closer read shows a real appreciation for the city - from the slang (referring to police as "Bulls" - slang that is not as benign as "cop" nor as acidic as "pig" - but somewhere in the middle) to depictions of the city - especially the neighborhood Wedding (referred to as "Red Wedding" for its strong working-class feel) to bits of dialogue about the Spree or a scene of the Seigelsaule. Clearly Lutes knows his stuff. While graphic novels may not be to everyone's taste, I would without hesitation recommend this book to anyone given its strengths. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Things fall apart

By Kerry Walters I've eagerly awaited the appearance of Jason Lute second volume of Berlin. Now that it's appeared, I realize that it was well worth waiting for. But it also seems to me that there's a bit of a decline in the meticulous craftsmanship that characterized the first volume. The story line continues in expected ways from an historical perspective, but in quite unexpected ways from the perspective of the characters. The most searing change is in the relationship between Kurt Severing, the increasingly disillusioned pacifist, leftist, and political journalist, and his young love Marthe Muller, whom he introduces to the cultural life of Berlin. What happens to Marthe and Kurt seems to parallel what's happening to the Weimar Republic in general: things fall apart. Much of *City of Smoke* follows the breakdown of the Republic: the increasing violence between fascists and communists, the virulence of anti-Semitism, the suppression of intellectuals. Jazz, lesbianism, homosexuality, and a general sense of fin de siècle are some of the themes that Lutes explores. Two shortcomings, while not at all fatal to Lutes' project, make the second volume of Berlin less wonderful than the first. At times, in order to add some historical detail to his story, Lutes becomes overly didactic (especially pp. 120-124). A weightier problem is the occasional sloppiness with which the panels are drawn. The artistry in Berlin, *City of Stones* was breathtaking. Here, occasionally, it seems cartoonish--for example, Lutes draws conventionally cartoonish clouds of anger above characters' heads instead of letting the anger showing on their faces tell the story (see, for instance, bottom panel on p. 173). In other places, the drawing lacks perspective and strikes one as preliminary sketches that were never completed (see, for example, the panels on p. 35). Still, Jason Lutes' is creating a masterwork with his Berlin saga, and I now await the third volume as eagerly as I did the second.

The second installment of the epic historical trilogy

The second volume of Jason Lutes's historical epic finds the people of Weimar Berlin searching for answers after the lethal May Day demonstration of 1929. Tension builds along with the dividing wall between communists and nationalists, Jews and Gentiles, as the dawn of the Second World War draws closer. Meanwhile, the nightlife of Berlin heats up as many attempt to distract themselves from the political upheavals within the city. The American jazz band Cocoa Kids arrives and quickly becomes a fixture. The lives of the characters within Lutes's epic weave together to create a seamless portrait of this transitory city. Marthe Muller follows her lover Kurt Severing as he interviews participants in the May Day demonstration, but she moonlights in the city's lesbian nightlife. Severing acts as a window through which the political shifts within the city and its participants can be seen. As with *Berlin Book One: City*

A comic of impressive scope, taking place in Weimar Berlin and touching on the issues of politics, aesthetics and technology in that cultural ground zero. *San Francisco Chronicle* on *Berlin Book One* [*Berlin*] will be the longest, most sophisticated work of historical fiction in the medium. Lutes has a natural, clean, European drawing style, much like Herg's Tintin . . . This book has the density of the best novels. *Time* on *Berlin Book One*

About the Author Born in 1967, JASON LUTES is an American cartoonist whose work includes the ongoing Berlin trilogy, and the graphic novel *Jar of Fools*.