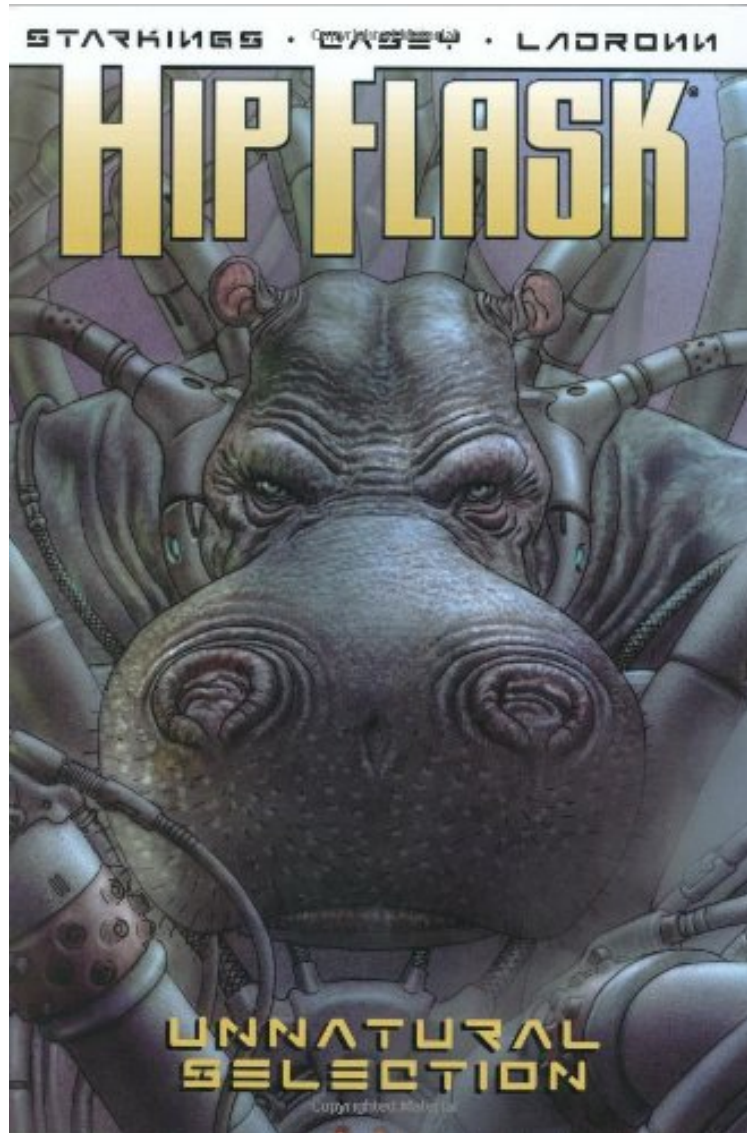


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## Hip Flask: Unnatural Selection

*Richard Starkings, Joe Casey*  
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**Richard Starkings, Joe Casey : Hip Flask: Unnatural Selection** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hip Flask: Unnatural Selection:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Hip Flask: Unnatural Selection By Timothy Reid This is where you should start reading. Definitely not for those looking for a traditional comic. You know right away who are the villains and who are the victims. Keep an open mind; not for those easily offended as Starkings' creation transcends boundaries. An excellent story. 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. One of the most remarkable comic books you'll ever read By Aethelstan I don't read as many comics as I used to, and when I do I like them to be

something different. Something a bit special. Something grown up. Something that need not be about humans with special powers. Something with artwork that is out of the ordinary, and with a story that, while accessible and entertaining, is relevant and thought provoking. Something like Unnatural Selection, in other words. Unnatural Selection is a remarkable piece of work. Its setting is a dark, dystopian future, with horrendous genetic experiments taking place on innocent human beings. This Orwellian society is brainwashing its twisted creations to follow only the party line. Yet out of this appalling situation appears a new kind of comic book hero - a talking hippopotamus. Well, 'Hip' doesn't actually say anything in this first issue, but he is destined to become a futuristic Sam Spade, who just happens to be a hippo. I first read this book in standard-sized comic book form, but the higher grade paper and larger format really does the artwork proud. It reminds me of the feeling I got when I saw H.R. Giger's work for the first time. In some frames you're not instantly sure what's going on, and it's only after studying the image for a minute or so that what it shows becomes clear. Horrifyingly clear, in the case of several images in Unnatural Selection. This is the sort of stuff that sticks in the mind long after you put the book down. A criticism? The story, since it's an origin, doesn't really satisfy - but leaving the reader wanting more is no bad thing. I'm keen to see where it all goes - but eager though I am I don't want the writers rushing out the next part of the story if it means compromising the quality... (Footnote - Elephantmen, the second part of the Hip Flask series, is now available in standard comic format - and they didn't rush: it's cover-dated a year to the month since the first one!)

Hip Flask: Unnatural Selection is the Origin of Hip Flask, Comicraft's grim yet affable hippopotamime hero. Somewhere in the African desert, thousands of miles from civilization, a group of geneticists led by Kazushi Nikken, has conducted unholy experiments involving both human and animal DNA. This is the story of the birth of Hieronymous Flask and his eventual liberation from the torturous world of MAPPO. This 48 page oversized hardcover features cover to cover painted art by Ladronn, collecting the remastered and expanded 'widescreen' art and story from UNNATURAL SELECTION and also pages and covers from HIP FLASK vol. 2: ELEPHANTMEN.

From Publishers Weekly This may be the most gorgeous graphic novel ever devoted to a corporate mascot. Hip Flask, a hippopotamus/hard-boiled detective, was originally created to illustrate Richard Starkings's computer lettering site, Comicbookfonts.com. This European-style oversized hardcover graphic novel presents the character's origin as an absolutely straight-faced science-fiction melodrama: Hip Flask and his half-animal brethren, readers learn, were created by an evil Dr. Moreau-ish 23rd-century scientist to be unstoppable killing machines for a wicked corporation. This story shows very little of Hip Flask himself; the story is mostly a setup for future volumes (at the end readers meet Obadiah Horn, a rhinoceros who means to "create the new future, unfettered by weak, human morality"). It's a ridiculous exercise, but it's enhanced with stunning painted artwork by Mexican artist Ladronn, equal parts Jack Kirby, Moebius and H.R. Giger. Ladronn turns every gigantic panel into a tour de force of riotously complicated machinery, terrifying biological workings and minutely stippled color. His vision of Hip Flask is of a genuinely bestial creature, so finely detailed readers can sense the texture of his skin. His outdoor scenes are landscapes on steroids, rust-stained and rubble-strewn. While not much of a story, this volume will delight fans of fantasy and science-fiction art. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. The most fully-realized sci-fi reality this side of nightmares since H.R. Giger! In an industry still resistant to innovation, Starkings, Ladronn and Casey have really put themselves out there with something that showcases their talents while forging a new path in the hybridized realm of science fiction-based comic books. Pass up that new X-book and make Hip Flask's origin your unnatural selection. --Arnold T. Blumberg, Cinescape Hip Flask is an outstanding example of unbridled creativity, professionalism and a real love of the medium. From the deftly-handled script and truly stunning art to Comicraft's high-quality lettering and design, the whole package simply oozes talent. It's rare that such diverse talent manages to gel into one cohesive and entertaining form, but dammit if Starkings, Casey and Ladronn don't make it look oh-so-easy! (Rating: 10/10) --Matt Yeo, Bullet Proof Comics HIP FLASK: UNNATURAL SELECTION, is a new milestone in comics...a science fiction masterpiece! --George Khoury, Comic Book Artist Magazine About the Author RICHARD STARKINGS learned the ropes of comic book production at Marvel UK in London. Moving to California in 1989 he founded the Comicraft studio with John JG Roshell and together they revolutionized the art of comic book lettering design -- introducing US publishers to the practice of digital lettering (covered in detail in their book COMIC BOOK LETTERING THE COMICRAFT WAY) which is now the industry standard. Starkings created the HIP FLASK character as a mascot for Comicraft's line of comic book fonts before developing the critically acclaimed UNNATURAL SELECTION storyline which details the origin of HIP FLASK and THE ELEPHANTMEN. LADRONN was born and raised in Veracruz, Mexico. After leaving Art School at the age of 21, he managed a design studio and later worked for Televisa Veracruz as a designer of animated station promotionals. His goal was always to work as a painter, and he never considered creating comics, especially not for the American market, until after he visited the San Diego Comic convention with a friend in 1995. Ladronn was invited to submit samples of his work to Marvel Comics and shortly thereafter he landed a regular job penciling the monthly X-MEN spinoff comic book, CABLE. He was later joined on CABLE by Joe Casey and they created a memorable run on the title from issue 51 through to 70. Ladronn's incredible painted work was first

published in a short story for Marvels THOR 2000 before he pencilled and inked the first three issues of THE INHUMANS with Carlos Pacheco. This was his last work for Marvel before starting his career over again painting HIP FLASK for Active Images. JOE CASEY is the co-creator of the avant garde comic book series, CODEFLESH and AUTOMATIC KAFKA. He has also written some of the most recognizable comic book franchises in the world, including SUPERMAN and THE X-MEN. He plays rock'n'roll and p\*sses people off on a regular basis. He is a founding member of the MAN OF ACTION creative thinktank, creating original properties in all forms of entertainment media.