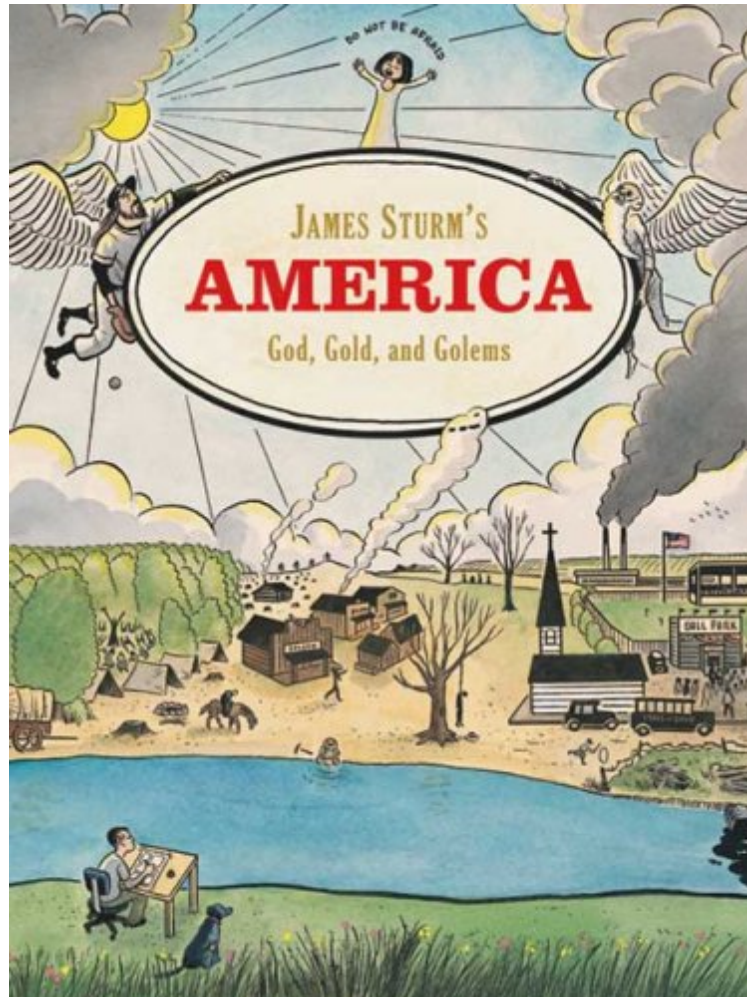


(Ebook free) James Sturm's America: God, Gold, and Golems

James Sturm's America: God, Gold, and Golems

James Sturm

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James Sturm : James Sturm's America: God, Gold, and Golems before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised James Sturm's America: God, Gold, and Golems:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. (Comics) Gold, Gold and Gold! By Sam Quixote This is a collected edition of three books James Sturm has written/drawn - "The Revival", "Hundreds of Feet Below Daylight", and "The Golem's Mighty Swing". All of the stories are fictional but have a basis of historical record. "The Revival" is the shortest of the three and is set in late 18th century America. A couple are walking through the woods on their way to hear a preacher's sermon. They devoutly believe in God and talk vaguely about a miracle. I won't spoil the surprise but it's a dark, dark story. Sturm does a great job of recreating the hard life these pioneers lived where it seemed like an endless camping trip. "The Revival" itself is a carnival-like atmosphere mixed in with desperate people praying to anyone for an easier life. "Hundreds of Feet Below Daylight" takes place in the late 19th century where the gold rush

has captured the imaginations of thousands, and a handful of men have gone to live in a small settlement with a mine to look for gold in the bowels of the earth. The mine however doesn't yield up any gold which soon leads to the workers' dissatisfaction with the man running the mine who promised them riches. Throw into this mix a deeply troubled worker, old and skinny, who loses his mind, and the family who take care of him and you get a surprise turnaround of events in the end. Again, Sturm does a tremendous job of creating an atmosphere that you feel might be close to how it felt at the time. The darkness and cold is so vivid it almost reaches out to reader. "The Golem's Mighty Swing" is yet another fantastic story. We're now in the early 20th century and a travelling baseball team of Jews calling themselves "the Stars of David" are going from town to town playing the local baseball teams. They soon encounter darker prejudices in some of the towns as well as the rise of their sport as entertainment. By far the longest story in the book, it's almost Sturm's most accomplished, showing how he's grown as a cartoonist with longer passages without words, multi-layering, and excellent character development. Sturm's style reminded me of Seth and Chester Brown's both in their line drawings and themes of "the olden days", but Sturm is definitely an artist in his own right. All of the stories convey complexity within the deceptively simple panels, and all of the pages look appealing. As for the book itself? If you're a comics fan who enjoys what Drawn and Quarterly and Fantagraphics put out, you'll love this. A definite masterpiece and a jewel waiting to be discovered by any and all comics fans, "God, Gold and Golems" is all gold.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Terrific collection explores the literary side of comic books. By J. Shurin. This sizable graphic novel collects three separate works by writer/artist James Sturm, each exploring a different (depressing) aspect of Americana. "The Revival" is the most hopeful of the three pieces, despite its macabre twists and unfortunate setting in a 19th-century religious gathering. "Hundreds of Feet Below Daylight" takes place at the end of the 19th-century, and tells the story of the grim happenings in a washed-out gold mine. It is entirely bleak and populated with thoroughly reprehensible characters. "The Golem's Mighty Swing", a look into a 1920's Jewish, barnstorming baseball team, is the best of the collection. The team - "The Stars of David" - is one of life's underdogs. Although terrific on the field, they're sleeping in the bus, playing multiple games every day, villainized by the local press, and constantly struggling to make ends meet. Although "Golem" shows a few flashes of hope (there's one surprisingly touching scene involving non-bitter small-town folks and a crate of apples), it is largely a story about a group of people, desperately struggling to do something they love, but slowly being ground down by reality. This is a terrific collection - especially the must-read "Golem" - which goes far in demonstrating how graphic novels can tell difficult and important stories.

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The other side of America. By Salvatore P. Vasta. Three stories that show three totally different aspects of the American psyche. Though set in the past, they are as real today as they were then. One only has to watch the televangelists or the WWE to see these features alive and well. Bravo James Sturm for having the fortitude to tell these stories.

Focusing on less sensational times in U.S. history (non-war and pre-Depression) James Sturm's America draws a portrait of the people and their dreams that make up this country. Comprised of three chapters "The Revival," "Hundreds of Feet Below Daylight," and "The Golem's Mighty Swing" the stories grow as the country grows: from pioneers searching for a place to call home to ghost towns gutted by greed and racism to the distractions and fantasies of popular entertainment.

From Publishers Weekly. Three of Sturm's previously released graphic novels are gathered to create a Howard Zinn-like look at lesser-known episodes of America's past. "The Revival" is a short, sharp piece dramatizing the massive 1801 religious revival meeting in Cane Ridge, Ky. (the country's biggest ever), with the story of a traveling couple who arrive at the meeting with fire in their eyes and a dark secret pushing them on. In "Hundreds of Feet Below Daylight," successive waves of greed, racism and blind folly swamp a Western mining town in the late 19th century. Because the allegory for the evils of Western expansion is so blatantly rendered, it's by far the weakest segment. The strongest is the last and longest, "The Golem's Mighty Swing," which adds a welcome dose of lyricism. Building on scraps of early baseball history, the Negro Leagues and Jewish mysticism, Sturm weaves a parable on racism and spectacle around a barnstorming, supposedly all-Jewish team in the 1920s called the Stars of David. The more the players parody themselves as mystical Hebrews, the more they earn. Sturm's art changes with the time period, moving from the dark gothic style of "The Revival" to the last story's clean and airy nostalgia. (June) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From School Library Journal. Grade 10 Up. Sturm presents three vignettes set in distinct places and times in U.S. history. The Revival showcases the desperation and despair felt by settlers on the frontier. The promise of second chances and the hope for a better life are offered not only by the religious spirit of the revival, but also by the opportunity to begin again someplace new. In Hundreds of Feet below Daylight, gold is a powerful lure that also offers hope of a better life. Sturm illuminates the wishes, antipathies, and fears of a mining town, punctuated by many acts of violence. The Golem's Mighty Swing, previously published as a stand-alone book, rounds out the collection. Hucksterism and prejudice collide when a down-and-out Jewish baseball team allows an unscrupulous promoter to costume a player from the Negro Leagues as the golem to draw crowds. A potential riot ends up washed out miraculous or just good luck? The black-and-white art varies, from smooth lines and

gray shading in Golem to a rougher look reminiscent of woodblock printing in Revival. Sturm ably captures his characters' emotions and reveals motivation with telling details. These stories will be best appreciated by readers familiar with or curious about the American past. Susan Salpini, formerly at TASIS The American School in England

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Three of Sturm's stories drawing on American history are here brought together in a compilation that enhances each one's historicity. The briefest, "The Revival," portrays frontier life in the early nineteenth century. "Hundreds of Feet Below Daylight" is set in gold rush country after the initial euphoria has waned, and only the patient and the stubborn vie for the mineral and the wealth it could bring. "The Golem's Mighty Swing," the best known of the three (it was published as a graphic novel in 2001), concerns professional baseball outside of the major and minor leagues in the 1920s. Social issues, including racial prejudice and intolerance, poverty, and family dynamics, are broached via both plot and character. Sturm provides excellent facial and physical expressions as well as good architectural and civic detail, making this an easy crossover graphic novel for readers who enjoy American history made into well-told stories. Meanwhile, graphic-novel stalwarts familiar with some but not all of Sturm's work will be most pleased. Francisca Goldsmith

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