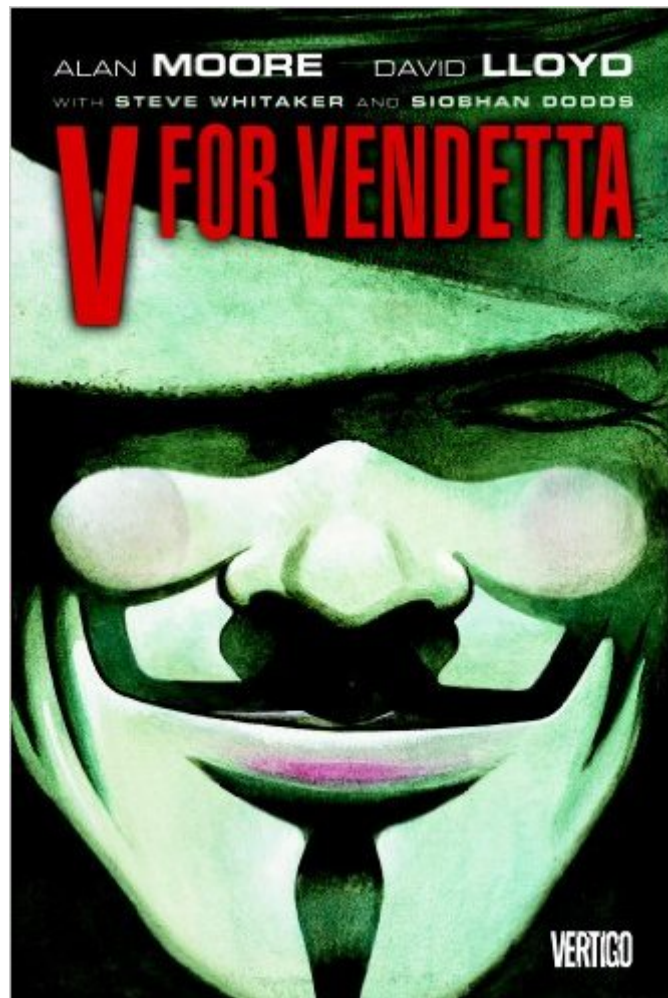


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V For Vendetta



Synopsis

A new trade paperback edition of the graphic novel that inspired the hit movie! A powerful story about loss of freedom and individuality, V FOR VENDETTA takes place in a totalitarian England following a devastating war that changed the face of the planet. In a world without political freedom, personal freedom and precious little faith in anything comes a mysterious man in a white porcelain mask who fights political oppressors through terrorism and seemingly absurd acts. It's a gripping tale of the blurred lines between ideological good and evil. This new trade paperback edition features the improved production values and coloring from the 2005 hardcover.

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Customer Reviews

It is perhaps simplistic to declare that "V for Vendetta" is Alan Moore's version of George Orwell's "1984." Orwell came up with his "prophetic" title by reversing the last two digits of the year in which he wrote his book. Moore began his story in 1982, picturing a future that was around the corner and setting his tale in then late 1990s in a Britain that had become a fascist state. Moore worked from the assumption that in 1983 the Conservatives would lose the elections and that the Labour Party would remove American missiles from the British Isles, which meant that England would no longer be a target during a nuclear war. In the post-holocaust Britain of the 1990s, Moore posited a Fascist takeover. The title character of V is a one time victim of a concentration camp medical experiment who is now an enigmatic hero wearing a grinning Guy Fawkes mask; Fawkes was one of the conspirators in the Gunpowder Plot that was an attempt to assassinate King James I of England. In the opening chapter V sets his sights on The Voice of Fate, the official voice of the government's

propagandistic lies. From that small but significant initial victory, the battle continues. There is something decidedly "English" about "V for Vendetta," and not simply because of the setting. Moore can talk about Harlan Ellison's "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" and "Fahrenheit 451" being among the elements he drew upon to create his own brave new world, but it is clear that he owes more to Orwell and Huxley, to Robin Hood and "The Prisoner," than American manifestations of the same impulse to freedom. V is not a superhero, even if the medical experiments have somehow made him more than human.

British writer Alan Moore earned his place in the comic book writers' pantheon with his seminal turn on Swamp Thing in the 80s, part of the triumvirate of Frank Miller, Neil Gaiman, and Moore who transformed lowly comic books into a respectable artistic medium. And, like Miller and Gaiman before him, Moore found that the only way to carry on once you've thoroughly changed your industry is to do it again and again in new and novel fashion. Thus, I give you "V for Vendetta," the absolute furthest thing from "Swamp Thing" and "Watchmen" imaginable. Moore almost singlehandedly restored the creepy cool of EC horror comics with his run on "Swamp Thing." He redefined the superhero genre with "Watchmen." With "V", Moore abandoned the conventions of both genres and embraced gritty Orwellian sci-fi. "V" is set in a Britain which has embraced Fascism following a nuclear conflict which left the nation intact but badly bruised. Mirroring Hitler's ascent over the ashes of the Weimar Republic, the Norsefire party seizes power in Britain and restores order at a horrible price. That is, until a stylish terrorist in a Guy Fawkes mask codenamed "V" appears on the scene to tear the new order down. "V for Vendetta" marks a major departure from comic book style. David Lloyd's cinematic style plays like a storyboard for a film; gone are the motion lines and Batman-esque sound effects so familiar to comic readers. Lloyd also dispenses with one of the comic writer's main crutches for exposition---the thought balloon.

Based on plot and artistry, "V for Vendetta" deserves five stars. Alan Moore's alternate history throws the reader into a chilling fascist England where the champion of liberty is the poetic, deranged vigilante, V. England has somehow survived the consequences of humanity's self-destructive myopia, but it has not survived intact. Facism rules the day, and England has been generally "purified" of minorities, homosexuals, and other officially-targeted degenerates. But plenty of officially-sanctioned degenerates abound, and they form both the upper and lower echelons of this new England. That is, until V strikes a blow for chaos, for liberty, and for freedom. V, a scarred survivor of the worst of the internment camps formed by the fascists, is undeniably insane, but he

has the spirit of a poet and the mind of a genius hidden behind his Guy Fawkes mask. He singlehandedly leads a campaign of terrorism against the corrupt powers-that-be, and there are several dazzling passages as "V" explores both V's perspective on life and his history as well as the more sordid characters who comprise England's new corrupt power structure. Many of these scenes are captured by Moore with startling visuals and poetic images. This is a dark-yet-colorful graphic novel -- nothing like Frank Miller's zebra-esque "Sin City" stories. Lurid colors combined with creepy darkness evoke the corruption that is the brave new world. Unfortunately, this review is of the paperback edition of the story, not the story itself. The paperback edition of "V for Vendetta" is, quite frankly, too darn small. Several panels feel cramped and crammed in, and I felt a lot of eye strain as I tried to explore the details of some of the more intricate panels.

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