



The Cage

By Martin Vaughn-James



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First published in 1975, *The Cage* was a graphic novel before there was a name for the genre. Considered an early masterpiece of the genre, the Canadian cult comic has been out of print for decades. The new edition includes an introduction by Canadian comics master and Lemony Snicket collaborator Seth (*Palookaville; It's a Good Life, If You Don't Weaken*).

Cryptic and disturbing, like Dave Gibbons (*Watchmen*) illustrating a film by Ozu, *The Cage* spurns narrative for atmosphere, guiding us through a series of disarrayed rooms and desolate landscapes, tracking a stuttering and circling time and a sequence of objects: headphones, inky stains, bedsheets. It's not about where we're going but how – if – we get there.

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The Cage By Martin Vaughn-James Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. First published in 1975, this work foreshadowed the rise of the graphic novel. While promoted by insiders in the years that followed, it is not well-known. Its relative obscurity may be due to the late Vaughn-James's devotion to his highly personal vision. Presented here are a series of black-and-white drawings, nearly clinical in their precision, detailing an enigmatic structure in an unspecified place and time. Accompanying the illustrations are bits of text, which are perhaps explicative in their unseen whole but as fragments offer only tantalizing hints of possible unity. Nonlinear in its approach to both space and time, the study mixes the banally familiar with the disturbingly alien. What emerges is not comprehensible in any mundane sense, but it presents enough of an illusion of a greater whole lurking just out of frame to be addictively engaging. It is a masterpiece, demonstrating a level of skill and insight very few have even aspired to in the nearly 40 years since its initial publication. With an introduction by Canadian comics star and Lemony Snicket collaborator Seth, this work is strongly recommended for every true fan of the graphic arts. (Nov.)

Review

"In the histories of comics in Canada and comics as book-length narratives he played an important and often neglected role. His importance stems not just from the fact that he was a Canadian cartoonist when so few others were out there, or that he created long-form cartoon books when no graphic novel designation yet existed in book stores or libraries. Vaughn-James was also, and remains, a significant figure in comics history because his work was singular, literate, experimental, and often unsurpassably good." – *The Walrus*

"He is best known for a publishing sequence from the early 1970s ... that stand as either seminal graphic novels from the generation in which that notion finally began to take hold, books that function in many ways like graphic novels but aren't quite the same thing, or works that have informed the development of or suggested possibilities for those kinds of books." – *The Comics Reporter*

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About the Author

Martin Vaughn-James (1943-2009) was a painter and groundbreaking comics artist who published three of his early works with Coach House Press: *The Projector* (1971), *The Park* (1972) and *The Cage* (1975). He was born in England and spent much of his youth in Australia, before moving to Canada to do his groundbreaking comics work in the 1970s. Vaughn-James is widely recognized as a pioneer in the development of the graphic novel. Later in life, Vaughn-James moved to Belgium, where he focused on painting. His works were the subject of several personal exhibitions in Brussels and Paris. Vaughn-James also published two works of prose fiction: *Night Train* (1989) and *The Tomb of Zwaab* (1991).

Users Review

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