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King: A Comics Biography of Martin Luther King, Jr. (The Complete Edition)

Ho Che Anderson

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A landmark graphic novel about the civil rights leader, complete in one volume.

This groundbreaking body of comics journalism collects for first time Anderson's entire biography of the renowned civil rights leader Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Over a decade in the making, the saga has been praised for its vivid recreation of one of the most tumultuous periods in U.S. history and for its accuracy in depicting the personal and public lives of King, from his birth to his assassination. *King* probes the life story of one of America's greatest public figures with an unflinchingly critical eye, casting King as an ambitious, dichotomous figure deserving of his place in history but not above moral sacrifice to get there. Anderson's expressionistic visual style is wrought with dramatic energy; panels evoke a painterly attention to detail but juxtapose with one another in such a way as to propel King's story with cinematic momentum. Anderson's successful use of the graphic novel to tell a major work of nonfiction has drawn favorable comparisons to Art Spiegelman's *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, Joe Sacco's *Palestine*, and Osamu Tezuka's *Adolph.*

Ho Che Anderson's biography traces King's life from his childhood in Atlanta and his education at Booker T. Washington High School, Morehouse College, and the Crozer Theological Seminary and his centrality to the civil rights movement: his first public involvement in civil rights when, in 1955, as President of the Montgomery Improvement Association, he organized the successful Montgomery Bus Boycott; his founding of the Southern Christian leadership Conference in 1957; his help in organizing the 1966 March on Washington and his "I Have a Dream" speech there; his Nobel price in 1964; his voter-registration campaign that ended in the Selma-to-Montgomery Freedom March; and the tragic moment on April 4, 1968 when he was shot dead on the balcony of the Lorraine Hotel in Memphis, Tennessee. *King* not only recreates the major events in King's public life, but chronicles the daily, rough-and-tumble, behind-the-scenes political maneuverings and strategic compromises that were required to mobilize millions of people toward a common goal. His internal debates with Ralph Abernathy and Jesse Jackson and his hardball negotiations with John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson are dramatized. Anderson's achievement is not merely a political biography filled with names and dates, but a fully rounded portrait of fallible human engaged in a superhuman effort his fears, his doubts, his relationship with his wife Coretta King, and his children are compassionately and truthfully rendered.

Anderson's visual approach includes the use of photographs, realistic portraiture, and expressionistic imagery alternating between stark black and white chiaroscuro and painterly full color. The dialogue is unflinchingly naturalistic and accurately reflects the moral urgency and labyrinthine political and practical complexities that King was navigating, from his deeply felt, personal commitment to a public cause to the wider political eruptions the country was experiencing. This is a respectful, unsparing, truthful biography of a man and his times that captures the moral and political gravitas of the cause as well as its human dimension. A major work of comics, depicting a major work of history.

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