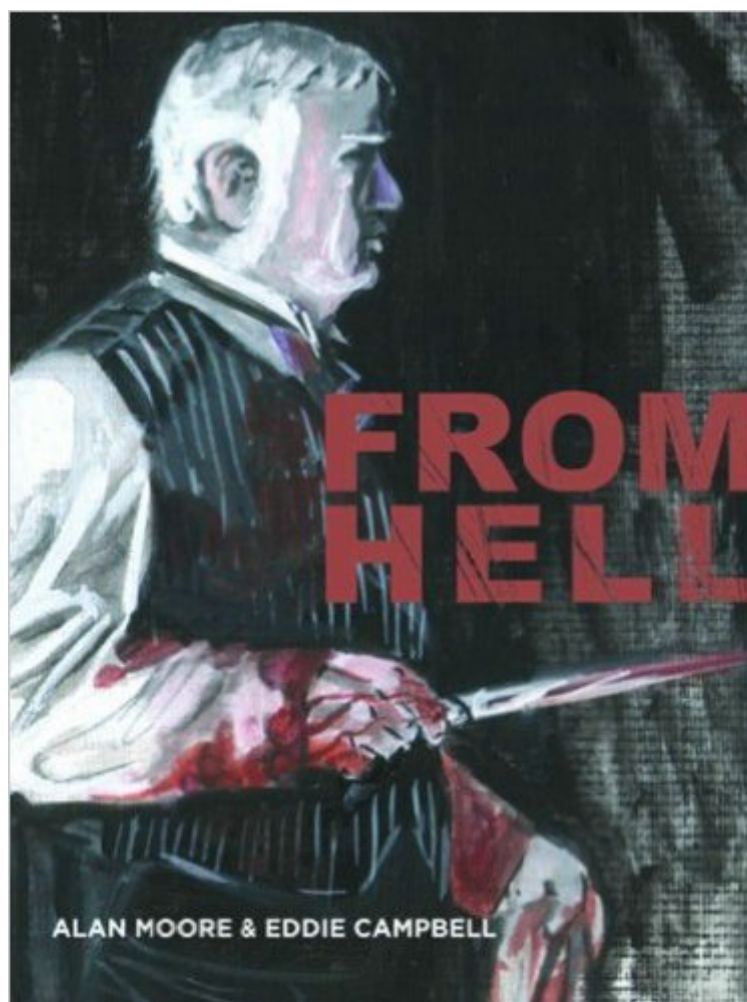


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From Hell



Synopsis

Legendary comics writer Alan Moore and artist Eddie Campbell have created a gripping, hallucinatory piece of crime fiction about Jack the Ripper. Detailing the events that led up to the Whitechapel murders and the cover-up that followed, *From Hell* has become a modern masterpiece of crime noir and historical fiction.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (176 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

This is a classic work, as dense and as demanding as any novel, and perhaps the closest to literature a graphic novel has ever come. It could only have flowed from the pen of the great Alan Moore, whose *Swamp Thing* and *Watchmen* revolutionized graphic storytelling. He and Eddie Campbell have done wonderful work here. I merely write to correct a couple of errors in other reviews. First, jplatt@webspan.net says this is only the first part of *From Hell*. The pictured edition does, I believe, contain the entire story, although there are single comics containing single chapters and other trade paperbacks containing fewer chapters than the above pictured edition. If you buy the pictured edition, you are getting a complete story from beginning to end. I read the above edition and found nothing missing -- it goes from before the first murder to after the last. Second, editor Rob Lightner says that Moore believes, and wants us to believe, that Jack the Ripper was the Queen's physician and part of a Masonic conspiracy to kill the mother of Queen Victoria's grandson. I think this misses the point. Moore loves to make connections between things (see, for instance, his ongoing series *Promethea*), and the Masonic conspiracy gives him a lot of room to weave in the

various aspects of the Ripper legend. I don't know that he necessarily believes it any more than he believes, as shown in *From Hell*, that the killer was able to predict the future while he was gutting his victims. Moore is a storyteller and his story contains many fantastic elements. It would be a mistake, I think, to attribute to Moore all the opinions expressed in this fine work of fiction.

The most recent offering from Alan Moore, the author who, alongside Neil Gaiman, was responsible for bringing comic books to their fullest potential as art on par with novels, *From Hell* is a brilliant, moody, and well-researched re-telling of the Jack the Ripper story. Moore takes an interesting twist on the story - and one he himself admits that he believes is false - but the point of the book isn't so much a whodunit as a treatise on the combining of fact and fiction into myth, and the nature of sensationalism and crime in the 20th century. *From Hell* features an amazing cast of characters and the story is told in sixteen chapters - two of which are a prologue and an epilogue. Moore weaves historical facts together to form a cohesive story, and draws on dozens of sources, both Ripper-related and otherwise. *From Hell* suggests that the Ripper was, in fact, William Gull, Physician Ordinary to the Royal Family and a member of the Freemasons (this fact is revealed very early on in the book, unlike the movie which IS a whodunit). Where high-level criminologists like FBI profiler John Douglas (inspiration for the Crawford character in *Silence of the Lambs*) seem to think that the crimes were motivated by a fear of women, Moore focuses on the calm, ritualistic nature of the murders, and the important connection between the victims - that they all knew each other. Although in this book the crime itself was a Masonic ritual, I think it should be noted that Moore isn't trying to smear the Masons, and that should be obvious to anyone reading *From Hell*. His contention, one that more or less fits the 100-plus years worth of facts, is that William Gull was gradually going insane and had visions about Masonic deities - shreds of old ritual from Freemasonry's past that he blows out of proportion and begins to manifest, at least in his mind. There was nothing anti-Freemason in this book, but I realize people have to find something to get bent out of shape about. The crowning achievement of this volume isn't the way Moore creates a perfect fit for Gull as the Ripper, but the appendix at the end in which he details the painstaking amount of research that went into this work. He has a reference for nearly every factual detail, and readily admits when he makes things up or dramatizes certain events for the story. It's an excellent resource for Ripperologists and scholars interested in Moore's book, and its inclusion is what makes *From Hell* such a fascinating read. I absolutely recommend *From Hell*, especially if you enjoyed the film - the book is far more detailed, and doesn't sacrifice any historical accuracies to make a better story, as the movie did. If the film is a starting point, this graphic novel is the logical conclusion. Get

it today; you will not be sorry you did.

After his success with Swamp Thing, Watchmen, and half a dozen other projects, Alan Moore went into self-publishing, beginning Lost Girls, Big Numbers, and From Hell. Sadly, the first two remain unfinished (possibly indefinitely), but the third well makes up for it. The exhausting amount of detail is the first thing one notices. From street philosophers, to royal courtesans and favorites to who had the most popular literature at the time, Moore has done everything humanly possible to make the book disturbingly accurate. His footnotes are almost a book in and of themselves. The take on the Jack the Ripper murders, while off-putting to the weaker stomachs among us, is psychological horror coupled with intrigue, sordid love affairs, and human perversity in almost every form. If you want to feel novacaine-numb good after reading something, pick up a Superman. If you want to be disturbed, challenged, and perhaps educated a bit, read From Hell.

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