



Savage Dragon, Vol. 1: Baptism of Fire

Erik Larsen

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(W/A) Erik Larsen

Chicago. A criminal mastermind called OverLord held the city in his terrifying grip. Ordinary cops were losing the battle against OverLord and his super-freaks. Then a miracle happened. When he was found, he had no memory of his past. Lieutenant Frank Darling helped him find an identity and a life. Now they have a fighting chance... now they have... The Dragon.

Savage Dragon, Vol. 1: Baptism of Fire Details

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From Reader Review *Savage Dragon*, Vol. 1: Baptism of Fire for online ebook

Drown Hollum says

I'm glad I finally got the chance to read *Savage Dragon*. It's fun, absurd, and absolutely a product of its time. The writing in this first volume can be cornball and a little too brisk, and the art isn't perfect, but it's fresh and a ton of fun to read. It's also deeply satisfying as the product of the one-man-army Erik Larsen has become. This is a silly, early Image book, but the history alone makes it worth the read.

Matej says

The first volume of *Savage Dragon* is a bit rough around the edges, but having read the later volumes I know how awesome it becomes.

Sure, there are some references that are dated and there are some things that are just way too on the nose, but despite that, it still manages to be fun and interesting.

Overall, a great beginning of a series that obviously has a lot of potential.

John says

The start of the now long running series was a bit better. I actually read this story arc long after I was deep into the other books and found that there wasn't anything I didn't already know. This is where you would start, however, if you've never read the series. Basically, these are cool characters that do exactly what most people would do in their situation. And, there is a full range of character types, in a strange way, making them more believable. Meaning, if we suddenly had people in society with super powers, this book portrays what those people would be like and how they would interact with society. Like all good fantasy, this is an extension of real life. It answers the question, "If this happened, what would it be like?" Also, it's a great escape from reality when reality needs escaping from.

Cheese says

Fantastic introduction and someone I could get used to reading.

Tony Laplume says

Fascinating as a piece of history. I know Erik Larsen's *Savage Dragon* as one of the enduring titles that helped launch the Image revolution (along with *Spawn*, it continues to this day and is more than two hundred issues into its run), filled with all sorts of sensationalism in its early days but in at least the past decade having evolved into a bastion of classic superhero storytelling. This material represents Larsen's first published arc, a mini-series that preceded the ongoing series and sets up *Dragon's* story, the amnesiac green

giant who ends up recruited by the police.

I wasn't a reader back in the day, but as I suggested earlier I've sampled issues here and there over the last ten years. Later Larsen is great fun to read. Early *Savage Dragon* is...rough. Larsen writes in sketches, and it's plainly evident that he was a Marvel guy, who even as he's rejecting Marvel tropes is writing the same angst-ridden archetype. Dragon himself, in these pages, looks (aside from the green skin and the fin) looks like he was pulled directly from '80s action movies.

If Larsen and his fellow Image founders were granting themselves creative independence, the knock is that they didn't often think of creative *control*, as in they had no safeguards in place to ensure the quality of their output. If you liked your superheroes in straight-up superhero adventures, then Image was the place for you. It was no wonder that Marvel found itself in such dire straights at the time, since a whole generation of creators left and set up a whole Marvel alternative.

Anyway, it's funny, because Larsen explains in a forward how he wrote hundreds of pages worth of Dragon stories as a kid, and his *main* concern, upon getting to do it professionally was that he wanted to give readers a fresh start. Later he'd realize he should probably advance the quality of the storytelling, too, and maybe this collection was a way he started on that, because he admits he didn't just take the original mini-series and reprint it, but rather heavily edit it, complete with some new material. If this were George Lucas, there would be no Erik Larsen *Savage Dragon*, mostly because of nonsensical fan outrage.

Well, thank goodness *that* didn't happen...

Charley Allen says

Here is the deal with *Savage Dragon*. Erik Larsen took a character that he created in 4th grade, and made a comic from him. The result is a bad ass character that has legit super powers and tears up his enemies. It's not terribly deep, but that's not what you want all the time. It's a fun place to escape, especially since Larsen has had control of the character since the first issue, and still writes and draws every issue. Win!

Sarah says

If I were reading *The Savage Dragon* for the first time today, this might not be a 5-star review... But with hindsight and nostalgic feelings towards one of my nerdy teenage endeavors, it still kicks ass.

The Dragon is super strong, has wolverine-like healing skills, pinpoint sharpshooter accuracy... And chooses to be a police officer.

Not to mention his upper body is crazy out of proportion, he has that fin on his bald green head (though still has a hairy chest/legs) and is still a ladies man.

Plus the "super freak" villains in these books are so totally over the top. The whole thing is like the ultimate super hero guilty pleasure on steroids.

Over 10 years later, and I still love it.

It will remain to be seen how much further I go into the story when I get back through all of my archives though...

Nate Fiala says

When I found this comic book when I was a kid, it instantly became my crack, and despite a lapse in collecting that I'm slowly rebuilding, continues to be my comic book crack to this day. This first volume of Savage Dragon has plenty of what to expect for years to come- ultra-violence, super-hot babes, bitchin' art from series creator Erik Larsen that is, in my personal opinion, at a career high point, having just come off writing, penciling and inking The Revenge of the Sinister Six storyline on the adjectiveless Spider-man title right before he left Marvel Comics with the other Image Comics founders and started this comic I'm writing about now... and to me, more exciting than all of this even, is the precedent he starts in these first three issues of the sudden and senseless deaths of people just associated with super heroes. This collection is the start of the modern Dragon stories, a character that Larsen created when he was a child and has been working on in one way or another most of his life. While more well-known for his artwork than his writing, he is a good writer and his style is not one that beats you over the head with it's themes, but he does have particular themes he comes back to, and the death of Debbie Harris is one that is still felt in the book and set a precedent that's lasted more than 20 years.

If you don't go out and read this comic tomorrow and then have catch up on the next 200+ issues, I don't even want to talk to you.

Isaac Thompson says

Savage Dragon was my favourite comic when I was in my early teens. Now, It's a bit dated and silly at times, but still lots of fun to revisit and definitely far superior to most of the early image comics.

Nancy says

This review can also be found on my blog: <https://graphicnovelty2.com/2017/10/0...>

A few weeks back, I dipped my toe in 1990's nostalgia and reviewed Wild C.A.T.S. an early Image comic line written by Jim Lee and Brandon Choi. Walt, a blogging friend for the aptly named blog Comic Reviews by Walt, encouraged me to read Savage Dragon. Since I like to take advice from my like-minded blogging friends I picked up Baptism Of Fire, as he said it would be the best to start off with.

Erik Larsen, the creator and author/illustrator deserves major kudos for developing a character that he designed in childhood, and making it the longest running American full-color comic book to feature a single author/illustrator. Larsen had drawn the Dragon into a few other issues for other comic companies before he became one of the founding members of Image Comics, and it was at that time in 1992 that he truly was able to give the Savage Dragon his own title. At the 20 year mark, Larsen took the time to pull together some of the first issues from the early 90's and rearrange them chronologically and add a few more pages in, to make this compiled volume have a smoother narrative flow.

We first meet Dragon in a ball of fire, landing in the city of Chicago. He is found by Lt. Frank Darling and brought to the hospital. Darling questions him about his origins, but the Dragon has amnesia about his prior life. His green skin, huge size, and finned head don't raise that many extra questions, as Chicago is over run with super mutants that the current superheros are struggling to keep in check. Darling is able to convince Dragon to join the Chicago Police Department, and the Dragon proves to be a boon for the department, especially after the most powerful hero Super Patriot is seemingly out of action due to grievous injuries. Dragon is able to take down villain after villain, with epics names such as Bedrock, Overlord, Mako, Hellrazor and Inferno. And no storyline like this would be complete without the trope of the woman he cares for being in danger. We never do find out his origins in this volume, and the Dragon's angst of always having to kill or be killed, sets up further story lines for the future.

These first issues of Savage Dragon were drawn with the usual 1990's excesses. The Dragon is muscled beyond belief, the women are sex kittens and Image throws in the obligatory Youngbloods reference. There are quite a few self depreciating jokes throughout, as Larsen plays around with the hero vs villain genre. I adore the fonts used throughout in the sound effects such as brakathroom, choom and skrakaboosh. They were similar to one's later used in Invincible, with fun interlocking oo's.

This 'director's cut' volume is a great debut to the Savage Dragon tale. While I don't know if I'll pick up future volumes, this was a wonderful introduction to one of Image's best ongoing heroes, and I'm glad I took the time to read it.

Μιχ?λης says

To Savage Dragon ε?ναι απ? τις αγαπημ?νες μου υπερηρωικες σειρ?ς. ?θελα λοιπ?ν, μετ? απ? χρ?νια, να ξαναπι?σω το απ? πο? ξεκ?νησε.

Το στορυ ειναι απλ?: ?νας πρ?σινος ?ντρας ξυπν?ει μ?σα στις φλ?γες με αμνησ?α (θα μ?θουμε το πως κατ?ληξε ?τσι χρ?νια μετ?) και κατατ?σσεται στην αστυνομ?α για να τη βοηθ?σει εν?ντια σε υπερκακοποιους.

Τα πρ?τα τε?χη ε?ναι ?να δυνατ? origin story που ?χει ?ναν περ?εργο ρυθμ? και δεν ε?ναι λ?γες οι φορ?ς που σκ?νε δι?φορα ?σχετα λογυδρια (πχ ?νας μον?λογος κατ? της αστυνομικ?ς βαρβαροτητας κατ? των μαυρων- που ?ταν και τ?τε τ?σο επ?καιρη ?σο και σ?μερα ? μια μπηχτη για τον Spider-Man που τρ?φεται ανεμπ?διστος με παιδ?κια). Το καστ ακ?μα ε?ναι μικρ? και εισ?γεται σταδιακ?.

Χωρ?ς να ε?ναι τ?λειο, ε?ναι (μαζ? με το invincible) ?να δε?γμα του τι θα μπορο?σε να ?ταν η Image, εν?, απ? ?σο θυμ?μαι, μ?λις μπει στους επ?μενους τ?μους και θεμελι?σει το καστ, η σειρ? γ?νεται ?να καθαρ? πενταρι (τουλ?χιστον μ?χρι το Savage World arc)
