

ALMOST USEFUL LIFE HACKS



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# How to become rich from comics

My first comic book was an act of negotiation at the age of five. A distant, teenage cousin had come to live in our house and he held a copy of an Archie comic. It was a compact single digest filled with puzzles and intriguing trauma-free stories of youth. I understood none of that. All I cared for was the one story about aliens and all the different panels depicting Archie's red jalopy. I wanted it for the cars.

So I negotiated heavily to own that book. I followed him around. I stood in front of the toilet when he was inside, trying to turn off the lights. I bugged him during lunch and dinner and bedtime. It was a beautiful tactic that works for little children and brand new girlfriends. It definitely worked. He let me have the book. And I drew on the cars, obviously.

Comic book readers are fortunate people. They all have different origin stories of their own start on this path. And they get the best of both worlds. They get the words AND the pictures. This is great for children who have not yet gone beyond the C-A-T of their vocabulary. The rich imagery pulls you in like the unforgiving jello and custard section at a buffet. Or the meat section with the fried beef items. Or the entire buffet. That's the thing about buffets, you are promised the entire world, just like comics.

## INSPIRING DOODLES

Comics are a source in inspiration for many future things. I became a cartoonist because I tried to imitate the gorgeously solid-coloured drawings in Tintin. Created by Georges Remi who went by the pen name Hergé, Tintin first appeared in 1929. That a pre-Google time which is a significant factor when you consider the extensive detail in the artwork. Georges Remi relied on thousands of photographs, documents, blueprints and other solid, hard to get sources for all his artwork. And the lettering was all done by hand by different cartographers. That manual non-Photoshop process created some of the most outstanding artworks in print. He used simple solid colours without any shading to tell so much more than thought possible.

Of course, I sourced my first Tintin from two cousins,

Mary and Julie, who came from abroad to live upstairs. They came with crates of books and the comics were the first ones I targeted. I was about ten and I was easily moved by colourful images. That led to saving up part of the lunch money to buy one comic every other weekend. That incidentally helped me maintain a strictly slim figure while feeding my mind with words. Some will say school provided lots of words but everybody knows those words are like medicine, necessary but terrible and unwanted. No, the words leaping out of a comic book are magic. The pop, pow, and crack of fists flying on paper were the 3D cinema for kids with no Netflix. That's 1990 by the way. Or BTW for our millennial readers.

## COMEDY GOLD

In 1962, the very first Spiderman was printed in Amazing Fantasy No. 15. Created by the visionary Stan Lee, it became the go-to superhero character for teens to aspire. Spiderman's Peter Parker was not like the others before him and not like almost everybody from DC Comics. He was a student; gifted, nerdy, unsure of life and struggling with becoming an adult. The weight of the world rested on his shoulders or so it felt. Something a growing teen can relate to with all the confusing chaos created by Pythagoras, balancing chemical equations, pimples, and girls. Or so it was for me. Peter Parker had much more than super strength and crawling abilities to help him tackle growing pains. He had wit and humour. Every Spiderman issue is spattered with comic relief throughout. And I picked on it. Life will give you lemons and rude math teachers but you can use comedy to win over the, er, girls.

## COLLECTOR'S SAGA

The 1938 issues of Action Comics No. 1 sold for \$3.2 million. Those are way too many zeroes than I am used to seeing outside of my high school math test marks. A 1974 copy of the first Wolverine is worth about \$200 in average condition. Mint costs upwards of \$10,000. Comic books are a collector's item and sometimes even newer material can quickly appreciate. An All-Star Batman #1 that came out in 2016 went for a few hundred dollars for its first issue. Are you ready for that though?



Collecting is a tough job. It is a risky and unsure investment. Much like owning a cat. It appears to be a safe bet, considering cats are generally self-cleaning. But the poop surprises and barf episodes can be gruesome. And as my colleague Zyma bemoans, her cat wakes her up lovingly with scratches. Why did I even think cats are an investment? They are the worst thing to put money into right after binding a large collection of comic books into one stack. It used to be quite the common thing in Bangladesh: gather old books and stitch them together. If you want to collect, storing them in less than ideal conditions ruin your chances of becoming obscenely rich. Humidity yellows the pages. Cold dries them out making them brittle. Worms eat them. Even worse, friends borrow them and forget to return.

It all boils down to one question: read or invest? I am handing out my comics one at a time to my eight-year-old. He has started asking for Batman of the Future and Spiderman, slowly developing his favourites. That could possibly be the best investment I make. There are many different ways to become rich from comics.

Tribute: On a sad note, Stan Lee passed away on November 12, 2018. He created way too many characters including the world of X-Men and helped greenlight many others like the Punisher. What made his characters stand out from earlier superhero works is the relatable emotions that permeates each character. His creations have hopes, aspirations and troubles just like us common folk. And that makes his characters leap out of the pages. He is singularly known to be the guy that made comic nerds cool. There certainly will not be another Stan the Man.

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ঠিক যেমন রূপচর্চায় আভিজাত্য মানেই

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