The Fantastic Four Encyclopedia Article

The Fantastic Four

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The Fantastic Four

The Fantastic Four is a comic book published by Marvel Comics since 1961. Created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, the Fantastic Four are a family of superheroes—Mr. Fantastic, the Invisible Girl (re-named the Invisible Woman in 1985), the Human Torch, and the Thing. The series departed significantly from previous superhero comic books by casting characters as distinct individuals plagued by human failings like self-doubt, jealousy, and even occasional antipathy toward the society that they have sworn to protect. With his monstrous orange rock-skinned appearance, the Thing especially was prone to alienation and periods of self-loathing. And he quickly emerged as the favorite among fans of the comic.

The Fantastic Four was the first of the Marvel comic books to predict the anti-conformist themes soon to become prevalent in the youth culture of the 1960s and subsequent decades. Along with *The Incredible Hulk* and *The Amazing Spider-Man, The Fantastic Four* formed the core of Marvel's 1960s comic-book publishing boom. It remained one of the company's most popular titles in the 1990s.

Further Reading:

Daniels, Les. *Marvel: Five Fabulous Decades of the World's Greatest Comics.* New York, Harry N. Abrams, 1991.

Lee, Stan. *Origins of Marvel Comics.* New York, Simon & Schuster, 1974.