



The Forgotten Man Graphic Edition: A New History of the Great Depression

Amity Shlaes (Adapter) , Paul Rivoche (Illustrator) , Chuck Dixon (Adapted by)

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An illustrated edition of Amity Shlaes's #1 *New York Times* bestseller, featuring vivid black-and-white illustrations that capture this dark period in American history and the men and women, from all walks of life, whose character and ideas helped them persevere.

This imaginative illustrated edition brings to life one of the most devastating periods in our nation's history—the Great Depression—through the lives of American people, from politicians and workers to businessmen, farmers, and ordinary citizens. Smart and stylish, black-and-white art from acclaimed illustrator Paul Rivoche provides an utterly original vision of the coexistence of despair and hope that characterized Depression-era America. Shlaes's narrative and Rivoche's art illuminate key economic concepts, presenting the thought-provoking case that New Deal regulation prolonged the Depression.

The Forgotten Man reveals through striking words and pictures moving personal stories that capture the spirit of this crucial moment in American history and the steadfast character and ingenuity of those that lived it.

The Forgotten Man Graphic Edition: A New History of the Great Depression Details

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Author : Amity Shlaes (Adapter) , Paul Rivoche (Illustrator) , Chuck Dixon (Adapted by)

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From Reader Review The Forgotten Man Graphic Edition: A New History of the Great Depression for online ebook

Taylor Ramirez says

I've gotten about 100 pages in and I don't really think this is for me. While I enjoy history it's just kind of dull. I think I'll probably unhaul it.

Melissa says

Not having read the original Shlaes work of history, I decided to try out the GN edition to see if I could understand a non-fiction book without the benefit of all the words.

And it works. The author/illustrator chose to focus the period through the narrative of Wendell Wilkie, exec for a utilities company, who talks over the history of the Great Depression and its economic impact with Irita van Doren, a literary editor and Wilkie's longtime companion. It "breaks the fourth wall" without actually breaking the fourth wall, which I liked. At times the narrative jumps around and gets disjointed, but that does emphasize how confusing and contradictory New Deal policies and their makers could be.

The art is really nice - all stark black and white for the history sections with interspersed sepia-toned modern-set (1940) sections. The style looks vintage, which suits the historical period. Have to call out a great rendering of Dorothea Lange's "Migrant Mother" photograph which is featured in the book.

Anton says

This is the first graphic book I've ever read. Of course, I'm familiar with comic books, and cartoon strips, but I've always thought I'd corrupt myself if I read one of these.

I started reading the regular version of the book, but got side-tracked when I went on the psycho-neurology kick. Which I'm still on. So I thought I'd cheat and read this one. It took me awhile, probably about a third of the way in, to get used to it, but after that, I liked it! I discovered there is an illustrated guide at the back of the book that helps explain which character is which. I needed help with Wilkie and Rex Tugwell, and well, everybody, except Ayn Rand and Bill Wilson. And Samuel Insull....never quite knew who he was except that my father lost money on his stock, and considered him a bad-guy. Oh, and FDR; his cigarette holder is a dead give-away.

Will this book convince anyone to see the Great Depression from a different perspective? I hope so, and It seems it may have....but this isn't my chosen place for political ranting. I like the book. My father was an illustrator and I grew up knowing some of the most well known cartoonists of the 20th century....illustrators and cartoonists tend to hang out together. I was once used as a model in a cartoon..., I posed as an actor, in a strip called Mary Perkins On Stage. (It was before your time.) O.K., the book was entertaining but I still feel I have to read the print version.

Jerry says

This is subtitled “A New History of the Great Depression”, and it is more a new history than about the Forgotten Man, except in the sense that the phrase was used by various politicians to mean different people.

The history covers the period from about 1927 (when unemployment was 4.1% and the Dow Jones Industrial Average was 155) to 1940 (when unemployment was 14.6% and the Dow Jones was 140). It is a history of the persistence of the Great Depression despite everything government did to end it and an incidental description of why this was so.

The story is told as if by Wendell Willkie, the Republican presidential candidate in 1940 and a New Technology entrepreneur in 1927. This New Technology, electricity, would be heavily invaded by government monopolies by the end of the story.

The Forgotten Man himself appears through various people affected by government policy, such as independent merchants trying to overcome the dictates of Roosevelt’s NRA and the families who can no longer afford meat because the federal government has forced farmers to destroy piglets in order to drive pork prices up.

Government solutions are contrasted with grass-roots solutions, including the start of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Around all of these domestic problems, foreign problems are arising in the Soviet Union, in Germany, and in Italy.

The narrative is more than a bit disjointed and sentences often end unfinished for reasons I don’t understand. On the other hand, this is a huge job; over a decade of people and policy in about 300 comic book pages. It is not as readable as, for example, Larry Gonick’s Cartoon History of the Universe but it also doesn’t have the advantage of getting by on jokes; it’s a serious history that delves into specific policy and its effects on real individuals.

The comic is based on Amity Shlaes’s book The Forgotten Man, which I have not yet read.

Skylar Hatfield says

First graphic novel I have read. I have not yet read the text version of this book. The graphic novel seems to scratch at the surface of the story of the great depression. As I read this book, I kept asking myself why these ideas and facts were not ever part of my education. I also realized that the study of history needs to be ongoing, because its depth and breadth is too vast to cover in a semester or in one text book. Unfortunately, I see the themes and patterns of the history of the world in the 1930s repeated in my day. Though this book sketches out the story of that time, it clearly reveals that success and property do not grow from manipulation and experiments. This country must be founded on truths and all action must be derived specifically from those truths. Government can never assure property and peace. Government is not far sighted or compassionate. Government exists for its own welfare and never has the welfare of the common man in mind. The common

man must fend for himself and reap what he sows.

Anaika says

I received this book in exchange for an honest review.

I have not read the novel that this illustrated edition was based off of therefore I cannot compare the two. This illustrated edition does its job very well of portraying the sadness and struggle the characters are going through. The art fit the story well and enhanced the storytelling. This is a great book for those who want to learn the different perspectives individuals had during the time and learn some more informative historical facts. I had some struggle reading the book due to a few of the words that had smudged, but that was the only issue I had. I am positive that these issues will be handled for the final copy as I did have an uncorrected proof. This illustrated edition is good for those who want to learn more about this time period whether they don't like to read novels or just like the idea of an illustrated version. Overall I think it did very well grasping the time period and I give it 4 stars.

Miroku Nemeth says

Didn't know that this was a revisionist history of the Great Depression praising some of the most avaricious and vile people in American history in the twentieth century, like Ayn Rand. Didn't notice the Steve Forbes endorsement I found on the back cover when I bought it on Amazon. Disappointing. A truly poisonous and insipid text, though one can learn something from the graphic novel as far as historical figures, politics, etc. if one can recognize that it is an extremely perverse propaganda piece and keep that in mind as one reads it.

Jennifer Haight says

My rating is 3.5 Stars

The idea of the The Forgotten Man: A New History of the Great Depression is ambitious and inspired; re-create a 2007 non-fiction book, which tells the history of the American Great Depression. The conflict: how to include the archival information and varied points of view into a linear story with original illustrations?

The attempt is noble. Author Amity Shales and Illustrator Paul Riouche have produced some moments of excitement and fluidity but these moments, unfortunately get sticky and come to complete stops at points as characters become confused and readers are pulled into different parallel story points. The illustrations by Riouche are spot on as a tribute to the illustration style of the first American hero comics.

Because this is told in the cartoon format the author and illustrator made the choice to tell the history as a superhero comic. In this case the hero is Wendell Willkie, a utilities executive. His heroine is friend and literary editor, Irita Van Doren. They are the propellers of the story and in sections it can get a bit twisted for the reader which peripheral plot points we should be focusing on. The story ranges from 1927-1940 and the cast of characters includes: Franklin Roosevelt, David Lilienthal, Andrew Mellon, Calvin Coolidge, Father Divine, Betty Glan, Joseph Stalin and Ayn Rand just to name a few.

History buffs will enjoy this as it shows another angle of the history, students may be able to garner some insight into life in America during this era but the book does not succeed fully at being a stand alone graphic novel. Although it includes a timeline and Cast of Characters at the end the reader must have a developed understanding of these things before reading this book, it does not stand alone.

Mindy says

I love learning about history so I thought this would be a great book to read. I have never read a comic book before, so I thought this would be interesting and would hopefully give me more information and another viewpoint of the Great Depression. I was sent an uncorrected proof, which I have to admit was difficult at times to read due to missing words and some sentences that I could not make sense of. I do have to admit that I had a difficult time reading as I was not used to the comic book type of reading with graphics and balloons with words in them. With that being said, overall the book did give me another way to look into how people felt during the Great Depression. The graphics were able to emphasize what the author was trying to inform the audience of, more so than some other books I have read on the Great Depression. I could almost feel the hopelessness and despair that our nation felt during this time.

Steve says

Almost as good as the original. Quick read, great art.

marcus miller says

A revisionist look at the Depression and New Deal where when President Hoover is criticized for intervening in the economy to help alleviate the suffering of the Depression you can only imagine what is said about FDR and his advisers. The hero is Wendell Willkie, a corporate lawyer who emerges as one of the main critics of the New Deal and goes on to challenge FDR for the presidency in 1940.

The book is readable and the graphics contribute to the telling. My problem is the interpretive viewpoint. I'm sure there are criticisms to be made of the New Deal, but little is said about how the country found itself in an economic depression. This is my understanding of the argument made in the book. If it sounds sarcastic, it is on purpose. -Things were fine under the non-interventionist President Coolidge, but then Hoover, the engineer, has to tinker with the economy and he screws it all up. Then FDR comes along and makes it even worse. See how high the unemployment rate rose under FDR, obviously his policies weren't working. If only the American businessmen, the enlightened disciples of capitalism and the free market were allowed to work their magic, the economy would improve and wealth would trickle down to that forgotten man of the title.-

Along the way, those directing the New Deal are smeared by making sure to talk about those who had a fascination with the Soviet Union and their implementation of communism. If the ties to the USSR aren't enough, the authors make sure to mention any ties New Dealer's had with Hitler and Mussolini. Somehow industrialist Henry Ford and Charles Lindbergh's fascination with Hitler are ignored or overlooked. An example of those working to overcome problems on their own, without government involvement, is the story of Alcoholic's Anonymous. To top it all off, Ayn Rand, the patron saint of individualism and greed makes a brief appearance as someone reacting to the economic oppression of FDR's policies.

If you want to read something from the perspective of a supply-side, free-market story-teller this should do the trick, but by itself it is in no way an accurate representation of the Depression or the New Deal.

Skjam! says

Disclaimer: I received this book through a Goodreads giveaway on the premise that I would review it. My copy was an uncorrected proof, and some changes will occur in the final edition (due out around May 2014.)

This is a “graphic novel” version of the revisionist history book by Amity Shlaes in which she argues that the New Deal policies tended to prolong the Great Depression. For this version, the story is told through the narration of Wendell Willkie, an electric utility executive that ran against Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the 1940 election.

The black and white Rivoche art serves the subject well, although casting FDR’s face in shadow much of the time is an artistic choice that is perhaps a bit too obvious in its intentions.

The general notion is that government intervention in the economy was (and is) a bad thing, and that self-starting individuals such as the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous could have brought the country out of its slump much earlier. It also tries to link several of the important figures in the Roosevelt Administration to Communism, a frequent bugaboo of neoconservatives.

That said, there were many missteps in the great experiment of the New Deal, and several of them get a mention here. Some of them don’t come across quite as the author intended, I think, looking more like the result of bad individual decisions than bad government policy.

There are some really good bits in here, such as the running gag of Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon not talking.

The back has a (possibly misleading) timeline and economic chart, followed by a listing of the cast of characters. The potted biographies carefully cut off as of 1940, which means that you will need to do your own research on such figures as Ayn Rand to see where they actually ended up.

As noted in the disclaimer, this is an uncorrected proof, and some dialogue balloons have missing words or badly constructed sentences, making them make little sense, which will presumably be fixed in the finished product.

Fans of the original book should find this one interesting, as well as history buffs who enjoy graphic novels. Those of you who are not familiar with economics may want to brush up a bit to more fully understand the positions being argued here. In honesty, I’m recommending this one more for the art than the writing.

Aaron Churchill says

You have to like it when a book can entertain as a "good read" and inform as an educational piece. There are far too many pieces of information that exists that lean to far one way or the other. This graphic telling of "The Great Depression" had it's right leaning moments, but read as more informational. There was nothing

overwhelming in the author's personal politics.

This book not only lead to a greater understanding of this critical period in American history, it caused me to think more of the role of government in our lives. There seems to be no one real, right answer. All we can ever do is look at what happened and make educated guesses on what to do next. The past doesn't even determine the present or the future. We can look at what was done, if we want, but too many factors change over the course of time to rely on choices once made.

What would have this period of time looked like had "The New Deal" not been? What would our lives look like today? How would be our impression of capitalism and government be shaped? This book gave me historical answers, and lead to many questions and the desire to think more deeply on how i view the role of government and business in our world today.

It would be great if more pieces of political writing, education, media today could be written and put forth in this fashion. Where we could think and discuss more of what may be best for today, instead of just throwing opinion and randomness into the discussion/debate.

This book is a great read, if you could not tell. It will inform and make you think. There are hang-ups of storytelling, as i expected by taking the length and depth of the original work into a shorter graphic telling. The story doesn't always have the best flow. Some things are left to interpretation (maybe that part on purpose). In other places the art doesn't always tell the story as well as the lack of information asks of it. Some characters are too similar looking and that caused confusion in places. There is a lot of information to get across and sometimes it feels choppy because of this. The information in the back of the book should have been in the front to get a better idea / understanding of the players in the book. So, if you read this book, read the back matter first, it will make a difference to your enjoyment.

Few books i feel the need to re-read, but this book definitely qualifies as a future re-read. It will also be a great way to educate my daughter in future years. Comics are a great source of education and a book like this goes a long way to proving the worthiness of graphic storytelling. A final note, any hang-ups of the author's view point are few and easily worked past to get to the heart of what is being discussed. Highly recommended.

Jody says

I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review.

Instead of copying the back cover or rewriting the book as so many do I will only tell you what I thought of it. It was a great book to read and it will explain a lot that you will not pick up in a classroom. Being from Tennessee you don't find many people who have something bad to say about the TVA. All I knew about it I learned in the classroom. The teachers told us that the TVA came in during a bad time in our nation when no one had work and created and provided a bunch of jobs. The TVA also used their technology to provide electricity for the small towns. We all left the classrooms with our chests stuck out thinking how our state played such an important role in such dark times. This book lets you see that everything is not as clean and shiny as people have made it out to be. I don't completely trust our government (I don't completely trust anyone but Jesus) and all my life I have heard about how good FDR and the New Deal was for America. This book shows the reader some of the gritty reality that went on behind the scenes. We get to see what the mainstream media didn't show us. I haven't read the print version of this book only this graphic version and I was hooked on it. This is not a book that is full of boring stats and figures. It uses powerful images along with greatly researched text to explain a dark time in our past.

This is a graphic novel and I liked it. There I said it. I have wrongly wrote the graphic novel off to Mad Magazine, Cracked or any other "fanboy" books there are out there thinking they were not worth my time. I now apologize. I have now added a graphic novel section onto my bookshelf and am up for reading more in the future. That being said I will close with this statement; Maus is a graphic novel of epic importance because of its subject matter. This graphic edition of The Forgotten Man is on the same shelf for the same reasons. It must be read.

Chris says

I was curious: a graphic novel adaptation of a conservative economic history of the New Deal. Not my political mindset, but I definitely went into it with an open mind. The format certainly does not allow for a very detailed examination of complex issues such as this, to start. I've had similar problems with other non-fiction graphic novels. But this takes it one step further down the wrong path by making a novel type narrative out of the story. This adds dialogue and motivation to the actions of historical figures, which if you feel were the incorrect actions then it is betrayed by the "adaptation" of these characters. Suddenly FDRs advisers become sweaty, power grabbing figures, while any who stand against them become noble figures standing up for the common man. It brings up many points that I would be very likely to agree with or be swayed by, especially by the abuses of judicial power, but the way the story is told it quickly degrades into noble men standing up to massive government injustice while they fight for personal liberty. It becomes a philosophical novel, like an Ayn Rand, rather than a history. I did enjoy the use of the birth of alcoholics anonymous as an example of "people taking care of problems on their own" without government help, but the interludes really stand out. Drawn very attractively, although I don't understand the decision to portray FDR in a black silhouette for most of the first half of the book. It doesn't make him seem like an evil manipulator, and seems illogical when it suddenly switches to a standard portrayal. Also, typesetting is horrible. Font choice is miserable and much text is border-line unreadable. It was as if it was lettered over a weekend by an assistant at the publisher.
