

Dignifying Science

Jim Ottaviani

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Jim Ottaviani : Dignifying Science before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dignifying Science:

12 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Mostly solid facts, comic book formatBy Jane Burch-PessesA single writer partnered with 12 different artists in stories about 6 different women scientists. Some stories obviously succeed better than others.For young people who like graphic novels and have some interest in science, I recommend it highly. But as a women's history buff and a comic book fan I find it a little disappointing. The comic format is ideal

for high drama stories but is not always used at its full potential here. For example, in the life of Barbara McClintock, two pages cover the time period from 1951 to 1983. They show her lecturing to men in business suits with their hands over their ears. The crowd thins out in the 60's and then begins to swell with more casually dressed people, both male and female, who don't have their hands over their ears. Then she gets the Nobel prize. The faces in the crowds are consistently expressionless. I think this misses the real drama of McClintock's life. She was so brilliant that her theory was not understood when she first presented it. She chose to continue her research even when it was not reaching a receptive audience and because she documented it for decades, when other researchers later repeated her experiments and discovered her documentation, she received the recognition she deserved. This was seldom the case with earlier women scientists, for example, Rosalind Franklin. Franklin's fascinating story, unfortunately, is difficult to follow through time and four different artists' styles. And, in an interesting bit of reverse sexism, Birute Galdikas' story is told without once mentioning (or picturing) her first husband who worked beside her daily for 20 years. OK, so her whole life story had to be told in only 21 pages, but the ghosts of all the women scientists whose husbands' got credit for all their work recognize a kindred spirit when they see one. In a format that's known for pounding points home, the drama here is often implied and understated. Perhaps less would be missed if the format was full color instead of black and white. Better yet, read some biographies of these women and discuss with your children how you would tell their stories to preserve the real drama. This is a good introduction to some fascinating women for those who like the graphic novel format. Use it as a starting point. 10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Enlightening Reading By mottebks@aol.com Ottaviani's DIGNIFYING SCIENCE is a well illustrated and well written work. It does what a lot of good nonfiction has done recently - it focuses on those often forgotten people and events that were important and influential on the better known ideas and forces that shape our world today. In this instance, Ottaviani has centered his attention on women scientists, inventors and researchers who discovered, researched, and supported major scientific achievements in the last century. He and the women artists who illustrate the book do a superb job of introducing us to the contributions of these people who we never knew or knew little, but to whom we owe a collective, and enormous, debt.

Dignifying Science is the newest book from G.T. Labs that tells true stories about scientists in comics form. This 144 page trade paperback features famous women scientists including Marie Curie, Emmy Noether, Lise Meitner, Rosalind Franklin, Barbara McClintock, Birute Galdikas, and (believe it or not) Hedy Lamarr. Scientists and non-scientists alike will appreciate the human context this award-winning anthology gives to some of the most famous names in the history of discovery. With stories written by Jim Ottaviani and art by notable illustrators such as Donna Barr, Mary Fleener, Stephanie Gladden, Roberta Gregory, Lea Hernandez, Carla Speed McNeil, Linda Medley, Jen Sorensen, Anne Timmons and comics legends Ramona Fradon and Marie Severin, this handsome trade paperback, complete with a full-color dust jacket, will please readers of all ages. Notes and references at the end lead them to discover even more on their own! An Eisner nominee (like its companion volume Two-Fisted Science) and Lulu of the Year nominee for 1999, Dignifying Science has earned praise from the toughest critics of all: the scientists themselves. Discover Magazine (February, 2000) says "In Ottaviani's hands, cartooning becomes exciting education. It's a tribute to Ottaviani's breezy style that one wants to dig into [the] references and learn a little nuclear physics. Now that is a superheroic achievement." Simon Singh, award-winning author of The Code Book and Fermat's Enigma writes: "When it comes to popularising science, Jim Ottaviani's comic books do an excellent job of telling scientific stories in a fun and absorbing way. His latest, Dignifying Science, is a beautifully drawn series of stories about women who made major contributions to science and technology, but who have been largely forgotten..." (The Independent - London, 12 December 1999)

From Publishers Weekly A collection of women-drawn comics profiling women scientists should be a great way to celebrate unknown and underappreciated female professionals and inspire young women to go into the scientific fields. But this collection almost entirely misses the mark, failing to tell clear, interesting stories or to impart much useful information about the remarkable scientists it covers. The fault lies in Ottaviani's writing and organization, not in the skillfully executed black and white illustrations. The profiles--of Lise Meitner, Rosalind Franklin, Barbara McClintock, Marie Sklodowska, Hedy Lamarr (yes, the actress) and Birute Galdikas--unfold almost entirely through dialogue. Secondary figures are introduced without historical context or explanation of their relationship to the main character. Even the unusual profile of movie star/inventor Lamarr is bewildering (who exactly is Gene Markey?). Ottaviani provides an appendix with panel by panel notes offering historical and biographical context, but the reader will tire of flipping from comics to notes and back again. Both the narrative and notes jump into scientific terminology without sufficient plainspoken explanations. The book leaves one longing for what it originally promised: biographical sketches of significant women's scientific accomplishments in comics form, presented in a manner that the dame on the street can understand. (Jan.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. A fine work and contribution to the body of good and mature comics...bravo. -- Will Eisner, creator of The Spirit Entertaining and inspirational...a home schooler's dream. If you know any girls with the slightest aptitude in math or sciences, can change their lives by

buying them this. -- Retailer s, The Comics Buyer's GuideI felt a little self-conscious paging through a comic book while waiting at the bar of an upscale Manhattan restaurant. My taste in books usually runs toward the ones without pictures. But Dignifying Science quickly won me over. -- Jean Kumagai, Physics TodayAbout the AuthorJim Ottaviani is a nuclear engineer now working as a librarian at the University of Michigan. He has been writing in and about comics for almost 10 years, and his stories have earned him a Xeric Grant and Eisner Award nominations. The artists featured are Donna Barr, Mary Fleener, Stephanie Gladden, Roberta Gregory, Lea Hernandez, Carla Speed McNeil, Linda Medley, Jen Sorensen, Anne Timmons, and comics legends Ramona Fradon and Marie Severin.