

## Green Arrow

### The Complete Series

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### Green Arrow: Quiver

ISBN: 1563899655

by Kevin Smith

Art by Phil Hester, Ande Parks, Guy Major, and Sean Konot

DC Comics 2002

The number of times I laughed out loud at this title (and they were too numerous to count) should not in any way detract from the seriousness of its issues or the craft of its creators. If anything, readers should be grateful for a tale that's smart, dramatic, full of excellent DC and Green Arrow canonical references, and, with all that, makes you guffaw at least once. Kevin Smith whips out some truly wonderful one-liners and perfectly timed conversations, my personal favorite an exchange between the Flash and Batman that proves the Dark Knight is anything but humorless. At this point, no one should be surprised that Kevin Smith is a funny guy.

The great part of this title is, however, the more unexpected depth and heart that Smith filled this tale with (though anyone who saw and loved *Dogma* as I did should know better.) As with that complex film, Smith tackles what it means to have faith, to have a soul, and how much a man needs all of his past, from shameful moments to pain as well as love and joy, to be human. All of these issues are contemplated fully, emotionally, though they are contrasted and lightened up by the sparks of humor.

The artwork is top-notch -- my favorite kind of superhero work where they all look like heroes, yes, but not too far from actual anatomy. The expressions are also particularly fine -- the interactions between Aquaman and Green Arrow are priceless in both word and image.

I was originally warned that this title was way too full of canon references for me to try: I have never read Green Arrow comics and only know what little I know about that hero from references in *Birds of Prey*. As a newbie, though, I can say, despite occasional moments of character vertigo, I was well able to follow and thoroughly enjoy the story. I could tell that if I knew the character and his world, the story would undoubtedly have been richer, but it was a fine feast for me as is.

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**Green Arrow: Sounds of Violence** (Volume 2)

ISBN: 1401200451

By Kevin Smith

Art by Phil Hester

DC Comics 2003

Following Oliver Queen's miraculous return to life (detailed in [Green Arrow: Quiver](#)) Kevin Smith returns to writing Green Arrow. In this volume both Green Arrow and Oliver Queen are trying to pick up the pieces of their life and finding it not quite as they had left it. For Green Arrow the villains have become more aggressive and better armed. Meanwhile Oliver Queen is dealing with a grown up side-kick (formerly Speedy now Arsenal), a son he never knew he had (Green Arrow II/Conner Hawke), a lover (Black Canary) he would like to reconcile with, and a street urchin he rescued who wants to be his new Speedy (Mia). Kevin Smith writes with his usual deft and funny touch about the ways in which Green Arrow succeeds and fails and occasionally just doesn't get it at all. Phil Hester draws with an elegant economy. He captures both the physicality of a superhero, particularly one without superpowers, as well as the emotion of the man behind the mask. [read more...](#)

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**Green Arrow: Straight Shooter** (Volume 3)

ISBN: 1401202004

By Judd Winnick

Art by Phil Hester, Andre Parks, Guy Major, Sean Knot

DC Comics 2004

The hardest part of turning over a new leaf is the part where you actually have to change old patterns of behavior. Oliver Queen is rediscovering the fun in taking on fat cat corporations, this time in the form of Elevast. Elevast is trying to build a mall in the middle of a low income neighborhood, evicting tenants and abusing the labor supply in the process. Green Arrow is worried about the monsters that have started to turn up at the construction site, and the hit man that the Board of Directors have hired to eliminate the monster problem, and tangentially anyone who might be getting too close to what's really going on which is to say Green Arrow I and II. The part that's really confusing him though, is the part where Mia won't talk to him and Conner is pissed off at him because he had a one night stand with a pretty lawyer lady. The Oliver Queen and Green Arrow parts of his life are easy to slip back into, it's the new things like being a father and being part of a family that are hard to learn.

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**Green Arrow: Archer's Quest** (Volume 4)

ISBN: 1401200109

By Brad Meltzer

Art by Phil Hester

DC Comics 2003

"I was dead. I came back to life" This is the phrase that Oliver Queen (Green Arrow) keeps repeating to himself like a mantra in this introspective volume of **Green Arrow**. This story is about his search for the things he left behind when he died; not the expected trappings of a superhero life, or the clutter of daily life, but those few things that had real meaning to him. Oliver Queen died and he came back again and this is his chance to do things differently – to reconnect with his ward and former sidekick Roy (then Speedy, now Arsenal), and to get to know the son (Conner) he never knew he had. This is a bridging volume between Kevin Smith and Judd Winnick's work on the series. The quiet sentimentality works in the best kind of ways: it's touching without being saccharine, and it's real without being melodramatic. Phil Hester is one of my favorite artists. He has a very clean style. He shows emotion and action in equal parts without being fussy.

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### **Green Arrow: The Longbow Hunters**

ISBN 0930289382

By Mike Grell

Art by Mike Grell

DC Comics 1991

This is the volume for everyone who was mildly confused by Quiver or wondered about Roy's background in Outsiders, or wanted to know what happened to Black Canary's sonic cry in Birds of Prey. This is the pivotal back story you've been missing.

Oliver Queen (Green Arrow) and Dinah Lance (Black Canary) have just moved to Seattle to open a florist shop (Sherwood Florist). They're trying to come to terms with getting older, with increasing urban violence, and with trying to rebuild a life together. In a lot of ways this volume by Mike Grell marks the shift in superhero comics from the costumed villain to the harsher villains of reality – poverty, gangs, rape, murder, drugs. Grell brings that new theme home when Dinah is kidnapped in the course of an investigation of a drug ring. Oliver has been keeping his distance from her investigations, as per her request, and when she's kidnapped he has no idea where she is. The time it takes him to find her and his inability to protect her, and the abuse she suffers at the hands of the sexual sadist who kidnapped her have lasting reverberations. It changes how they see each other, their roles in the landscape of urban violence and their self images. Mike Grell's artwork is beautifully realized. His attention to detail makes this book feel very rooted in a time and place which works well with the themes of the story line.

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### **Green Arrow: City Walls (Volume 5)**

ISBN 1401204643

By Judd Winick

Art by Phil Hester, Manuel Garcia, Ande Parks, Steve Bird

DC Comics 2005

My reaction to this volume was generally, enh. It certainly wasn't bad. It just wasn't exciting either. In the aftermath of the last volume, Oliver is more than a little wary and protective of his various children and pseudo-children. He's questioning whether he did right to bring Roy into this life, what it means that Conner chose this life, and actively discouraging Mia from getting anywhere near the superhero life. However, life doesn't stop just because you're debating your life choices. Someone has erected a force field around Star City that prevents anyone from getting in (and watching Superman try is amusing) and stops anyone from getting out. To make matters worse apparently the force field comes equipped with it's own fiery (literally) vigilantes who are there to interpret and enforce the letter of the law. While that does stop the looting, because as soon as you so much as jaywalk you have fire breathing demons coming after you, it isn't really a positive. The story is a metaphor for Oliver's life. You can't build walls to keep people from making mistakes or living their lives, you have to let them make their own choices good and bad. In the end Oliver realizes that and both allows and needs Mia to contribute to the fight.

By far the best part of the volume is the first, separate, storyline in which Roy and Conner go out on the town for a night of fun. Conner takes Roy to a bookstore. Roy takes Conner to a strip club. Wacky almost-sibling hijinks ensue. I'm always fascinated by the interstices in the superhero life – the moments when they aren't being superheroes, when they're just two guys who are related but don't know each other very well hang out.

I am, as ever, impressed with Phil Hester's artwork. I enjoy the economy of his style and the balance of physical and emotional depth that he gives these characters.

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