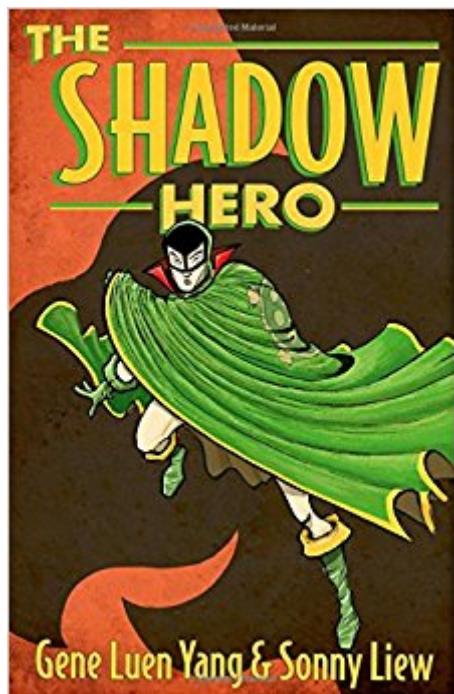


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# The Shadow Hero



## Synopsis

Gene Luen Yang is the National Ambassador for Young People's Literature and is a MacArthur Fellow, a recipient of what's popularly known as the MacArthur "Genius" Grant. A New York Times bestseller in the comics boom of the 1940s, a legend was born: the Green Turtle. He solved crimes and fought injustice just like the other comics characters. But this mysterious masked crusader was hiding something more than your run-of-the-mill secret identity... The Green Turtle was the first Asian American super hero. The comic had a short run before lapsing into obscurity, but Gene Luen Yang, the acclaimed author of *American Born Chinese*, and Sonny Liew, the author of the New York Times-bestseller *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye*, have finally revived this character in *Shadow Hero*, a new graphic novel that creates an origin story for the Green Turtle. This gorgeous, funny comics adventure for teens is a new spin on the long, rich tradition of American comics lore.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: GN420L (What's this?)

Paperback: 176 pages

Publisher: First Second (July 15, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1596436972

ISBN-13: 978-1596436978

Product Dimensions: 6.6 x 0.5 x 0.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 79 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #19,653 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #26 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Comics & Graphic Novels > Superheroes #28 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Prejudice & Racism #44 in Books > Children's Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction > Superheroes

Age Range: 12 - 18 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

## Customer Reviews

Gr 7 Up • Award-winning author Yang and artist Liew tackle a lesser-known aspect of history, breathing new life into the Green Turtle, a 1940s comic book hero. According to lore, the Green Turtle was originally drawn to be Chinese, but publishers quashed artist Chu Hing's plans, and Hing rebelled by drawing his hero so that his face was never visible. The Green Turtle is cast as an

unlikely 19-year-old young man, Hank, the son of Chinese immigrants who own a grocery store in 1940s America. When his mother is rescued by a superhero, the loving but overbearing woman decides that it's Hank's fate to become a hero himself, and she does everything in her power to push her son in that direction. Though Hank initially shies away from assuming the role of caped crusader, when tragedy strikes, he's eventually inspired to call himself the Green Turtle, and fight back against gangsters who have been intimidating his family and many others in Chinatown. Liew's scratchy, action-packed illustrations have a nostalgia-tinged vibe ideal for the gritty/hard-boiled setting, and Yang plays expertly with clichés and stereotypes about Chinese culture without ever becoming heavy-handed or obvious. A detail about the four spirits of China, one of whom allies himself with Hank's father and then Hank, injects an element of magic and of Chinese history and mythology that made Yang's *American Born Chinese* (First Second, 2001) such a layered and complex work. A creative take on the superhero genre. [See author Q&A, p. 20.] Mahnaz Dar, *School Library Journal*

**\*Starred Review\*** In the 1940s, the golden age of comic books, Chu Hing, a little-known Chinese American cartoonist—very likely the first ever—created the Green Turtle, a superhero tasked with protecting China from invading Japanese forces. Though the comic ran for only five issues, Yang uses Chu Hing's Green Turtle as a launching pad for this story of young Hank Chu, a Chinese American teen in the 1930s who becomes a hero in his Chinatown neighborhood. In a loving spoof of classic superhero origin stories, Hank is exposed to toxic radiation, visits a mystic, and is bitten by an animal used for science experiments before simply working hard at becoming a good fighter. It isn't until he is faced with real tragedy and inherits the wish-granting turtle spirit who lived in his father's shadow that he becomes a real hero, the Green Turtle. There's plenty of humor in this lively, entertaining adventure story, and it capitalizes on the dashing bravado of golden-age comics, particularly in Liew's stylish pages, full of inky outlines and dramatic paneling. At its heart, though, this book is a subtle comment on China's changing cultural landscape and growing multiculturalism in America. A lovingly tongue-in-cheek homage. Grades 8-12. --Sarah Hunter

I recently attended a conference at which author Matt Mikalatos was the plenary speaker. During one of the breakout sessions, he spoke about the craft of writing and shared what inspired him. In passing he mentioned graphic novels as a frequent source of enjoyment as well as grist for his own creativity. At a break I asked whom he was currently reading and what he would recommend.

Without a second's hesitation he said, Gene Yang, and recommended several titles. The Shadow Hero did not disappoint! It's a classic tale of a young man's desire to avenge his father's murder, but it's no cliche. The glimpses into the Chinese-American culture of the early 1940s was both humorous and insightful. I confess, I laughed out loud in a library... and again on the flight home. I especially liked how the good guys looked good, but the bad guys were all caricatured (kinda felt like the white-hat/black-hat standard in the old spaghetti westerns). Now that I am home, I'm eager to read the other titles Matt recommended.

Another great book by Gene Luen Yang. Good mix of humor and excitement. Hard to put what I mean into words, but it's simultaneously a comic about race and the Asian-American experience and just a "normal" graphic novel. It'll really resonate with Asian-Americans, especially Chinese-Americans, but at the same time even if you're not Asian you'll think it's a good superhero origin story. Decided to research the first Green Turtle series thinking that it had more details about the character, but Gene Yang actually came up with most of the backstory (which I think is cool).

This book is great for adults and I'm sure it'd be great for kids, too. The story is fantastic and covers so much of the Asian-American experience. I love that GL Yang brings so many aspects of the struggle between being American and Asian, and the parent-child cultural differences, too.

The story was great! It kept my interest the entire time. I bought this after reading a free comic from Panda Express. At first I wasn't expecting much (from the free comic) but it proved to be an enjoyable story with interesting & relatable characters. I enjoyed it enough that I sought out and purchased the graphic novel (which isn't something I do often). I also feel the story tells a good story about a culture, I personally wasn't that familiar with, which gave it an interesting extra dimension I found enjoyable.

This book provided a lot of insight into the Eurocentric comic industry during the 1940's. Yang and Liew created this story in order to honor the creator of The Green Turtle (Chu Hing) by writing and drawing The Green Turtle as Hing had first envisioned him: as the first Chinese-American comic book hero. In the process, the author/illustrators of "The Shadow Hero" fill in the gaps regarding the life and origins of The Green Turtle by thoroughly integrating Chinese American culture in to every aspect of the Green Turtle's story.

This is a great book. My boys like it but the binding just fell apart. It is not glued enough to keep the cover on. It looks new and still in perfect condition and the cover came off?! Hopefully they fix this issue.

Good

Fun, clever, humorous and inventive tale complemented by fantastic, expressive, character driven art. A breath of fresh air in a field too dominated by countless comics featuring apocalyptic gloom and doom. Highly recommended

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