



Heroes and Villains: Essays on Music, Movies, Comics, and Culture

David Hajdu

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Heroes and Villains is the first collection of essays by David Hajdu, award-winning author of *The Ten-Cent Plague*, *Positively 4th Street*, and *Lush Life*. Eclectic and controversial, Hajdu's essays take on topics as varied as pop music, jazz, the avant-garde, comic books, and our downloading culture. The heart of *Heroes and Villains* is an extraordinary new piece of cultural rediscovery, original to this book. It tells the untold story of one of the most important—and, ultimately, one of the most tragic—figures in American popular music, Billy Eckstine. Through exhaustive new research, Hajdu shows how this great, forgotten singer, once more popular than Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby, transformed American music by combining sex appeal, sophistication, and black machismo—in the era of segregation. The cost, for Eckstine, was his career—and nearly his life.

Other essays in this expansive book deal with topical and surprising subjects like Beyoncé, Bobby Darin, Kanye West, Marjane Satrapi, Woody Guthrie, Will Eisner, the White Stripes, Elmer Fudd, Elvis Costello, Harry Partch, Ray Charles, Joni Mitchell, and more.

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