



# A Once Crowded Sky: A Novel

By Tom King

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## A Once Crowded Sky: A Novel By Tom King

**This critically acclaimed and inspired debut novel brings to life a universe of superheroes stripped of their powers and forced to confront danger in a world without heroes—save one.**

A tour de force debut novel from a former CIA counterterrorism officer, *A Once Crowded Sky* fuses bombastic, comic-book-style storytelling with modern literary fiction. Supermen stripped of their powers must wrestle danger in a world without heroes.

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### Editorial Review

Review

“Beyond postmodern, complex in conception . . . relevant to the graphic-novel, video-gaming generation.”

--*Kirkus Reviews*

"An original, assured debut . . . Impossible to put down."

--*Library Journal*

An exciting post-millennial conflict allegory, which echoes the terror of Alan Moores writing for *Watchmen* while sidestepping its shadow.

--*The A.V. Club*

One of the Best Graphic Novels of the Year. The mythology and backstories that author Tom King constructs and weaves together are done like only an old-school comic book fan could. For those who enjoyed the human drama contained in such hero-based series as *Astro City* and *Watchmen*, this is a book that's most definitely worth a read.

--*USA Today*

A Masterful Story About Humanity. The tale moves quickly and fluidly, making *A Once Crowded Sky* an incredible page-turner. It is King's careful character development that drives the story. *A Once Crowded Sky* isn't just for comic book aficionados. Its message is universal and guaranteed to be appreciated by most readers.

--*The Charleston Post and Courier*

Everything we love about comics origin tales, a worthy villain, team-ups/conspiracies, super technology, disgraced heroes, redeemed villains it's all here; and it's a fun read. There are surprises galore and I really didn't see them coming.

--*Wired.com*

King gives us a rare glimpse into the spandex, muscle-bound, testosterone-driven world of Superheroes, written in a style that mirrors the sensibilities and style of comicbooks in such a way that glorifies the medium rather than diminishes it. Clearly King is a fan of the genre, and his love of the medium is reflected in not only his respect for the field, but his desire to add to the mythology rather than deride it. Ultimately, *A Once Crowded Sky* delivers to us a story that is not predictable as to its potential outcome, which makes it read much better than the comicbooks it purports to mirror. So, if you are looking to read a new chapter in the mythology of superheroes, you would do yourself well to seek out and read, Tom King's book, 5 Stars.

-- *The Washington Examiner*

In a summer swimming in comic book inspired blockbusters, perhaps the most visionary tale in a generation won't be found in either a multiplex or the local comic book shop but rather nestled in the shelves of your local book retailer.

--*Fandompost.com*

A philosophical gem on heroes, sacrifice, and the meaning of life in a corrupt world.

--*SF Signal.com*

Masterfully developed, incorporating versions of the archetypal superhero into a fantastic modern prose story. I loved the authors entertaining writing, the occasional humor, and the connections to the myth, history and literature. I breezed through a lot of the book, not wanting to put down such a well-written, epic fantasy story. By the way, I don't think I've ever read a comic book in my life.

--*SusieBookworm*

Ultimately a story of wonder, and of redemption. At its core, this is a story about humanity, told from the perspective of simultaneously the most and least human of us all.

--*Spencer Daily Reporter, IA*

From the Author

(*Excerpted from an interview with SFSignal.com*)

**SFS:** How did *A Once Crowded Sky* come about?

**Tom King:** I left the CIA shortly after my son was born. The type of career I wanted at the agency did not fit with the type of father I wanted to be. Prior to 9/11, I'd always wanted to be a writer, and after leaving the CIA, I decided to go back to my original plan. I wanted to write about my experience, not in terms of what I'd actually done, but in terms of the emotional and physical impact of such a life, a life spent in pursuit of an endless enemy--the joys, the frustrations, the moments of bravery and cowardice. I wanted to explore the virtues and follies of a world of violence.

The lives of comic book characters, lives dedicated quite literally to quests without ends, seemed like an obvious metaphor. The basic idea of *Crowded Sky* then is what happens when that quest ends, when all the powers and villains are taken from these heroes, how do they go on, how do they fall.

From the Back Cover

A tour de force debut novel from a former CIA counter-terrorism officer, *A Once Crowded Sky* fuses bombastic, comic-book storytelling with modern literary fiction. Super men stripped of their powers must wrestle danger in a world without heroes.

**"A Masterful Story About Humanity.** King tells the tale of the heroes of Arcadia City, all but one of whom sacrificed their powers to save the world from an entity known as The Blue...The tale moves quickly and fluidly, making *A Once Crowded Sky* an incredible page-turner. It is King's careful character development that drives the story. He chronicles each character's struggle with the aftermath of The Blue, making them seem even more human....*A Once Crowded Sky* isn't just for comic book aficionados. Its message is universal and guaranteed to be appreciated." --**The Charleston Post & Courier**

"For those who enjoyed the human drama contained in such hero-based series as *Astro City* and *Watchmen*, this is a book that's most definitely worth a read." --**USA Today**

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### **William Gilbert:**

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### **Josephine Widman:**

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