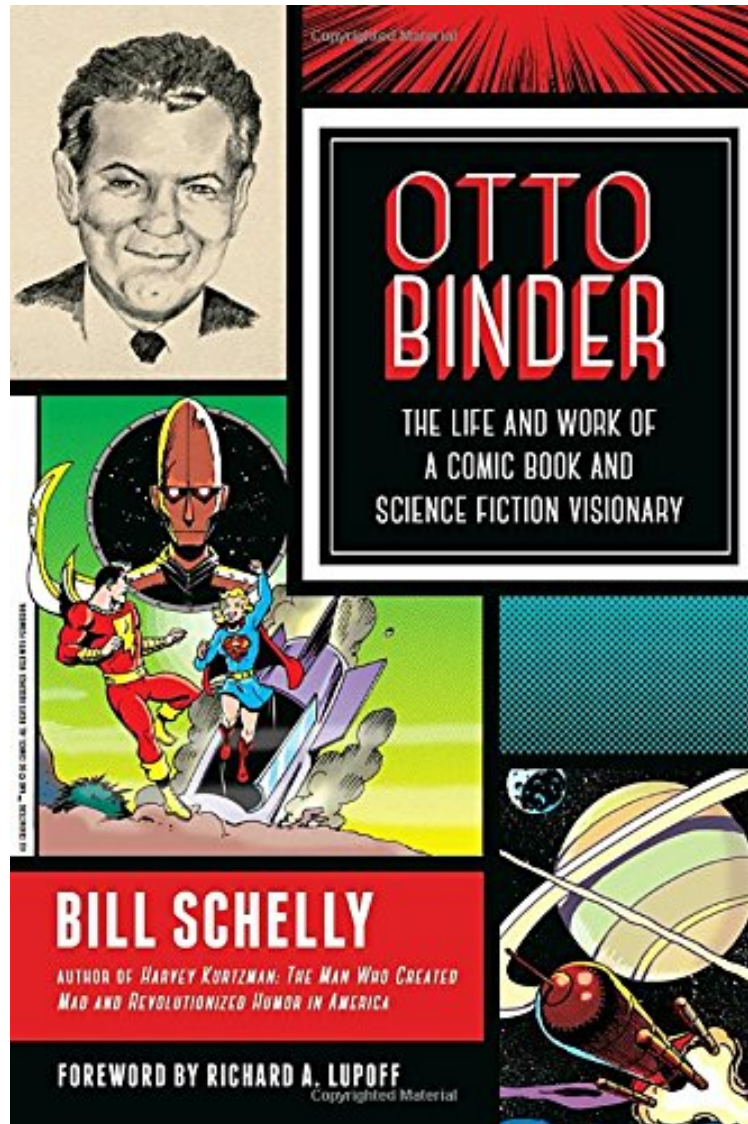


# Otto Binder: The Life and Work of a Comic Book and Science Fiction Visionary

Bill Schelly

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**Bill Schelly : Otto Binder: The Life and Work of a Comic Book and Science Fiction Visionary** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Otto Binder: The Life and Work of a Comic Book and Science Fiction Visionary:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. **\*MUST READ\*** for those who enjoy comics history, "How it's made?" type information, and meeting an industry icon. By Customer Whether you are a fan of comic books,

comic/publishing industry history, or of "Behind the scenes" or "How it's made?" type readings, I can not recommend this book enough; I'm a bias fan of all three. Basically, the book reads like a novel, taking us through Otto's personal and professional career, chronicling the peak and valleys of both. Otto Binder is one of the most prolific and important writers in comics history, having entered the industry in the late 1930s/early 1940s, and continued through the late 1960s with few interruptions, he not only was one of the driving forces behind the 1940s cultural icon Captain Marvel (A.K.A. Shazam!) and the Marvel Family, he was also one of the main creators of what has come to be known as the "Superman Family" of supporting characters; Supergirl, Legion of Super-Heroes, Brianiac, and other (now) iconic characters and Superman character mythos. His anecdotes and personal recollections of his peer comic industry professionals - many legends in their own right - and descriptions of the workplace, creative process, and corporate politics, sheds light on the industry, is invaluable for comic industry historians, relational across all industries, and entertaining for all readers, though some portions are tragic. SPOILER ALERT: The only complaint I have is a section of the book where the author briefly discusses the Binder's second child, who was born in the 1950s and with down-syndrome. With the Binders having decided to institutionalize the child from birth and not raise it at home, the author comments how this decision is difficult to reconcile with who the Binders were as loving, caring people. The author seems disappointed with the Binders for their decision and abandonment. I think the author's observation is a mistake many historians make; inserting a modern interpretation over an historical event. There is no question that in the 1950s society and the medical community didn't know as much about down-syndrome as we do today, or will tomorrow, not to mention now available at-home resources to parents. That being said, we must assume that the Binders were told by society and medical community (A.K.A. "experts"), that life-long institutionalization was their only option and best for their child. All good intentioned at the time but viewed through medicine of today, their actions would seem Machiavellian. Again, I think the author's observation is a mistake many historians make; inserting a modern interpretation over an historical event.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Story of a SF and comics pioneer  
By William Henley  
When Bill Schelly published the first edition of this biography (under the title, "Words of Wonder") I considered buying it, but skipped it. Im glad I picked up on it this time... even though, in honesty, Otto Binder is not among my personal favorite science fiction or comics writers. (I'm only mildly interested in the original Captain Marvel and his family, and though Binder produced a lot of stories and ideas for the "Superman family" comics I grew up on, I kind of prefer the stories written by Jerry Siegel and Edmond Hamilton.) Nonetheless, Otto Binder's life story is a fascinating read for anyone interested as I am in the history of old-time science fiction and comic books. And Binder deserves credit for coming up with a lot of great ideas, even if-- as one of the editorial blurbs for this book suggests-- other writers sometimes went on to develop those ideas more effectively.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great book that has been written with reverence to the Otto.  
By Kevin  
Great book. I enjoyed this version better than the first version. Touching and thoughtful words about a giant in the field. Well written and Otto was given the respect he deserves. Bill Shelly has done well in this honest look Otto and his family life. Great !

Otto Binder: The Life and Work of a Comic Book and Science Fiction Visionary chronicles the career of Otto Binder, from pulp magazine author to writer of Supergirl, Captain Marvel, and Superman comics. As the originator of the first sentient robot in literature ("I, Robot," published in Amazing Stories in 1939 and predating Isaac Asimov's collection of the same name), Binder's effect on science fiction was profound. Within the world of comic books, he created or co-created much of the Superman universe, including Smallville; Krypto, Superboy's dog; Supergirl; and the villain Brainiac. Binder is also credited with writing many of the first "Bizarro" storylines for DC Comics, as well as for being the main writer for the Captain Marvel comics. In later years, Binder expanded from comic books into pure science writing, publishing dozens of books and articles on the subject of satellites and space travel as well as UFOs and extraterrestrial life. Comic book historian Bill Schelly tells the tale of Otto Binder through comic panels, personal letters, and interviews with Binder's own family and friends. Schelly weaves together Binder's professional successes and personal tragedies, including the death of Binder's only daughter and his wife's struggle with mental illness. A touching and human story, Otto Binder: The Life and Work of a Comic Book and Science Fiction Visionary is a biography that is both meticulously researched and beautifully told, keeping alive Binder's spirit of scientific curiosity and whimsy.

Otto Binder was a kind of titan, a precursor of the gods because he came up with basic primordial forms that later writers would perhaps polish to a greater luster. But Binder hewed them out of solid rock. He was mining the raw material. Alan Moore, author of Watchmen and V for Vendetta Bill Schelly has an obsessive yet intelligent passion for things many might consider marginal if not bizarrealways the mark of an interesting mind. Tom Robbins, author of Even Cowgirls Get the Blues Bill Schelly has done an amazing job of capturing Otto and his family and friends, and explaining in an interesting way why his work was so important and precedent-setting. Michael Uslan, executive producer of The Dark Knight Rises Schelly truly brings Binder alive on the page. He crafts a candid and sympathetic portrait that makes you feel that you have gotten to know the man almost as vividly as if you had met him in real life.

Paul Gravett, Comic Book Marketplace About the Author Bill Schelly has been immersed in the world of science fiction and comics since the mid-1960s, making his first contributions to the pop culture fringe through his comics fanzine *Sense of Wonder*. Schelly began meticulously researching the history of comics fandom in the 1990s and has since published many books on the subject. He is currently the associate editor of the Eisner Award-winning magazine *Alter Ego*. His recent books include *The American Comic Book Chronicles: The 1950s* and *Harvey Kurtzman, The Man Who Created Mad*.