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# The Shadow Hero



## Synopsis

Gene Luen Yang is the National Ambassador for Young People's Literature. A New York Times bestsellerIn 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 the acclaimed author of American Born Chinese, Gene Luen Yang, has finally revived this character in Shadow Hero, a new graphic novel that creates an origin story for the Green Turtle.With artwork by Sonny Liew, 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 10 inches

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

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars See all reviews (72 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #51,061 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #29 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Prejudice & Racism #38 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Comics & Graphic Novels > Superheroes #72 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Prejudice & Racism

Age Range: 12 - 18 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

## Customer Reviews

I've got a new favorite thing, and it's THE SHADOW HERO, a boss graphic novel by Gene Luen Yang and Sonny Liew. And it's the backstory that first got me. It's fascinating stuff: In 1944, during the heyday of the golden age of comic books, the obscure publishing company, Rural Home, wanted to strike while the iron was hot and hired a cartoonist named Chu Hing to create the main attraction for their series BLAZING COMICS. And Chu Hing came up with the World War II

costumed vigilante, the Green Turtle. The most unique element about the Green Turtle is that he was the first Asian-American superhero. The Green Turtle evidenced no obvious superpower, relying mostly on his rocket plane and his two good fists. He went around in a mask and a massive cape with a turtle design. He defended America's ally, China, against the encroaching Japanese forces. One odd conceit about him was that his seemingly ubiquitous shadow resembled a cheerful giant turtle that no one seemed to notice. The awesome rumor goes like this: Chu Hing was pushing to make a Chinese-American superhero, except that Rural Home ixnayed that intent pretty quick. So Chu Hing went the passive-aggressive route and introduced another odd conceit. He drew the Turtle in such a way that never once did the reader get a good look at his face. Too, whenever the Turtle was about to explain his origin story to his sidekick, Burma Boy, something always came up to interrupt him. Seven decades later, writer Gene Luen Yang notes that even his extensive research is unable to confirm this rumor. But to quote THE MAN WHO SHOT LIBERTY VALANCE: "When the legend becomes fact, print the legend."

"The Shadow Hero" Written & Illustrated by Gene Luen Yang and Sonny Liew (First Second Books, 2014). . . . The set-up for this one seems almost too good to be true: author/cartoonist Gene Luen Yang rediscovered an obscure WWII-era comicbook character, the Green Turtle, who was apparently created by an Asian-American artist and was intended to be the first Asian-American superhero, a revolutionary step in an industry which primarily depicted Asians as either comedic fools (ala Chop-Chop, in the "Blackhawk" books) or as satanic, bucktoothed heathens (as in every caricature of Japanese soldiers ever...) Legend has it that the book's publisher forbade the cartoonist to make the Turtle explicitly Asian, so in the few episodes published, he always appears with his back turned to the readers - we can't tell what his ethnicity is, because his face is actually never seen. Anyway, when contemporary artists Sonny Liew and Gene Luen Yang discovered the Green Turtle, they came up with the idea of revamping and modernizing the character, reclaiming him for modern audiences. They came up with a new origin and placed the Turtle in a comedic yet realistic scenario -- here, he is the teenage son of Chinese-American immigrants, a nice boy named Hank who helps his dad out in the store while his overbearing mother tries to direct both men's lives, even going so far as to push Hank into becoming a superhero proving herself to be the ultimate "tiger mom" (including her acting as his masked chauffeur, ala Cato in the Green Hornet) The domestic backdrop provides the comedy, with playful tweaks of Asian-American stereotypes and the outdated conventions of pulp-era pop culture, such as a family friend with the unfunny but punny name Wun Too, and the like.

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