

been no official, or authorized, history of the show written. Ortved may have set out to write an authorized history, but it is obvious that he was not getting the cooperation he felt was necessary. As a result he has created an unauthorized history of our favorite family, pulled together from what seems to be extensive sets of interviews with many key people in and around the Simpsons universe as well as pulled from various printed interviews and articles by others who may not have been willing to participate. What results is less of a story, and more of a magic window into the birth and formative first decade of the show. Told by a series of recollections and vignettes, we are taken behind the scenes of the Matt Groening being involved in creating interstitials for the Tracey Ullman Show, the eventual spinoff of the shorts into a full blown show, the show becoming a worldwide phenomenon and the resulting legal wrangling, staff changes and hurt feelings that a mega-success brings. The lack of participation by many vital players, including Matt Groening himself, necessitates the use of printed comments in the stead of interview comments. The lack of cooperation also frees Ortved from having to be objective in his writing, allowing others to present only one side of the story. It also probably limited his access to some areas, especially within Fox, that might have fleshed out pieces and give some heft to his story. This lack of objectivity allows the author to speak very highly of the first dozen seasons with high praise, milder praise for the next few seasons and then almost outright dismissal of work from the 9th or 10th season on. That said, the book is extremely entertaining, very informative and eye opening and just a great glimpse into the Juggernaut that is The Simpsons. It is the work of love of a fan who is trying to explain how lightning was captured in a bottle and the focus can be on the overall story, with varying amounts of attention paid to the details. It would have been nice to get a better overview of who everyone is and how they fit together (much of the conflicts that appear involve people who are around for a year or two, are influential and then leave), but since the goal is to produce a history told in individual's recollections and stories rather than in a cohesive narrative, this is not a major issue. While not perfect, the book is a fascinating read of anyone interested in the history of The Simpsons as a show and how Fox became the House that Bart built. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An interesting oral history of one the greatest TV shows of all time By Phillip Urlevich An interesting oral history of one the greatest TV shows of all time. It's told from interview soundbites of some of the primary players. While it doesn't feature new interviews with the main cast, it does have some funny anecdotes, especially as it shows the WHOLE story of how "The Simpsons" became a phenomenon, it was more than some underground artist getting lucky, other than that it barely scratches the surface of the show, and it is a good read, but more library checkout than a collection on the bookshelf.

John Ortved's oral history is the first-ever look behind the scenes at the creation and day-to-day running of the television phenomenon known as The Simpsons as told by many of the people who make it.

From Publishers Weekly This behind-the-scenes look at perhaps the most successful television series of all time is a memorable and highly entertaining romp that offers listeners never before heard stories and anecdotes from such figures as Conan O'Brien and James L. Brooks. John Allen Nelson does a splendid job at relating the text with an ear for Ortved's wry wit though his Homer impression could use a little work. Nelson takes listeners to places they've never been, tells them stories they thought they'd never hear, and does it all in such a cool and collected tone, that it seems almost second nature. It's endlessly informative and a fine complement to Ortved's superb study of the pop culture phenom. A Faber Faber hardcover (\$18.95, Oct. 5). (Nov.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "Ortved's "uncensored, unauthorized" history... is as tasty as a pink-glazed donut with sprinkles, as refreshing as a Duff beer and as piquant as a curry slushy from Kwik-E Mart." Louis Bayard, The Washington Post