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King of Fighters 2003 #1by [Kat Avila](#)

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Publisher**Comics One**<http://www.DrMasterbooks.com>**Credits**

ISBN: 1-58899-030-3

Writer: Wing Yan, King Tung

Cover Artist: Ying-Hsiang Lin

Other Creators: Ying-Hsiang Lin

Grade: 7

Welcome to the world of **The King of Fighters** (KOF)! A storyline from the **SNK Playmore** fighting game series has been turned into a comic.

To truly appreciate this comic, the reader must be a **KOF** game player. Otherwise, you can surf over to sites like Answers.com to get the 411 on the game and its characters: "Throughout the Orochi Saga, Kyo Kusanagi is the main hero, with no changes on his team. In the NESTS Saga, K' is the main hero, and several changes are seen in the heroes team. In the new saga (**The King of Fighters 2003**), Ash Crimson is the main hero." There's not enough background information at the beginning of the comic for a walk-in.

The King of Fighters 2003 comic introduces the coming

together of the new heroes team (for the 3-on-3 battles) consisting of the stylish Ash Crimson with the beautifully designed and painted fingernails (whom I initially mistook for a woman), the brawler Shen Woo, and the elegant assassin Duo Lon. But before that, the reader is treated to a life-and-death fight in Hokkaido, Japan, between Kyo Kusanagi and K', with K' on the defensive. The rest of the comic builds excitement for the upcoming KOF 2003 tournament, which Shen Woo self-assuredly looks forward to as an "all-you-can-fight buffet."

If you peruse a lot of B&W manga, the color in Chinese kung fu comics is distracting at first. My eyes have to retrain themselves from speed reading outlines to focusing on the gestalt of the colors on the page; I have to work harder at separating the foreground from the background elements.

I liked what production artist Ying-Hsiang Lin did on page 48. The top half of the page features a medium close shot of the handsome blond, European-looking Shen Woo getting ready to "greet" an old friend with his fists. It's a traditionally inked panel with sharp stiff lines. However, the bottom half features a blurred filter close-up shot of the beautiful, strongly Asiatic-looking Duo Lon. Only his eyes are in sharp focus. The filter promotes the impression of incredibly fast movement toward the reader, who is peering at Duo through Woo's eyes. On the next page, you have an interior splash rotated 90 degrees to the left for a panorama revealing Duo has coolly parried Woo's punch with an open hand.

The King of Fighters 2003 can best be enjoyed by KOF game players and martial arts aficionados. Such fans can understand the different physical vocabularies being used by each fighter, which are hinted at by creative names for certain battle moves, e.g., "Solar Thunder Axe," "Feral Feline Furioso," "Bastille Basher." Look for the next volume to see how the fighting strategies play out.

Written: September 27, 2005

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