CRASH COURSE

IN GRAPHIC NOVELS

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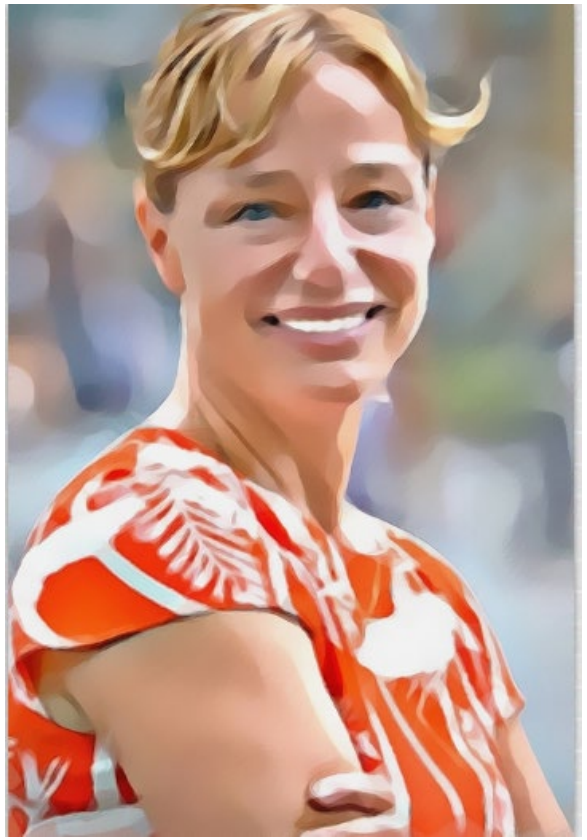
Empowering Librarians... Engaging Readers

LIBRARY READS

Panelists



Lynn Lobash

Assistant Director of Readers Services

New York Public Library

Patrick Holt

Adult Services Librarian

Durham County Library, NC

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Panelists

Kendal Spires

Collection Development Librarian

NoveList

Halle Eisenman

Manager Content Development

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libraryreads.org

What is a graphic novel?

Paraphrasing cartoonist and comics educator Jessica Abel, graphic novels are basically **long works in the comics medium**, which in turn is:

Artwork by Jessica Abel, published under Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Sharealike license 3.0
Source: https://dw-wp.com/resources/what-is-a-graphic-novel

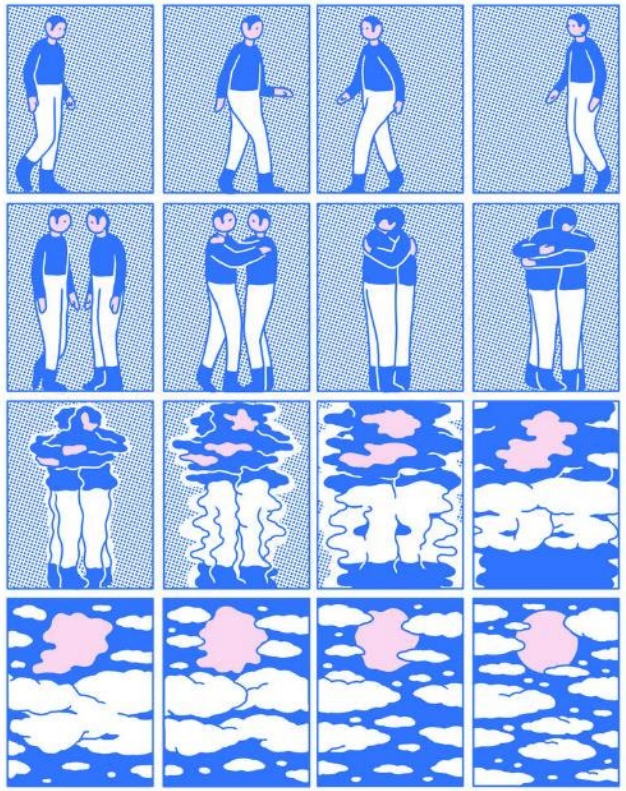
What is a graphic novel?

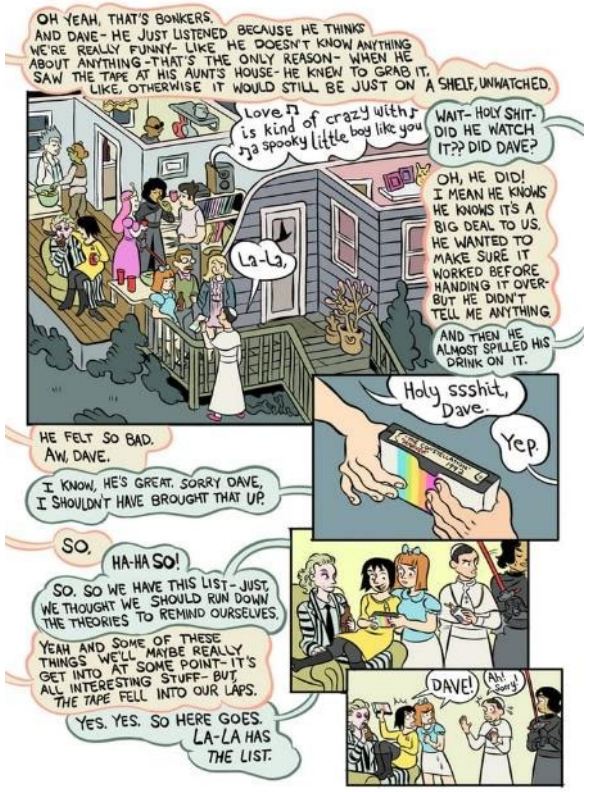
Abel continues: they often feature dialogue in **speech balloons,** interior monologues in **thought bubbles,** and discrete moments of time in **panels**:

Artwork from *Peanuts* for June 2, 1969, by Charles Schulz

What is a graphic novel?

...except when they're something else entirely!





Artwork L-R: *Visions* by Evan M. Cohen; *Vanishing Act* by Roman Muradov;
Scenes from an Impending Marriage by Adrian Tomine;
Girl Town by Casey (née Carolyn) Nowak

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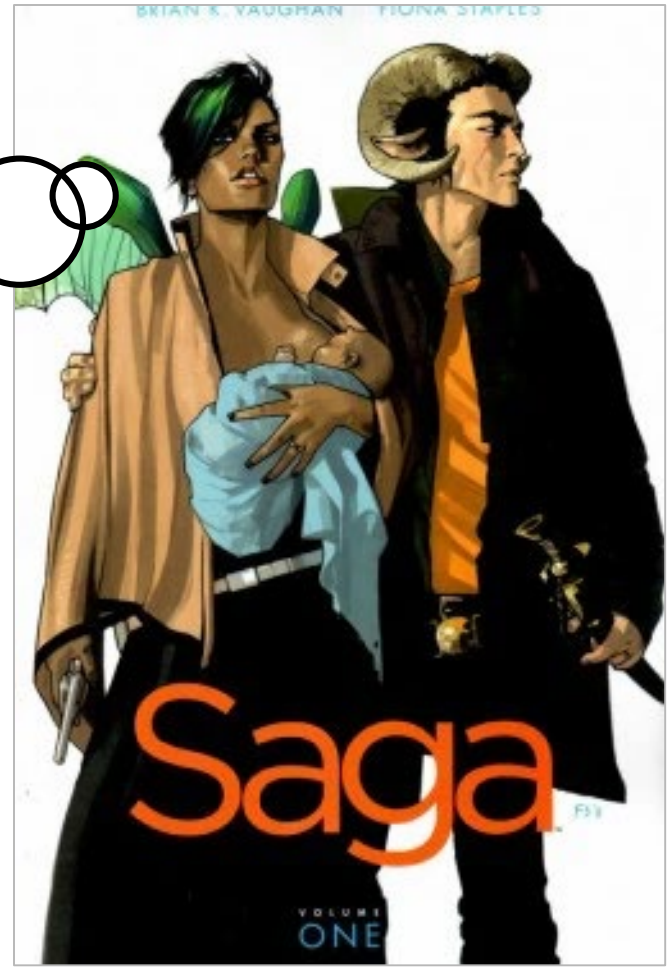
What do people mean when they say, “graphic novel”?

- Any long, square-bound (i.e. not staple-bound) comic book,
- Comic books that were first published serially, but have been collected into a single volume
- A long, standalone story, published as a single volume and not serially
- A serious comic book for serious grownups
- Comic books of higher-than-average cultural value
- An unnecessary attempt at claiming more seriousness or cultural value
- Fiction comics, as opposed to “graphic nonfiction”, “graphic biography”, “graphic memoir”, etc.
- An industry term for a segment of the publishing market
- **Convenient shorthand for all this stuff and more, but one that regularly warrants more elaboration for the benefit of patrons and co-workers**

History of graphic novels & comics



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History of graphic novels & comics

1830s-1930s

1930s-1970s

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History of graphic novels & comics

1970s-1980s

1980s-today

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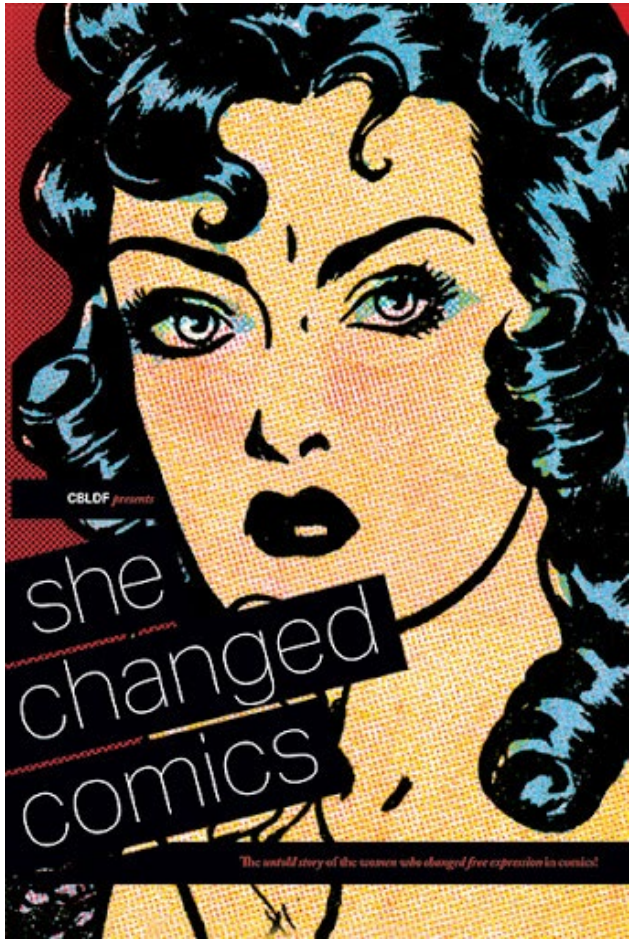
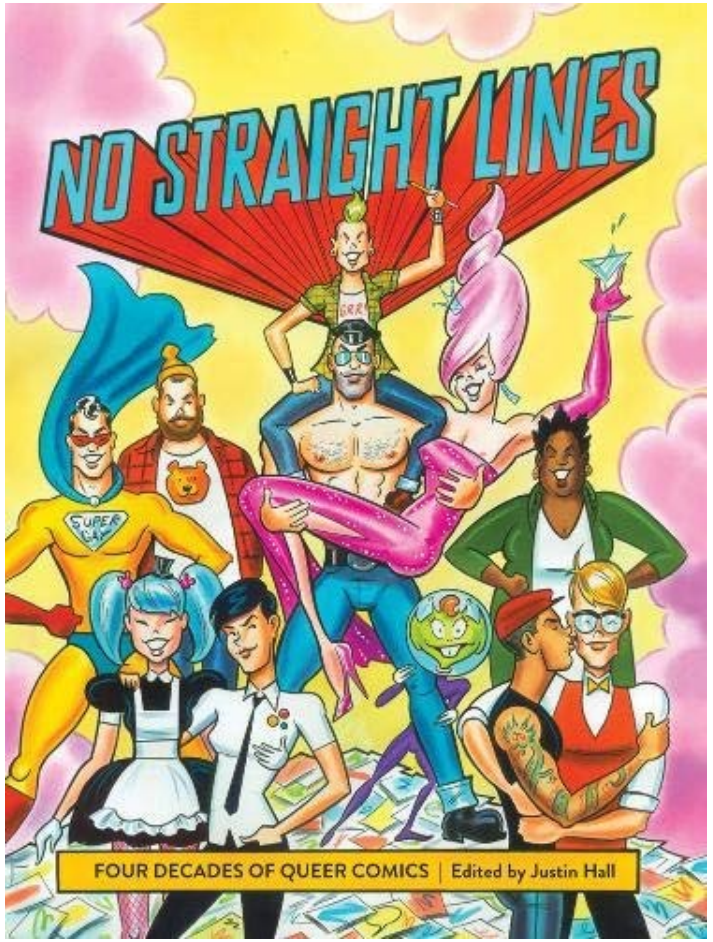
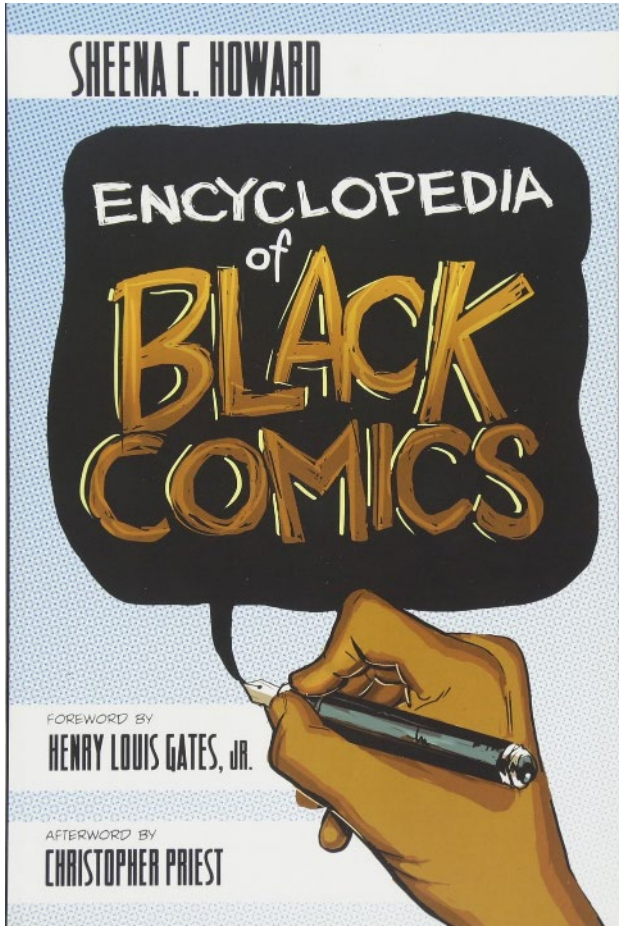
History of graphic novels & comics







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Why read graphic novels?

pictures

Visual and multimodal literacy

words + pictures

Image from *Hark! A Vagrant* (Kate Beaton)

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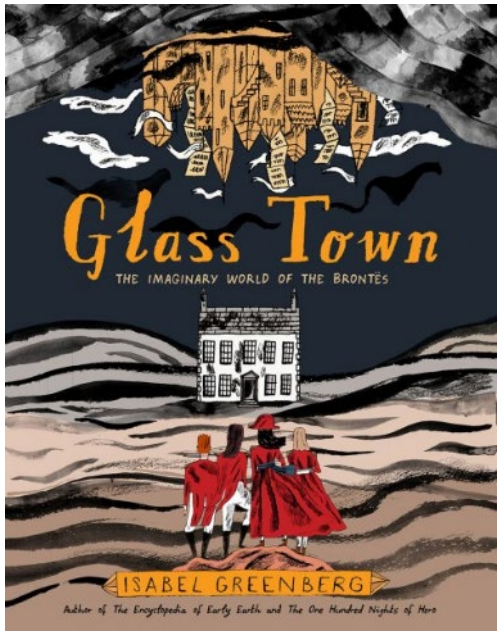
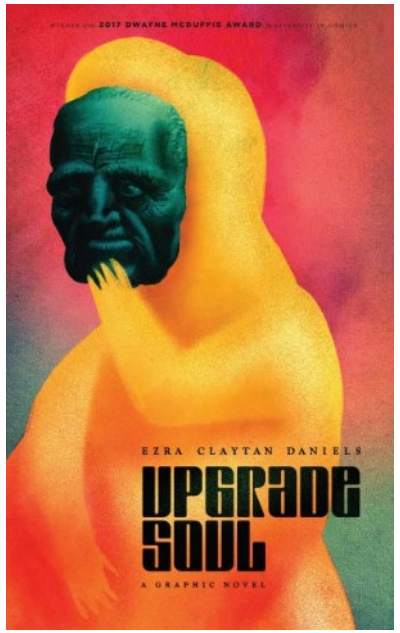
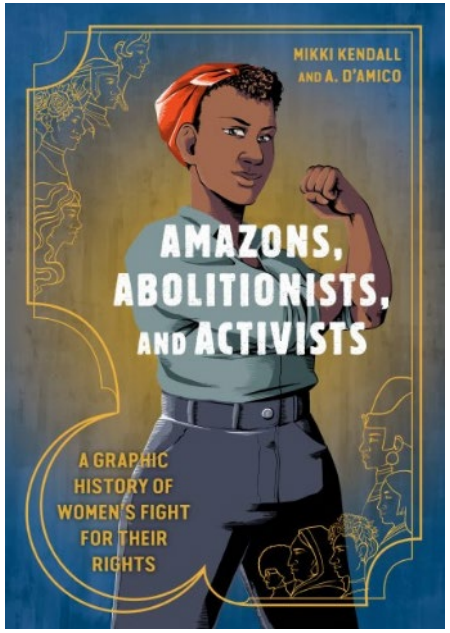
13

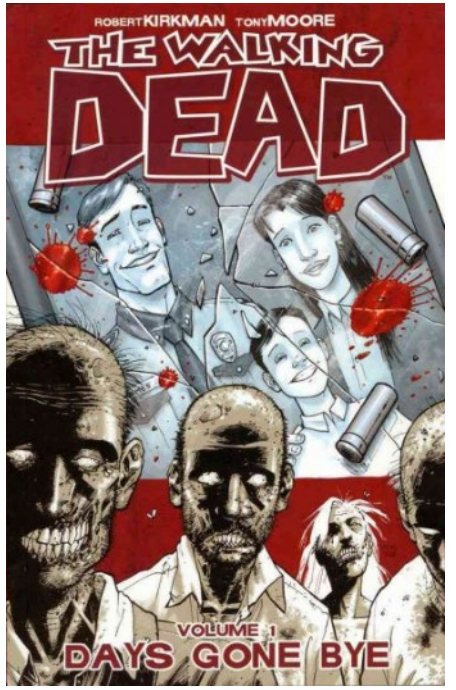
Why read graphic novels?

Genre variety!









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Why read graphic novels?

delicate, detailed, muted

bold, cartoony, colorful

art variety!

cartoony, minimally colored

black-and-white, dark, detailed, inventive

Images from *Beasts of Burden* #2 (Evan Dorkin, Jill Thompson); *Bloodlust & Bonnets* (Emily McGovern); *Fun Home* (Alison Bechdel); *March: Book Two* (John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, Nate Powell)

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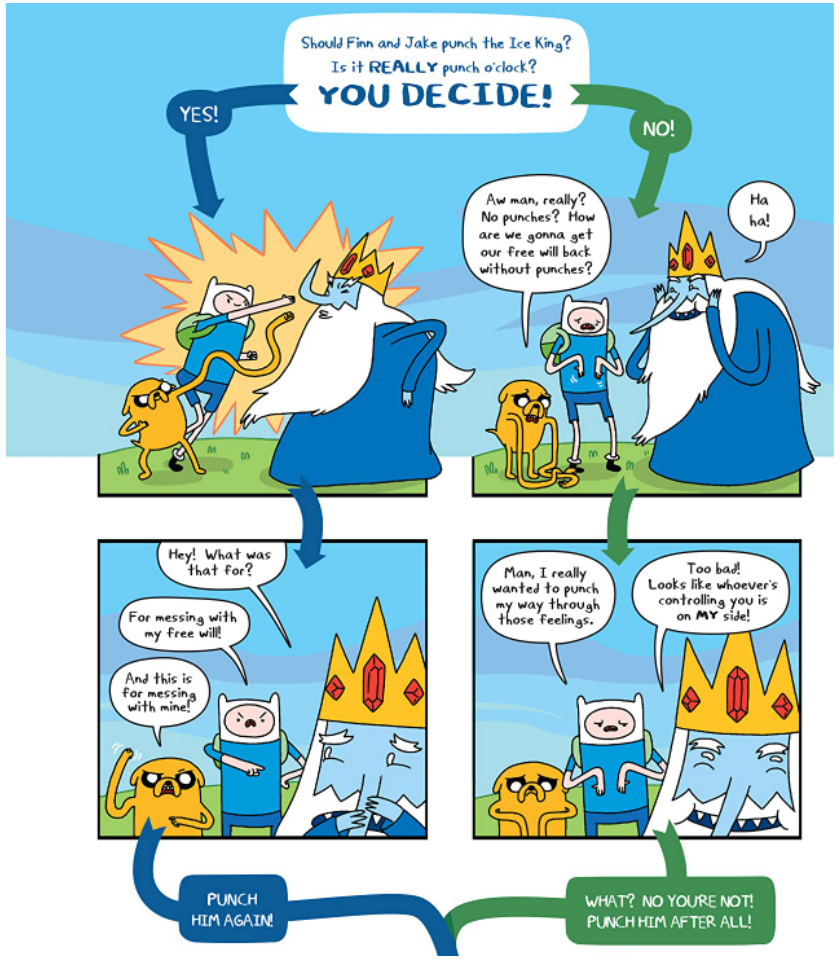
Why read graphic novels?



cool experiments with the form!

Images from *Hawkeye* #19 (Matt Fraction, David Aja, Matt Hollingsworth); web version of *His Face All Red* (Emily Carroll); *Adventure Time* #10 (Ryan North, Braden Lamb, Shelli Paroline)

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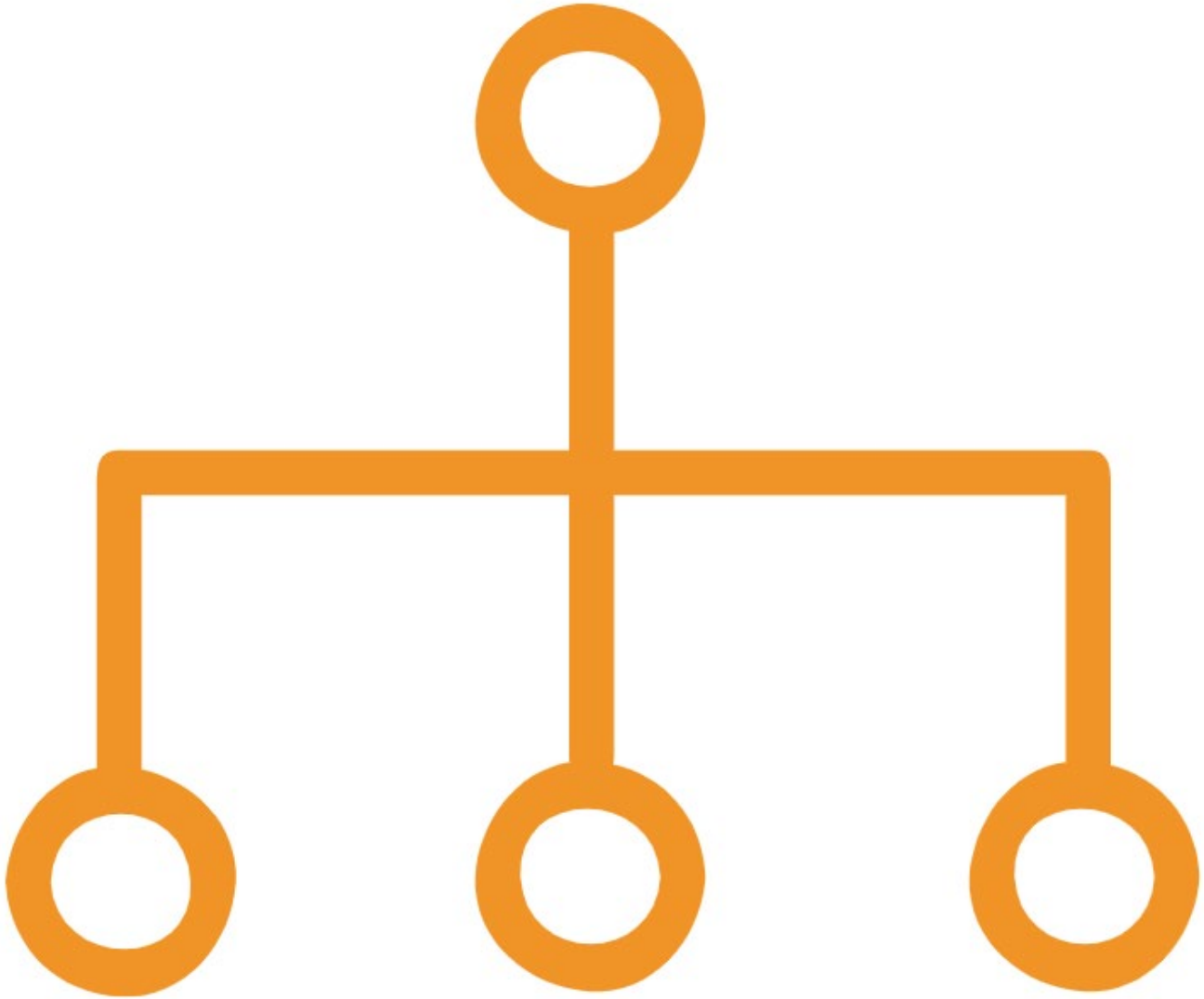
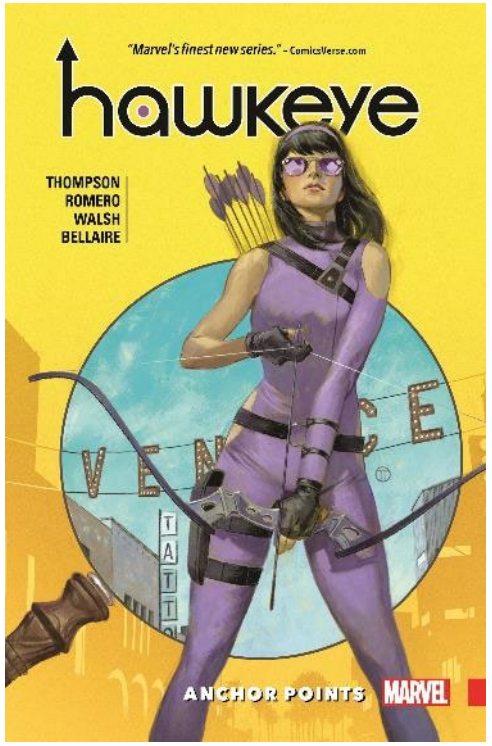
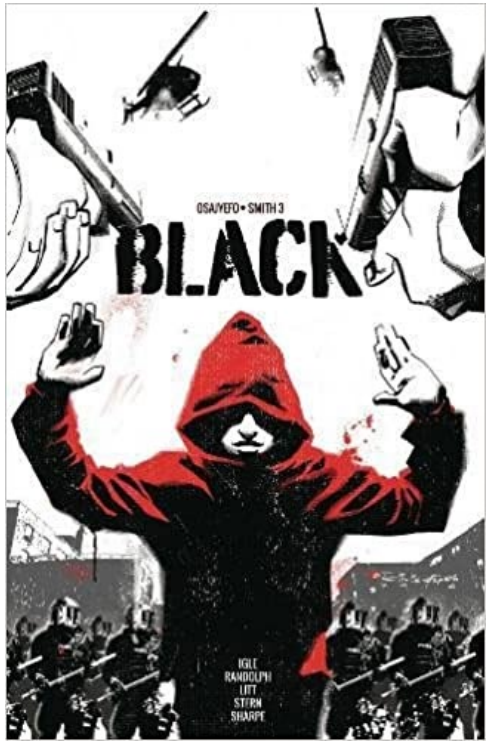
Genres / Subgenres



Superheroes





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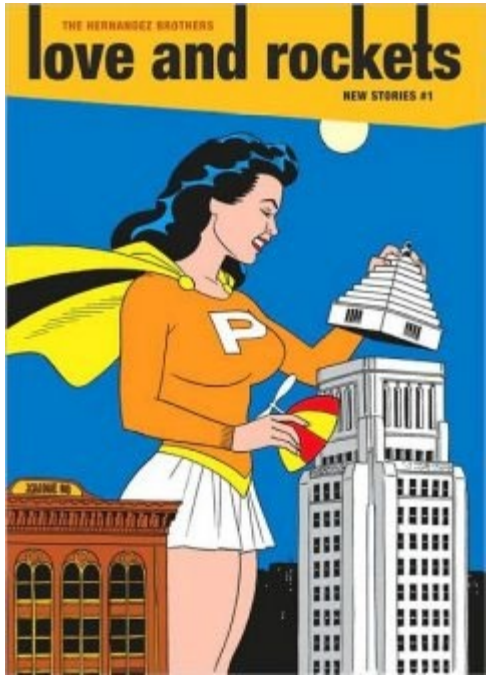
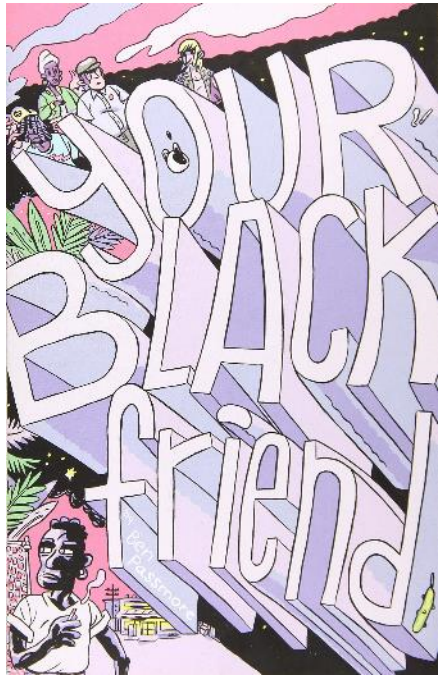
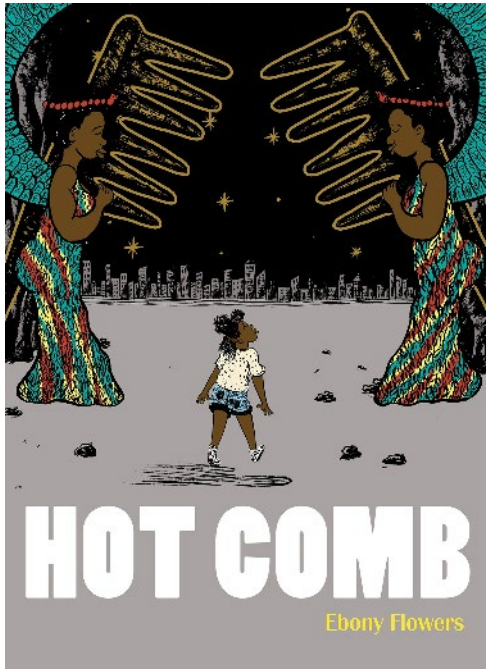
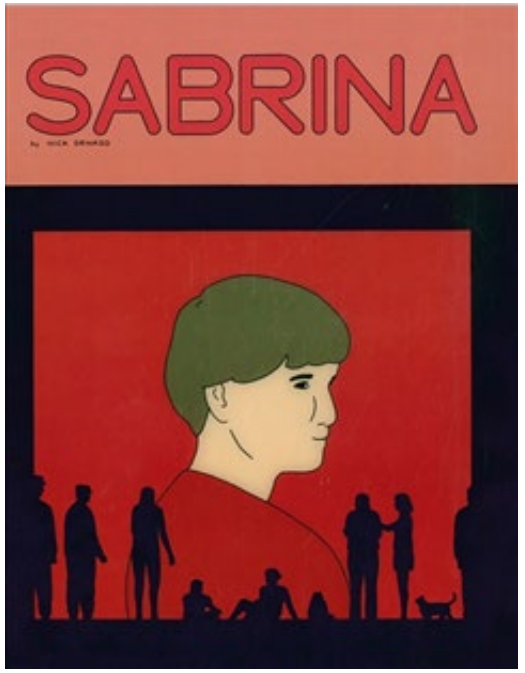
Alternative

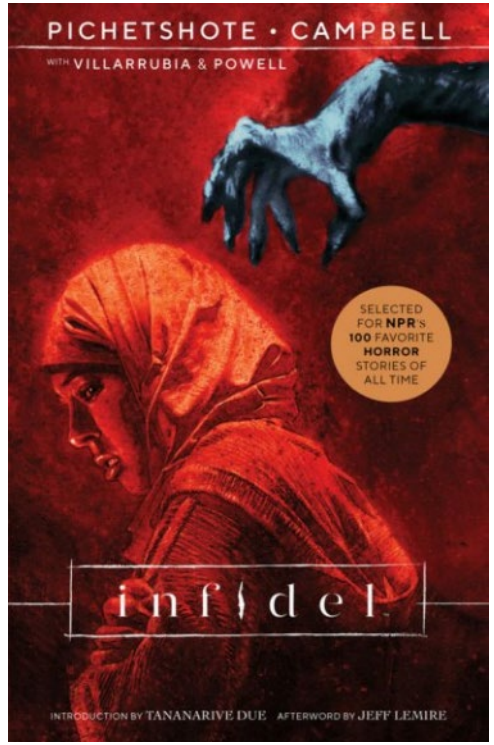








Fantasy, Sci-fi, & Horror



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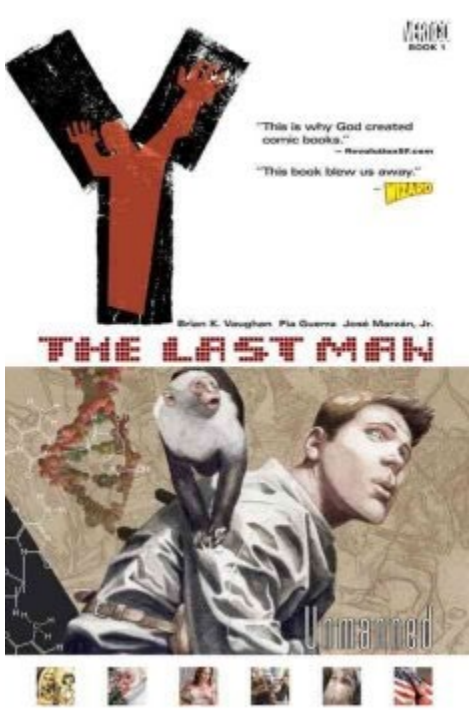
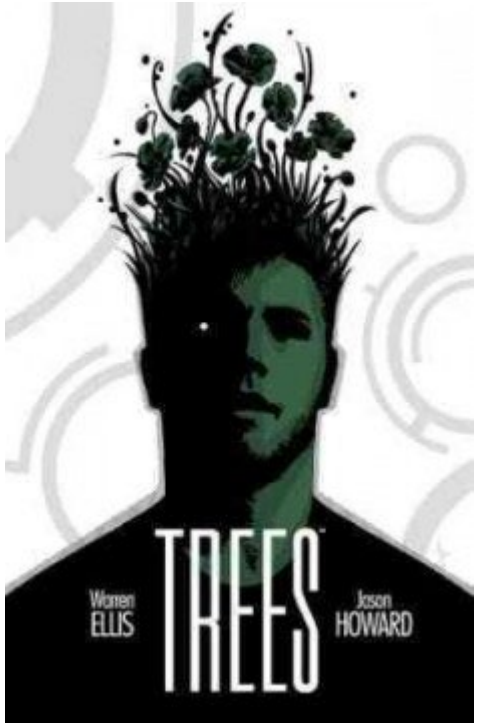
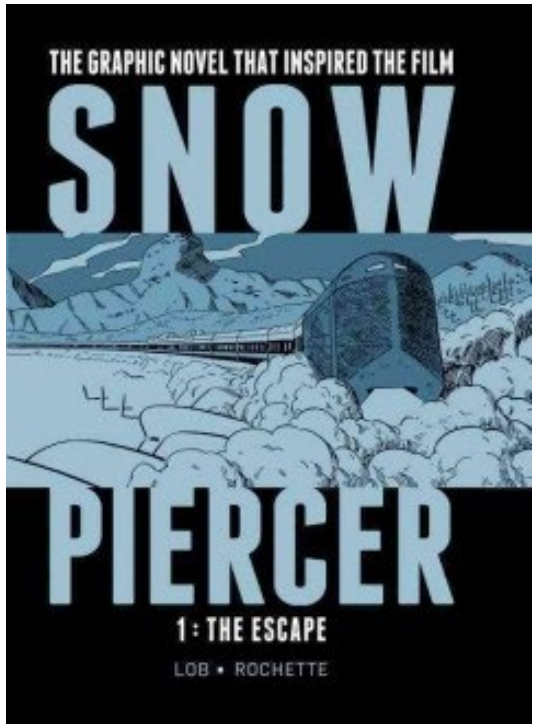
Apocalyptic & Dystopian







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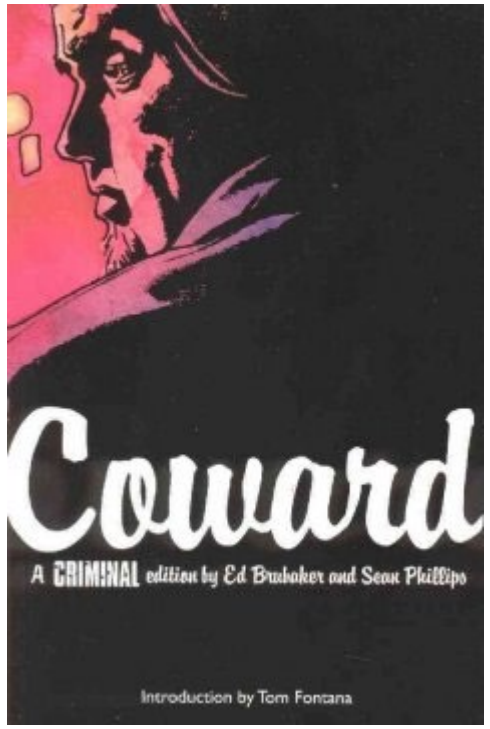
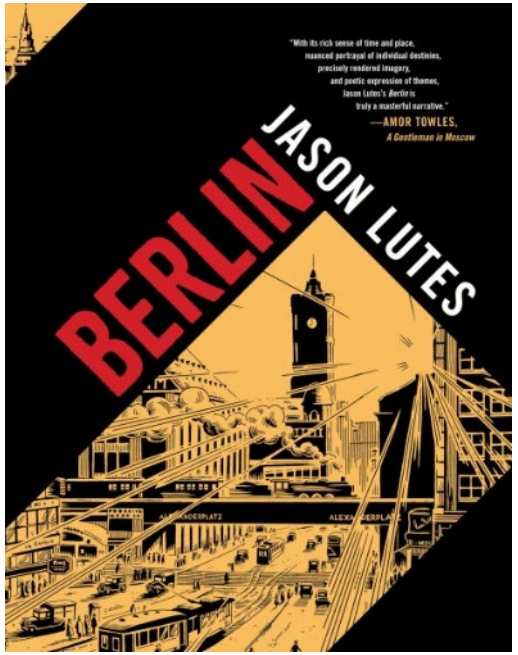
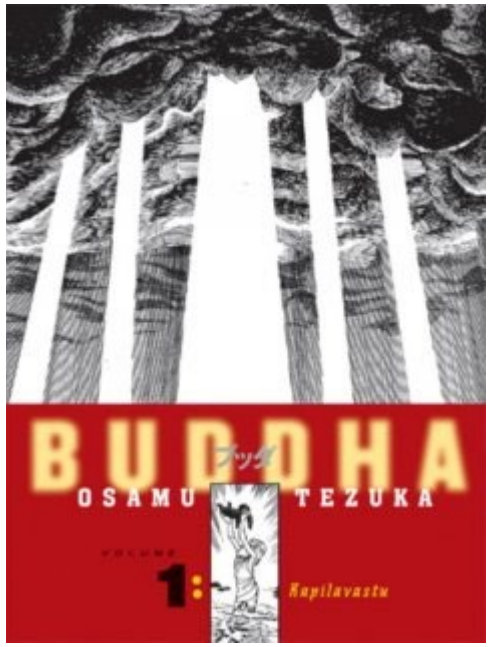
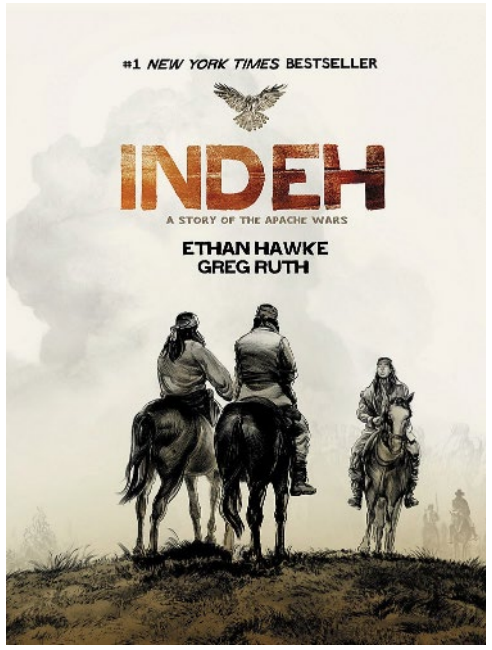
Crime, Mystery, & Noir

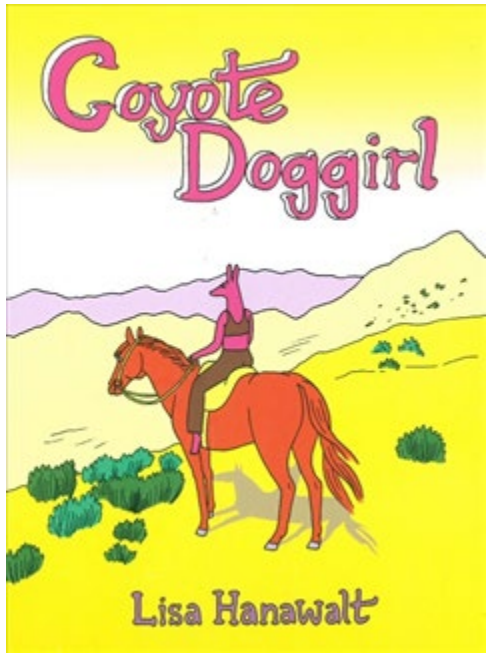


Historical & Westerns









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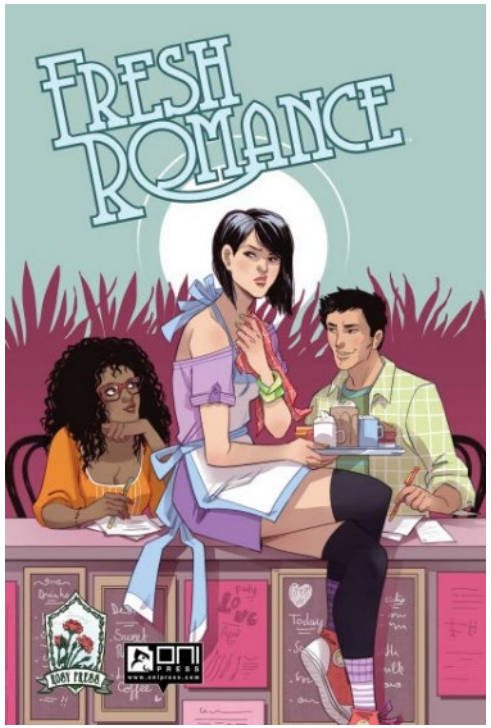
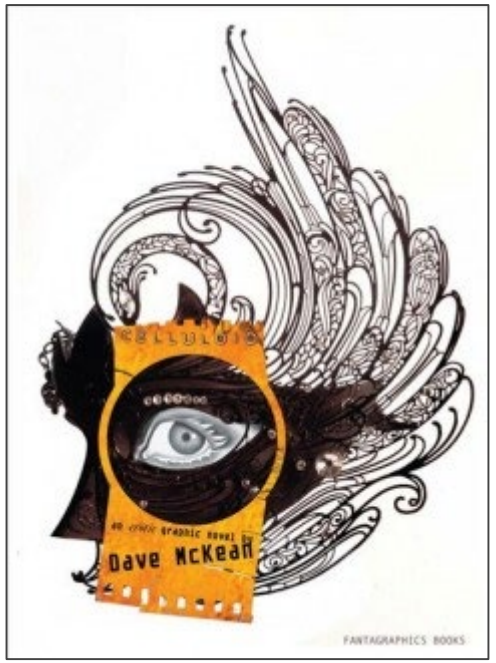
Romance & Erotica





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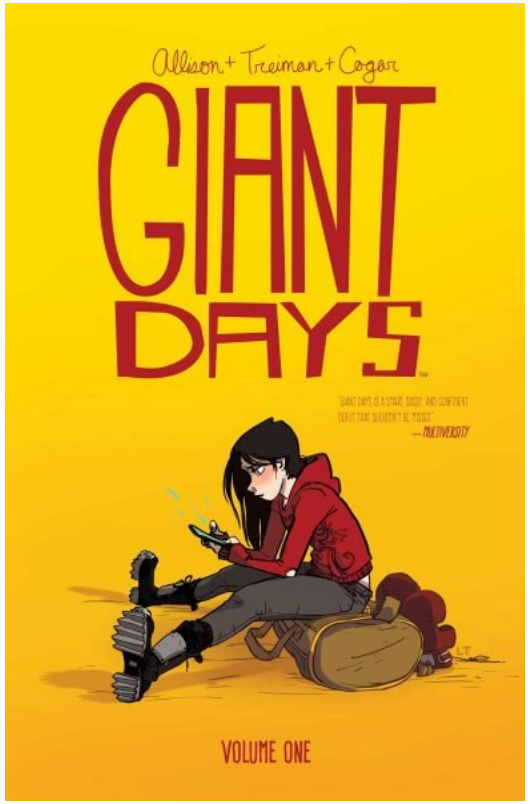
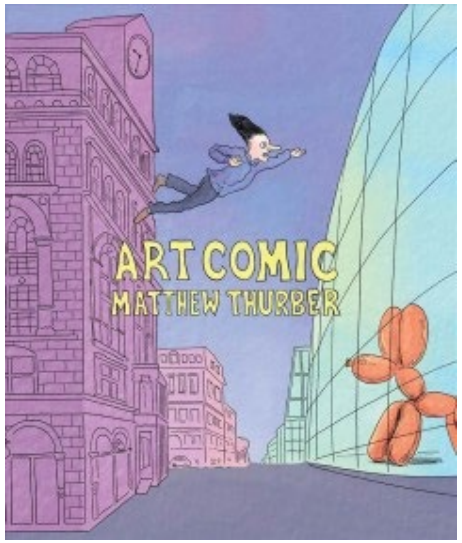
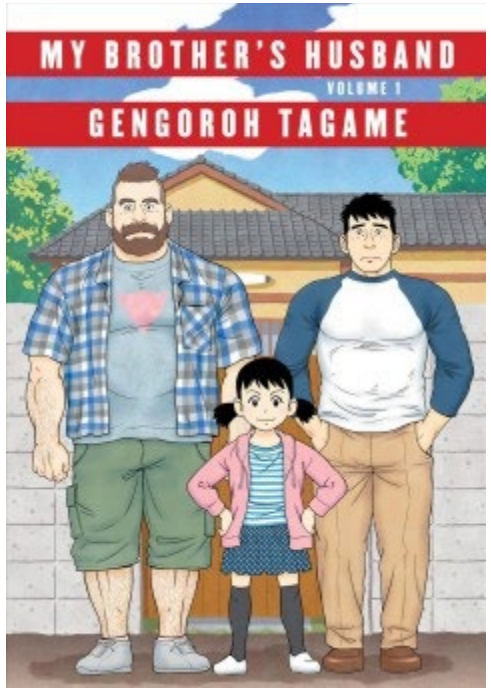
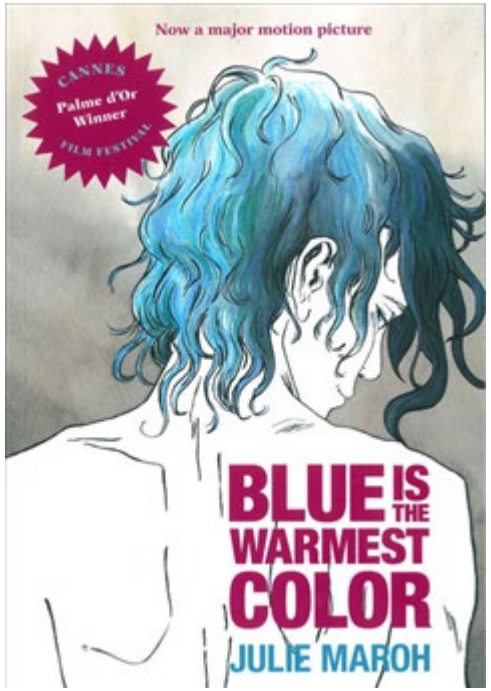
Humorous & Satirical

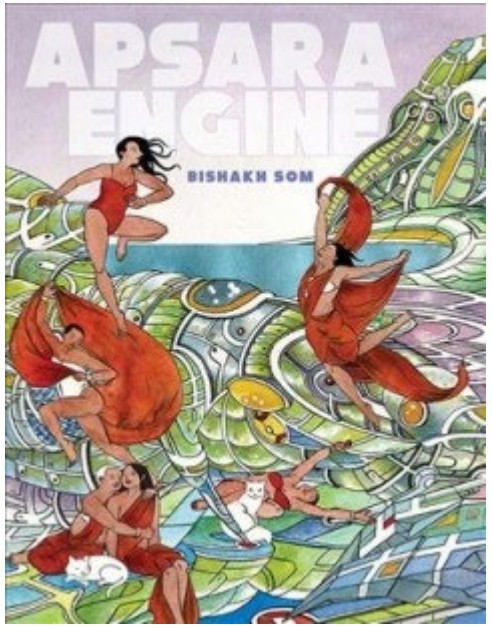


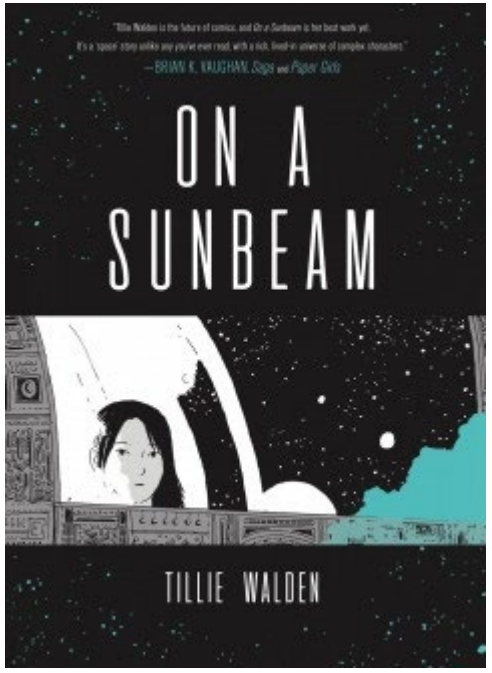


LGBTQIA

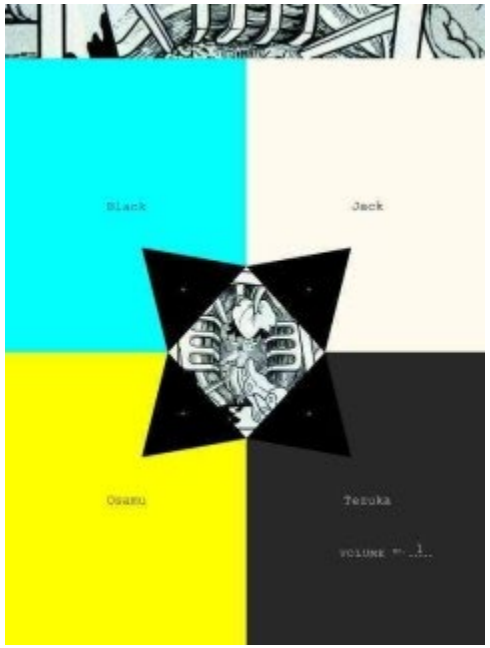

MY BROTHER'S HUSBAND
VOLUME 1
GENGOROH TAGAME

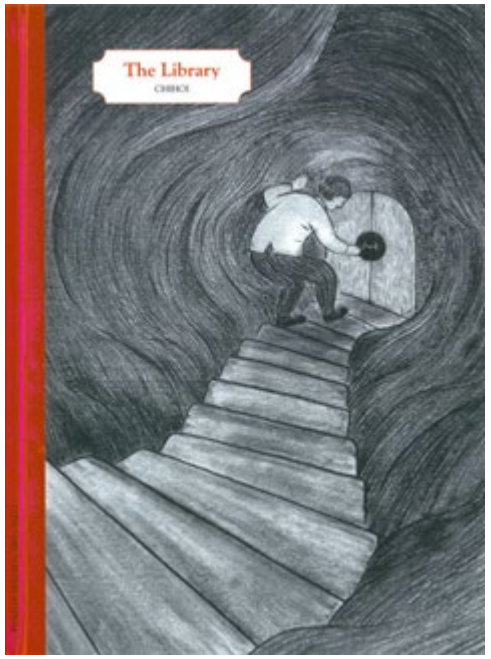

Now a major motion picture
CANNES
Palme d'Or
Winner
FILM FESTIVAL
BLUE IS THE WARMEST COLOR
JULIE MAROH

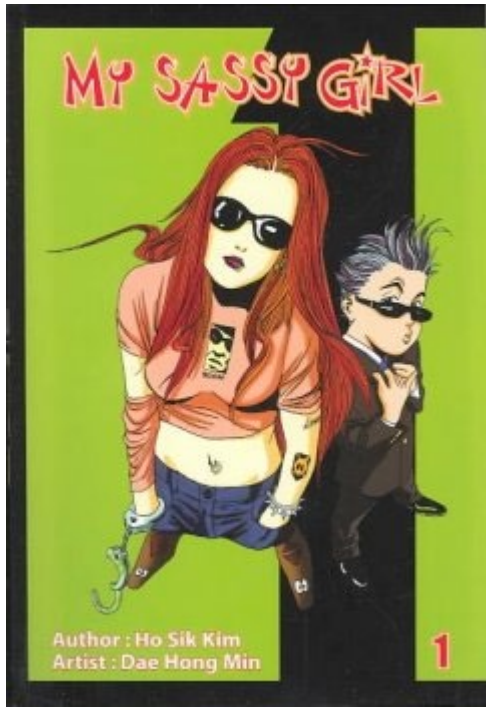

APSARA ENGINE
BISHAKH SOM


ON A SUNBEAM
TILLIE WALDEN

Manga, Manhua, Manhwa







Japan

China

Korea

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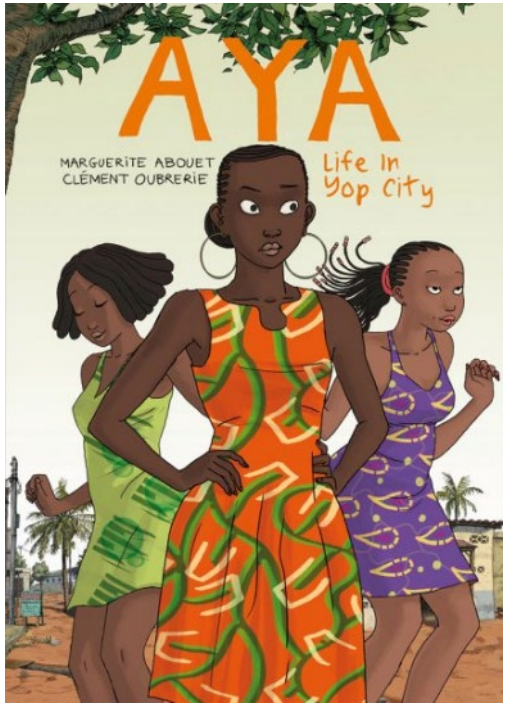
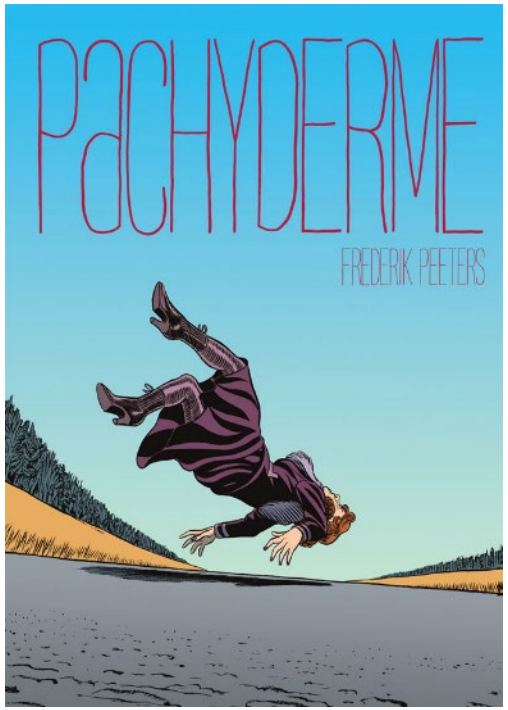
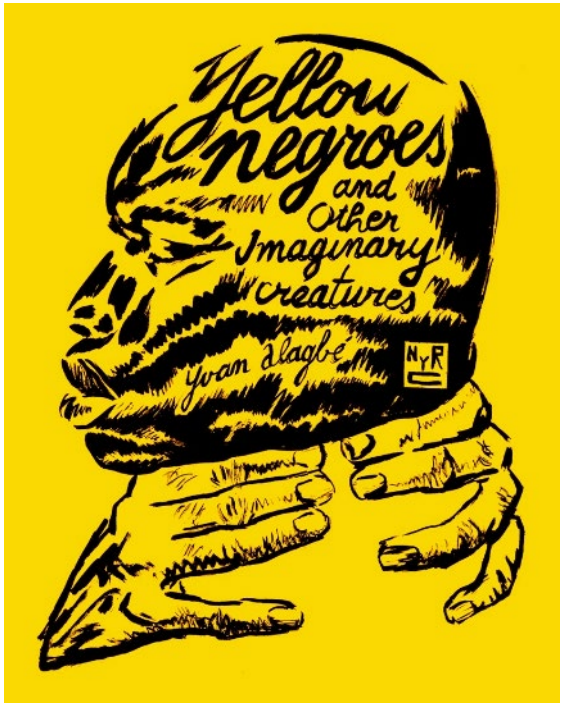
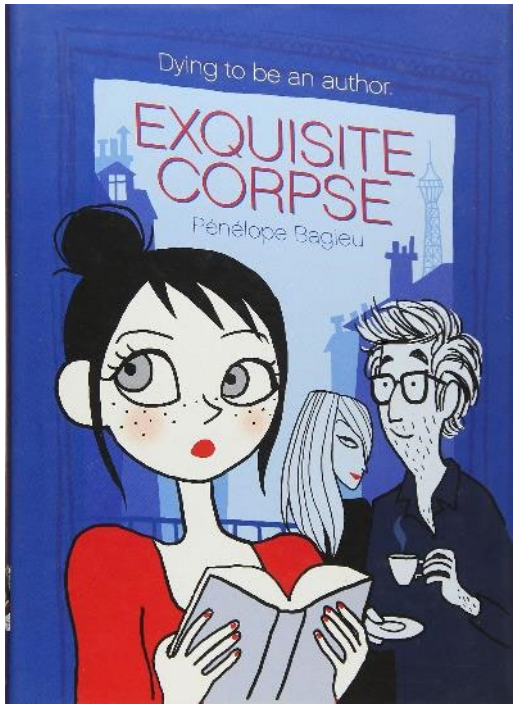
Franco-Belgian

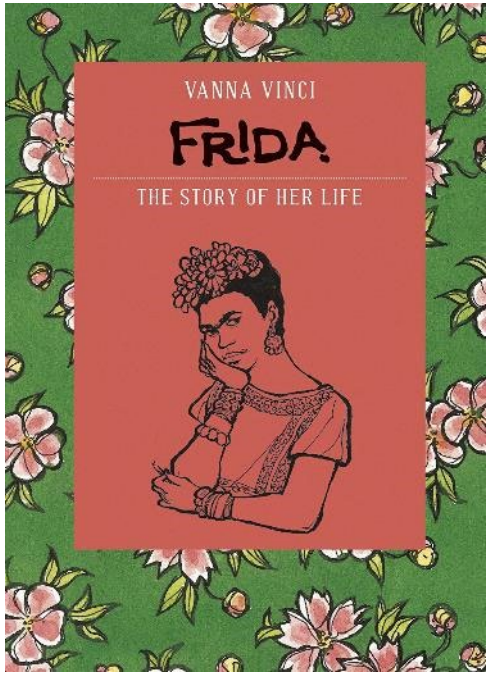


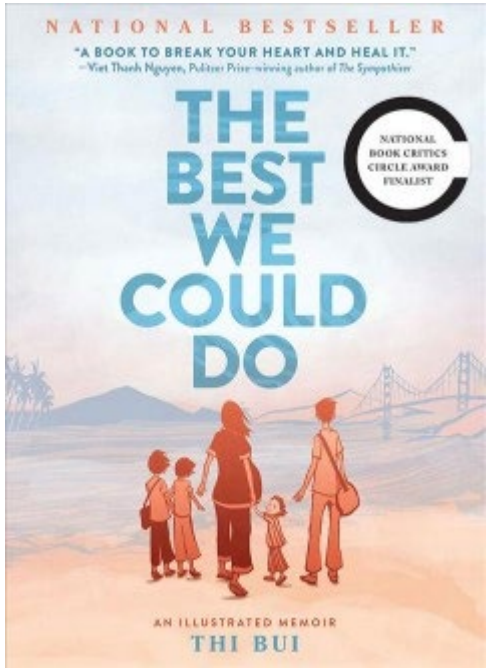


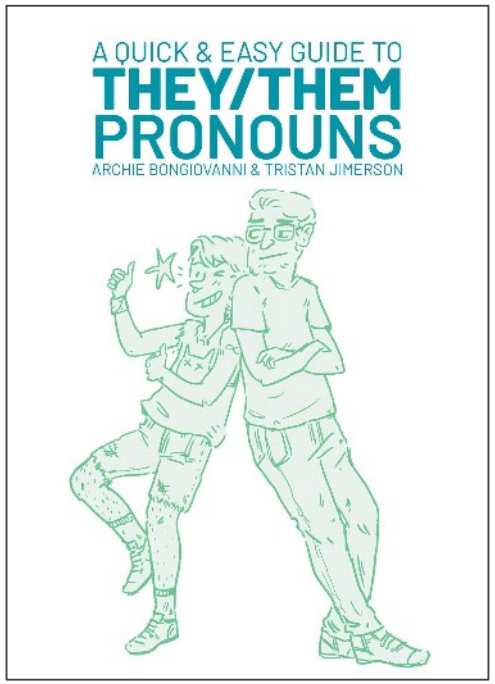


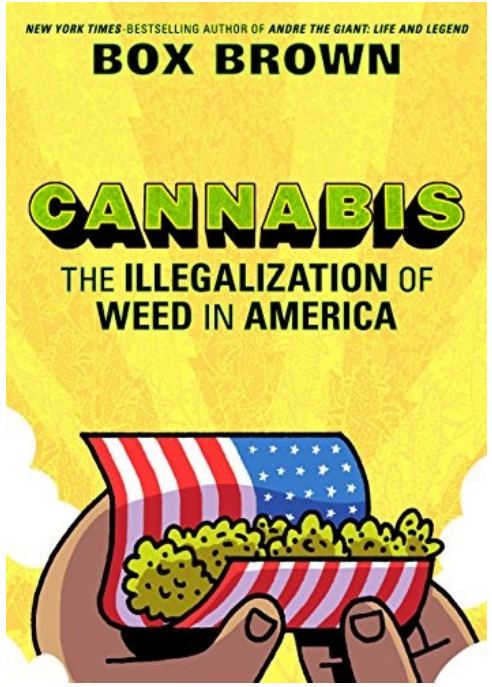


Nonfiction

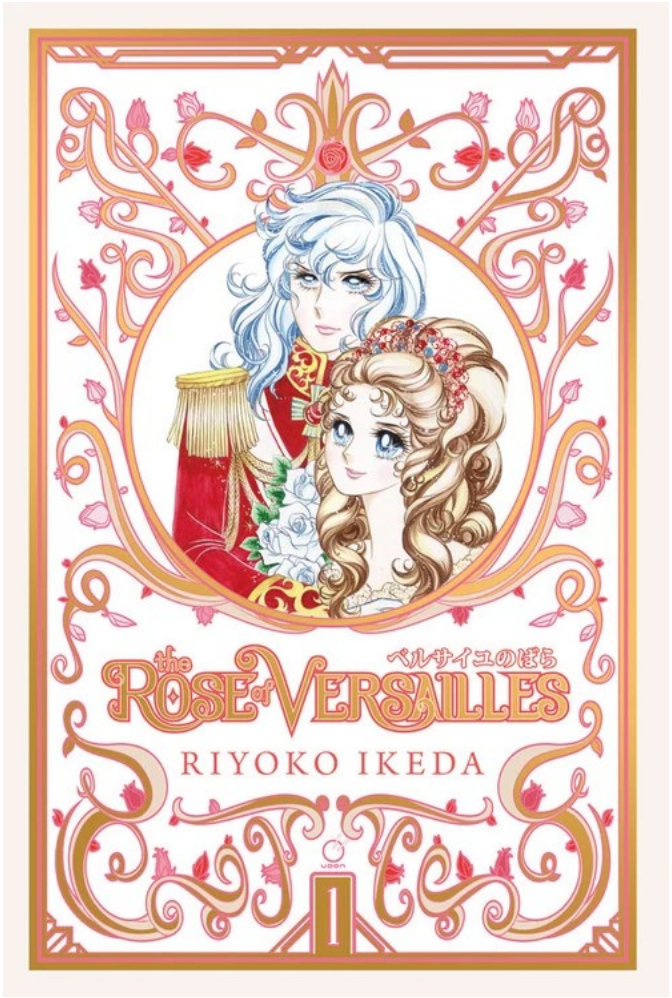

VANNA VINCI
FRIDA
THE STORY OF HER LIFE

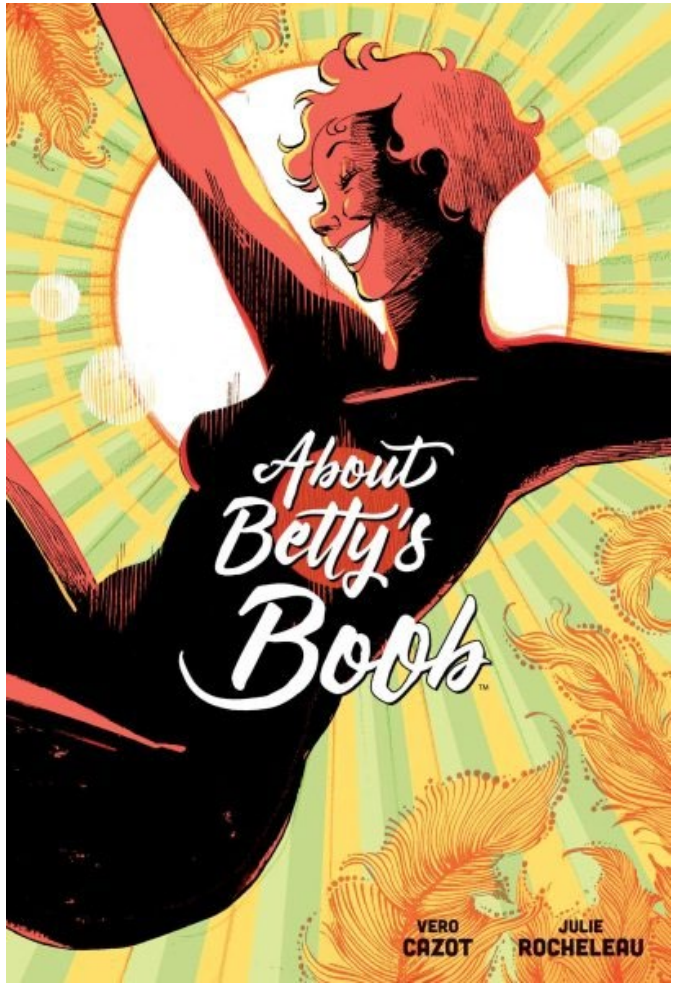

NATIONAL BESTSELLER
"A BOOK TO BREAK YOUR HEART AND HEAL IT."
THE BEST WE COULD DO
NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE AWARD FINALIST
AN ILLUSTRATED MEMOIR
THI BUI


A QUICK & EASY GUIDE TO
THEY/THEM PRONOUNS
ARCHIE BONGIOVANNI & TRISTAN JIMERSON

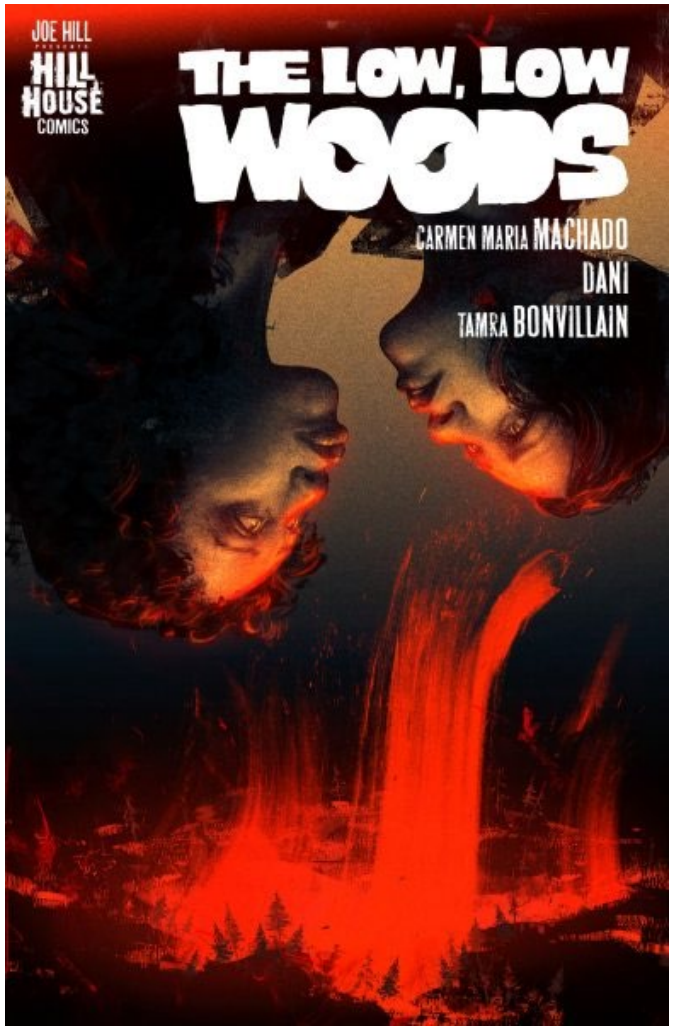

NEW YORK TIMES-BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF ANDRE THE GIANT: LIFE AND LEGEND
BOX BROWN
CANNABIS
THE ILLEGALIZATION OF WEED IN AMERICA

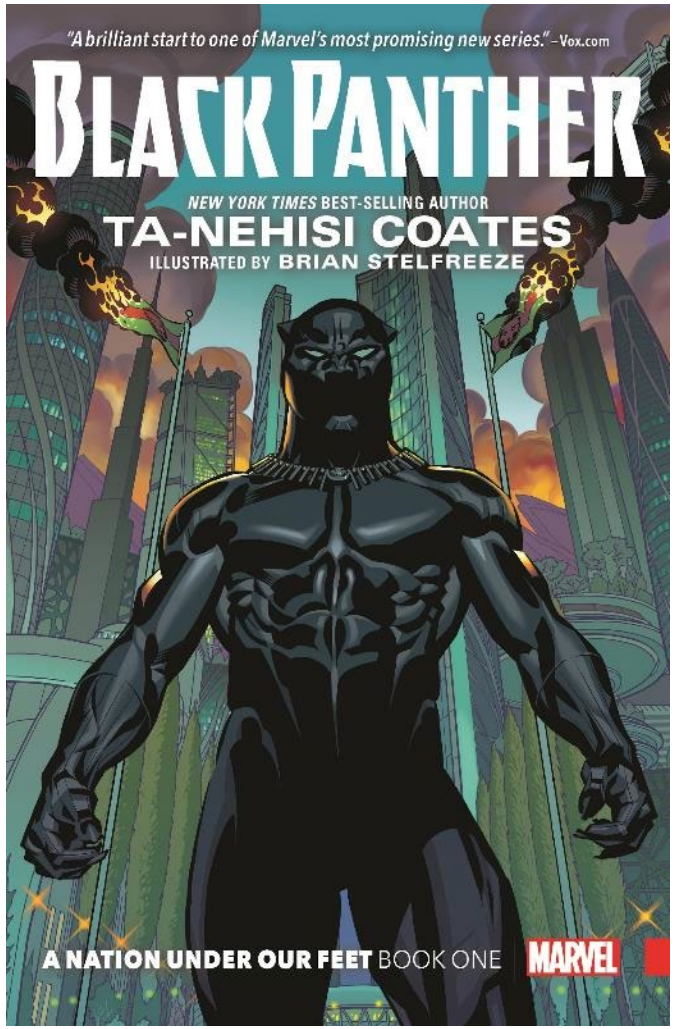
Trends: Translations (new and old)

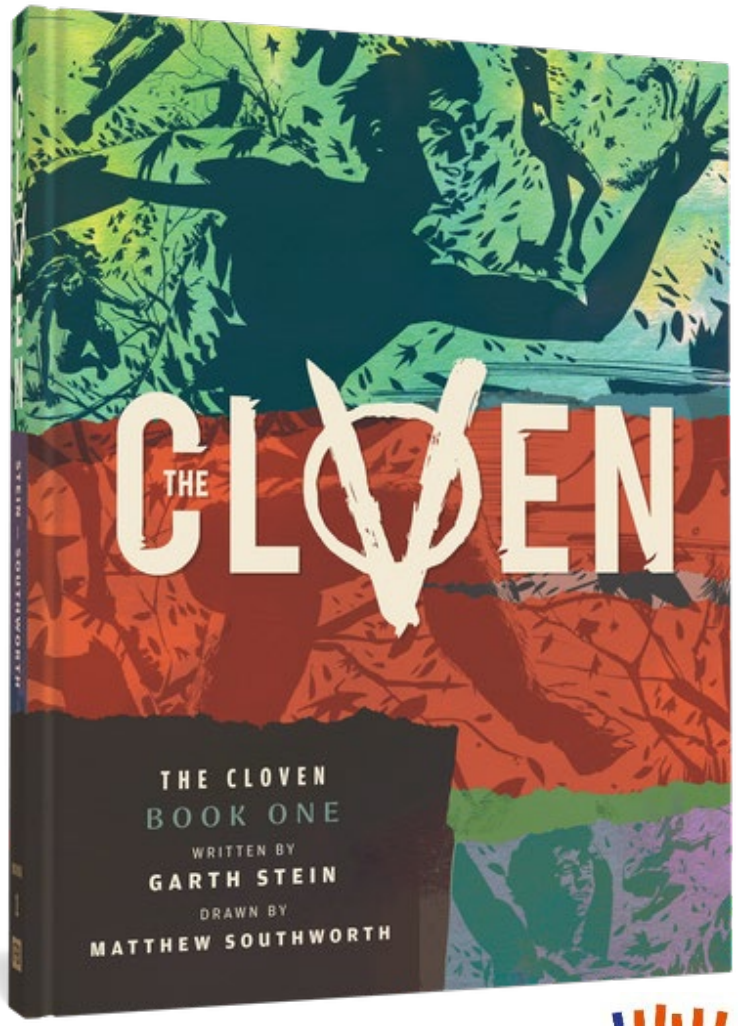




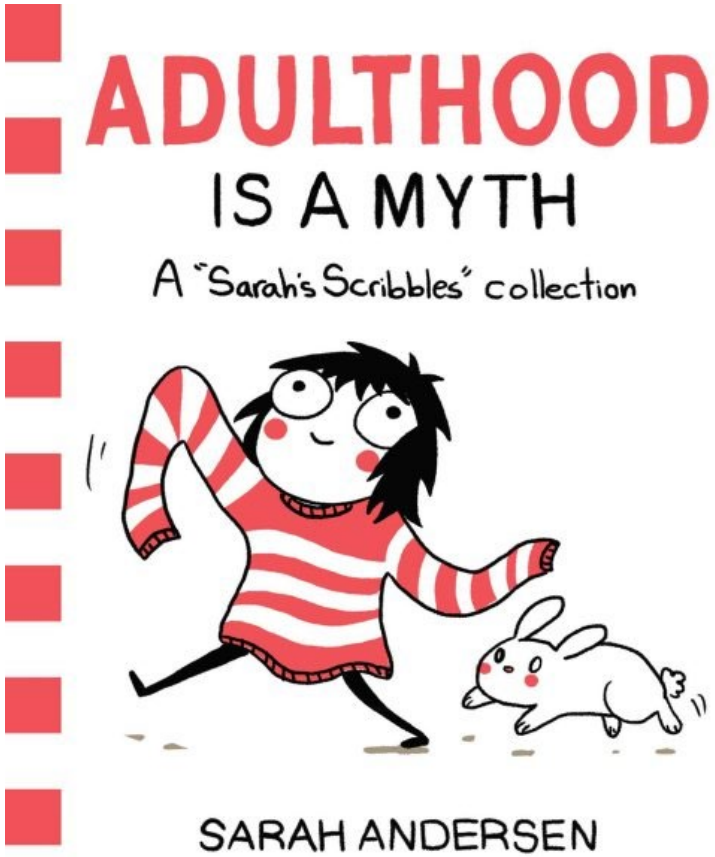
Trends: Prose authors try their hand



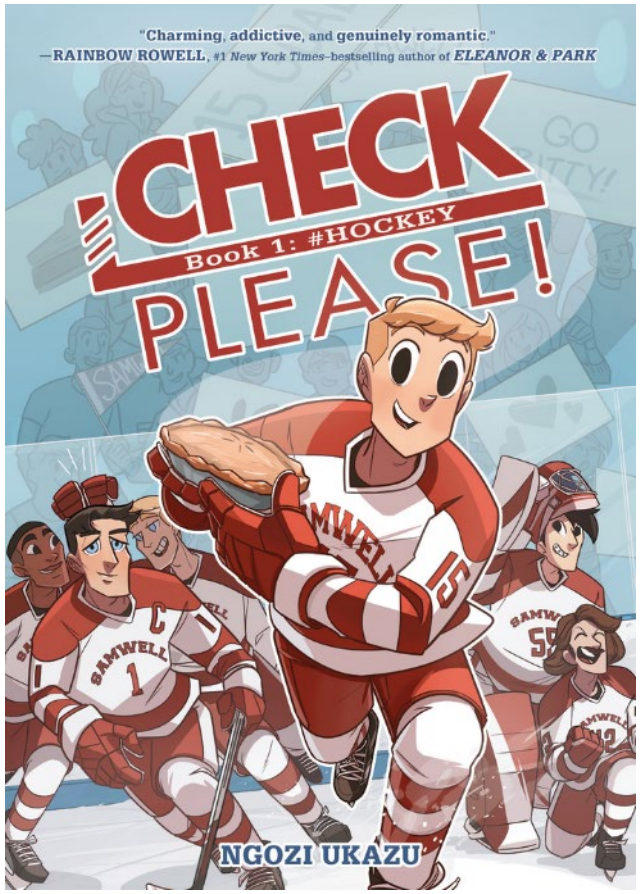




Trends: Webcomic breakouts



LORE OLYMPUS
CREATED BY RACHEL SMYTHE
EDITED BY BEKAH CADEN



NoveList
LIBRARY READS
32

NoveList Appeal
Action-packed
Character-driven
Atmospheric
Amusing
Bleak
Creepy
Intricately plotted
Darkly humorous
Moody
Romantic
Violent
Disturbing
Dramatic
Haunting
Offbeat
Suspenseful
Witty
Gritty
Melancholy
Menacing
Engaging
Upbeat
Spare
Sardonic
Quirky
Reflective
Descriptive
Conversational
Likeable
Flawed
Introspective
Complex
Compelling
Authentic
Brooding
Stylistically complex
Well-crafted dialogue
Jargon-filled
Courageous
Culturally diverse
Ability diverse
Twisted
Spirited
Creepy
Unlikeable
Melancholy
Character-driven
Large cast of characters
Well-developed
Strong female
Witty
Romantic
Snarky
Amusing
Quirky
Violent
Gritty
Atmospheric
Brooding
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Menacing
Dramatic
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Strong female
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Character-driven
Authentic
Conversational
Reflective
Descriptive
Bleak
Likeable
Atmospheric
Reflective
Complex
Engaging
Intricately plotted
Creepy
Action-packed
Sardonic
Haunting

Melancholy
Authentic
Violent
Own voices
Haunting
Compelling
Irreverent
Lyrical
Offbeat
Banter-filled
Strong female
Hopeful
Action-packed
Moving
Complex
Anthropomorphic
Thoughtful

Illustration appeal

Tone

- Charming
- Dark
- Nightmarish

Style

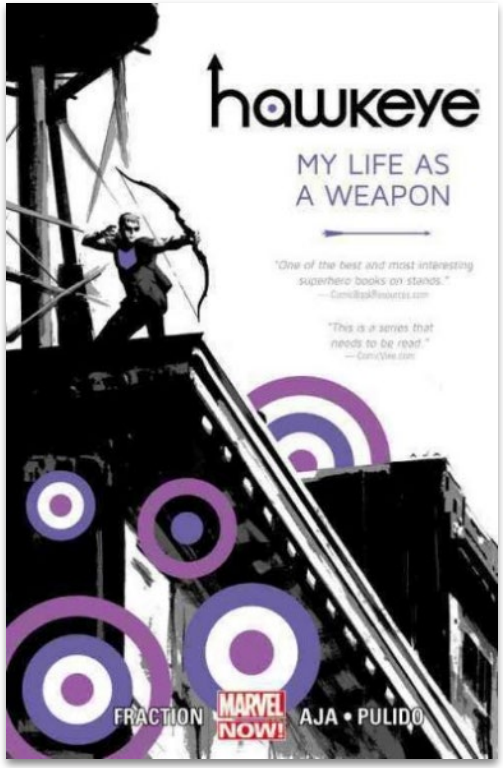
- Abstract
- Bold
- Cartoony
- Delicate
- Detailed
- Inventive
- Lavish
- Photographic
- Realistic
- Rough-edged
- Simple
- Surreal

Color

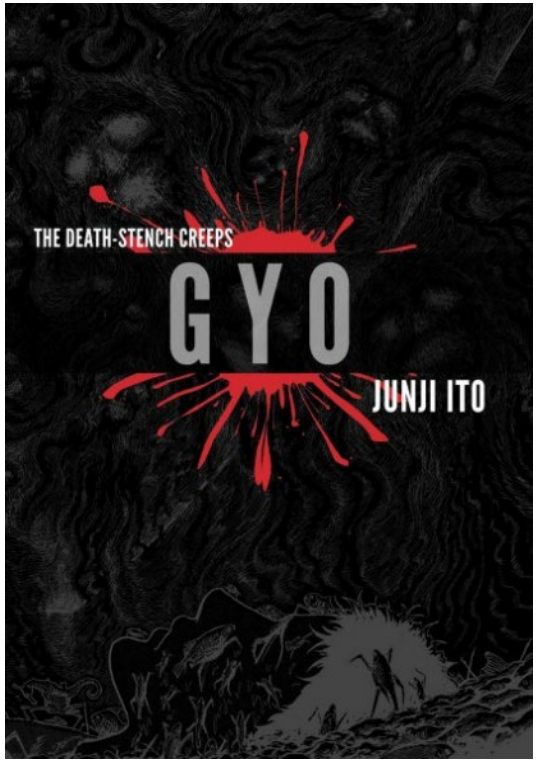
- Black-and-white
- Colorful
- Minimally colored
- Muted
- Sepia-toned

NoveList Themes

Assemble!
No power, still super
Reboots and retcons



Creature feature
Evil animals



Being a friend
Coming out experiences

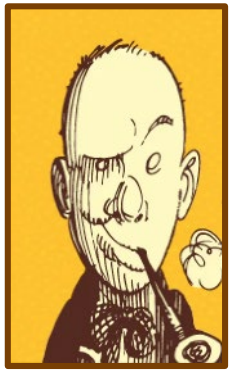
NoveList
LIBRARY READS

Characters	No power, still super
	Good gone bad
	Scum and villainy
	Sidekick spotlight
	Hidden heritage
	Vengeance is mine
	Rightful heir
	Ensemble cast
	Band of survivors

Setting
Home again
Hidden among us
Inspired by real events
Boldly go
Academies of magic
Small town horror

Plot	Inspired by real events
	Origin story
	Coming out experiences
	Engendering gender
	Chosen family
	To the rescue!
	Lost in space
	On the run

Awards



- Eisner Awards
- Ignatz Awards
- Harvey Awards
- Ringo Awards
- Angoulême Prix
- ALA-GNCRT Best Graphic Novels for Adults Reading List
- Excellence in Graphic Literature Awards
- Doug Wright Awards
- Dwayne McDuffie Award for Diversity in Comics

Helping Readers

Questions to ask...

- What graphic novels have you read and enjoyed?
- What do you like to read outside the GN format?
- What genres do you like?
- What TV shows and movies are in your top 5?

TIP: It's very easy to flip though graphic novels, so you can walk a patron over to the shelves and browse a few genres & styles.

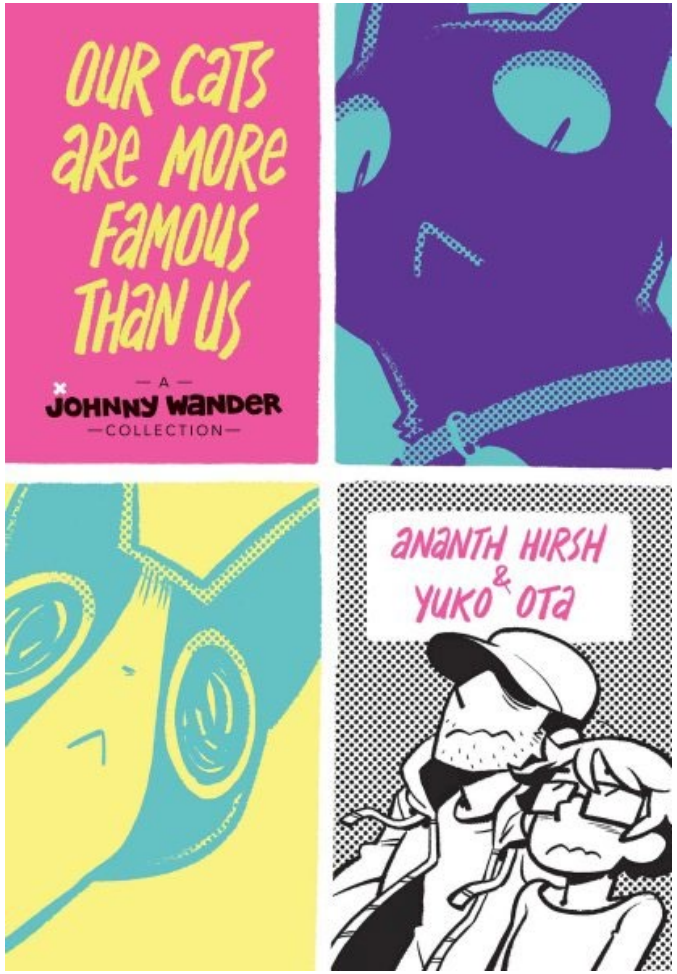
Graphic Novel Starter Pack

- ✔ Breadth of genres
- ✔ Well-reviewed
- ✔ Wide appeal
- ✔ Stand-alone graphic novel or completed series

Our Cats Are More Famous Than Us by Ananth Hirsh and Yuko Ota

NoveList Plus Cataloging

- **Genres:** Autobiographical comics; Life stories; Webcomics
- **Story/Character Appeal:** Amusing; Feel-good; Reflective; Conversational; Engaging
- **Illustration Appeal:** Black-and-white; Bold, Charming



NoveList
LIBRARY READS

BTTM FDRS

by Ezra Claytan Daniels and Ben Passmore

NoveList Plus Cataloging

- **Genres:** African American fiction, Afrofuturism and Afrofantasy, Horror comics, Satirical comics
- **Themes:** Body horror
- **Story/Character Appeal:** Authentic, Culturally diverse
- **Illustration Appeal:** Colorful, Rough-edged

NoveList

LIBRARY READS

Monster by Naoki Urasawa

(read right-to-left!)

NoveList Plus Cataloging

- **Genres:** Manga, Horror comics, Mystery comics
- **Story/Character Appeal:** Compelling, Sympathetic, Well-developed

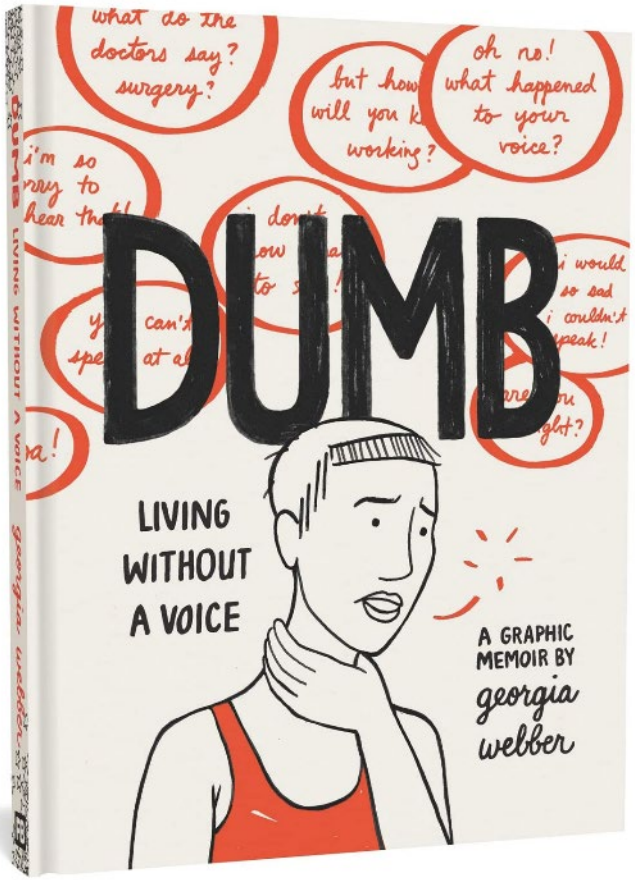
NoveList

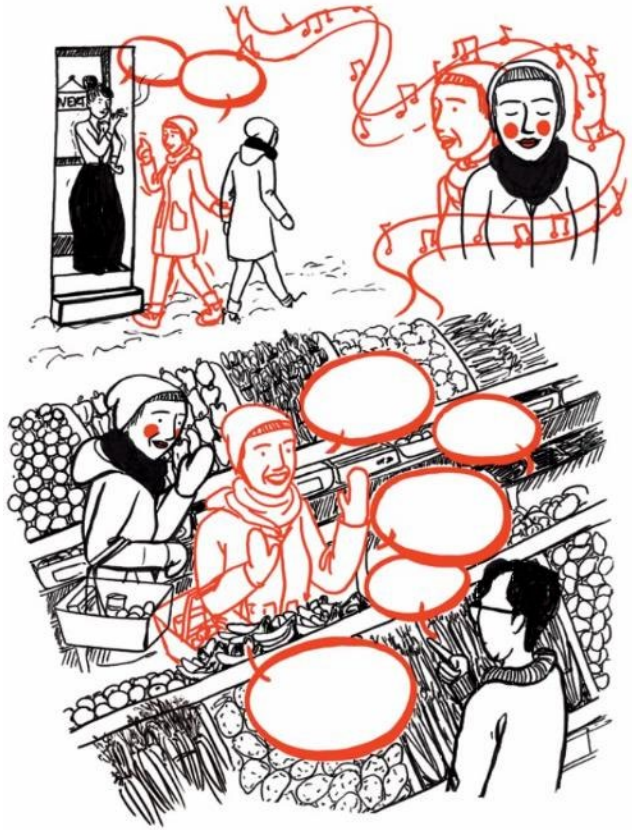
LIBRARY READS

Dumb by Georgia Webber

NoveList Plus Cataloging

- **Genres:** Autobiographical comics; Life stories
- **Story/Character Appeal:** Hopeful; Reflective; Compelling
- **Illustration Appeal:** Minimally colored





NoveList
LIBRARY READS

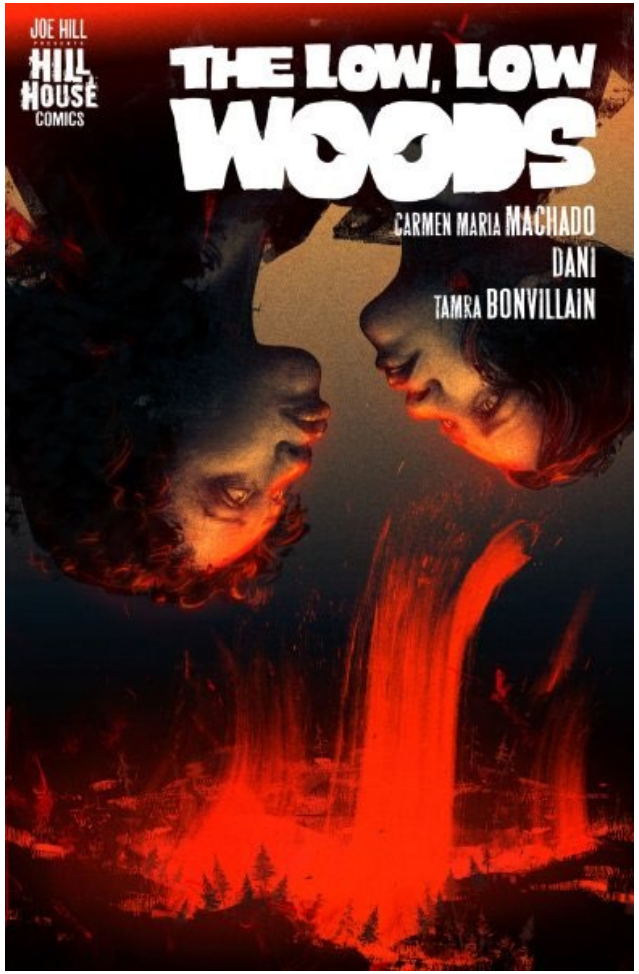
Y, The Last Man by Brian K. Vaughan and Pia Guerra

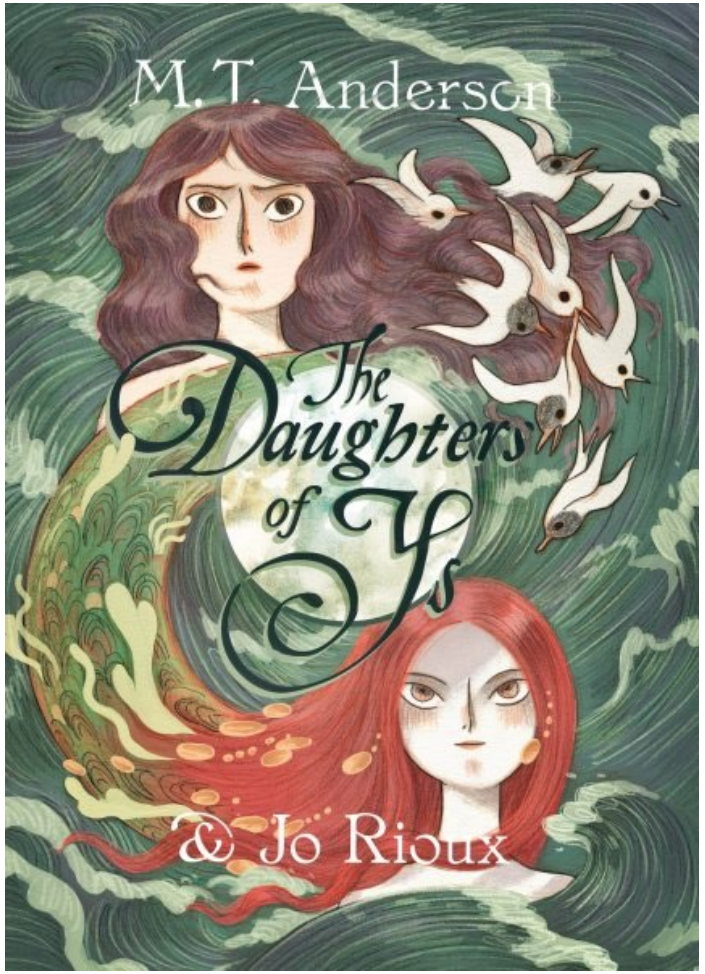
NoveList Plus Cataloging

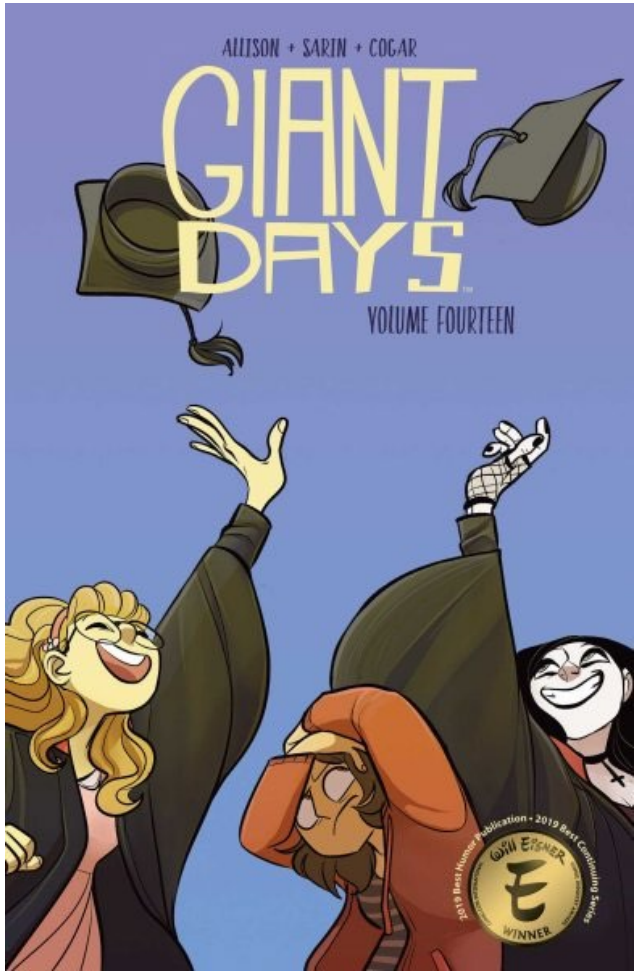
- **Genres:** Apocalyptic comics, Science fiction comics
- **Story/Character Appeal:** Character-driven, Fast-paced, Thought-provoking, Compelling
- **Illustration Appeal:** Detailed, Muted

Titles we're excited about

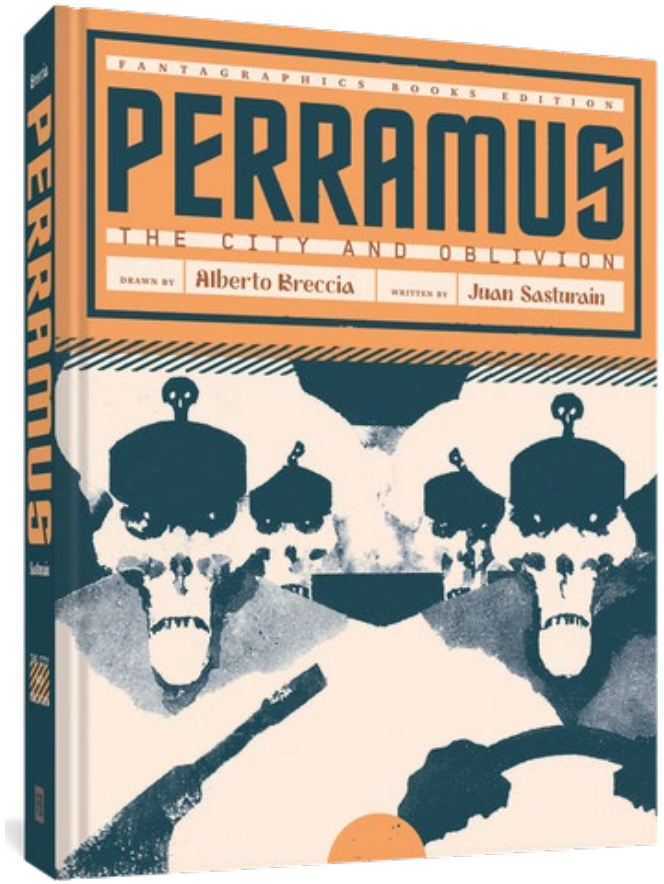
Kendal is excited about:

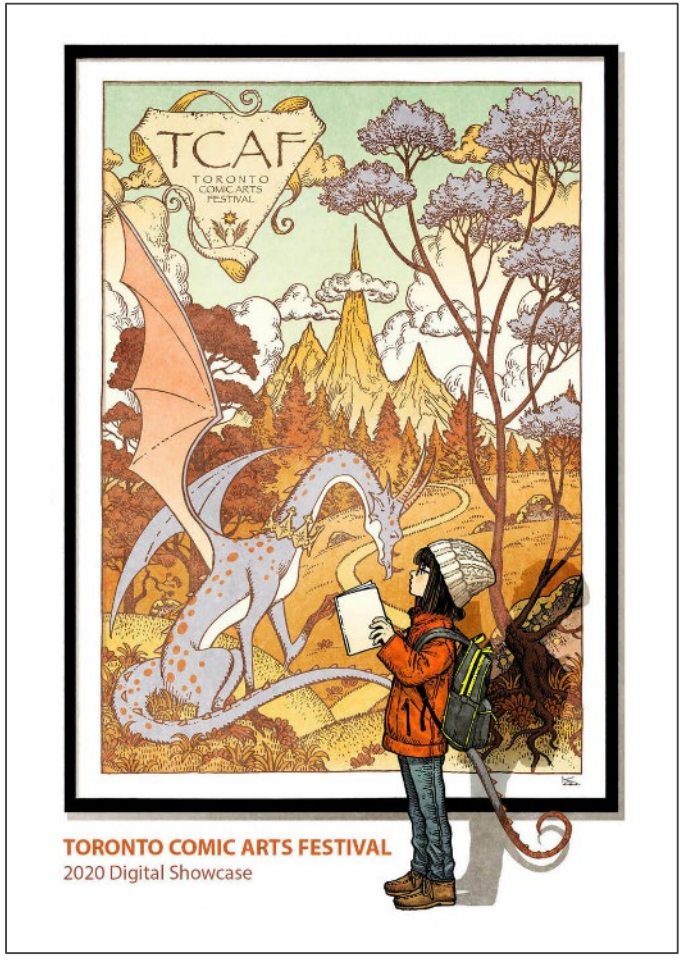






Patrick is excited about:





NoveList
LIBRARY READS

Questions?

Thank you

Learn more at

ebscohost.com/novelist & libraryreads.org

NoveList

LIBRARY READS

NoveList Resources

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Genre outlines

All About Graphic Novels for Teens
by Lindsey Dunn

What are Graphic novels?

Graphic novels are stories in print that are told through sequential panels of illustrations. Although most graphic novels include words as part of the narrative, the primary method of storytelling is visual. What separates a graphic novel from collections of newspaper comics is that a graphic novel has one continuous story.

Although graphic novels originally received acclaim for their appeal for reluctant readers or children, today many are considered just as literary as text-only novels, with many titles even winning awards previously considered out-of-bounds for graphic novels.

What happens in Graphic novels?

Technically, graphic novels are a format, rather than a genre. Any genre or type of narrative can be told using the graphic novel format, from historical fiction to realistic fiction to fantasy to romance. In graphic novels, authors and illustrators use a combination of illustrations, speech bubbles, thought bubbles, colors, and occasional narrative sections to tell one continuous story with a beginning, middle, and end.

Top themes found in graphic novels

Themes are popular, recurring, and recognizable plot elements found in fiction. Themes are now searchable and displayed on title records of books in NoveList. To search for a particular theme, use the field code TH. (Example: TH Chosen one)

While graphic novels make use of the same themes that NoveList uses in text-only books, superhero comics now have their own set of themes applied. Some of the most popular are:

- *No power, still super:* These heroes make use of gadgets or brain power to save the day, rather than superpowers.
- *Reboots and retcons:* Same story; new decade, location, or outfit
- *Assemble!:* Superheroes work in teams for a greater cause
- *Origin story:* Here's how it all began
- *Sidekick spotlight:* Sidekicks get their chance to shine

To see all the themes, select "Browse by . . . Themes," visible in the colored bar at the top of the page anywhere in NoveList.

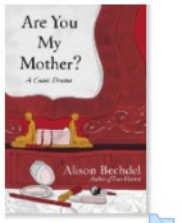
Common characteristics

- Graphic novels epitomize the saying "show; don't tell." Authors tend to tell more of the story using character's facial expressions, actions, body language, and dialogue instead of textual details.
- The tone or mood of graphic novels is often made clear by the artist's use of an evocative color scheme or illustration style.
- Graphic novels have dynamic visual content. They are an excellent format for telling action-packed stories. Even in more character-driven or issue-driven graphic novels, the emotional state of characters is drawn in a compelling way through facial expressions, color choices, and body language. There is always something happening in each panel to propel the story forward.
- In graphic novels, words and illustration work together in concert, with illustrations sometimes taking the greater role. Though readers need to pay attention to both, a good deal of the story can be communicated through the illustrations alone.

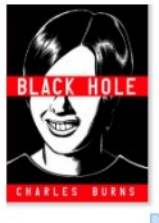
Why do teens like Graphic novels?

- Graphic novels provide a refreshingly different way to read than in traditional novels. The combination of illustrations and words challenges readers to use both parts of the brain. The reader sees what is said and shown and can infer the events that happen between the illustrated panels. All the many fascinating intricacies of how people read graphic novels can be found in Scott McCloud's breakout nonfiction book, *Understanding Comics*.
- Graphic novels appeal to visual learners who enjoy art, cartoons, comic books, movies, and video games.
- Once you learn how to read graphic novels, they are quick and easy to read.
- They can be helpful for language learners, since the illustrations provide context for the words.
- Reluctant readers are often drawn to graphic novels, since the combination of illustrations and text – with visual breaks between the comic panels – may appear less intimidating than books with big blocks of text.
- In general, they are fast-paced, visually compelling, and contain expressive characters.

Recommended reads lists

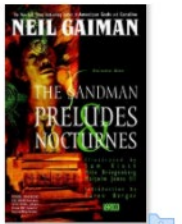


Are you my mother?: a comic drama
(May 2012)
By: Bechdel, Alison, 1960-
Popularity:
Check Availability



Black hole
(Oct 2005)
By: Burns, Charles, 1955-
Popularity:
Check Availability

Preacher. Vol. 1, Gone to Texas
(Jan 1996)
By: Ennis, Garth
Popularity:
Check Availability



The Sandman. Vol. 1, Preludes & nocturnes
(Jan 1993)
By: Gaiman, Neil
Popularity:
Check Availability

Pogo: the complete syndicated comic strips. volume 1
(Dec 2011)
By: Kelly, Walt
Popularity:
Check Availability

21st century Tank Girl
(Dec 2015)
By: Martin, Alan C.
Popularity:
Check Availability