

# Graphic Novels

Book-length comics come in all shapes and sizes. The larger ones are generally Western-style comics produced in North America and Europe, while the smaller ones—about the size of a trade paperback novel—are often from Japan and Korea (where they're known as "manga" and "manhwa," respectively). The booklist below divides comics into two types – North American/European and Manga – since many readers enjoy reading one or the other.

Though many people associate comics with superheroes, there are graphic novels about almost every topic, including true stories about the Holocaust in World War Two (**Maus** by *Art Spiegelman*) and a young girl growing up in Iran during the Islamic Revolution (**Persepolis** by *Marjane Satrapi*).

Fictional works include everything from muscled men in tights saving the world to achingly realistic personal dramas, such as the nostalgia-tinged **Paul has a summer job** by *Michel Rabagliati*.

For fantasy stories, try **Bone** by Jeff Smith (appropriate for all ages), **Sandman** by *Neil Gaiman* (appropriate for older teens and up), the **Conan** stories by *Kurt Busiek* or fantasy quest manga such as **Inu Yasha** by *Rumiko Takahashi* and **Fushigi Yugi** by *Yu Watase*.

For horror featuring fisticuffs and splatter, try anything by *Mike Mignola* or *Kohta Hirano*. For spooky stories about a precocious, spell-casting schoolgirl, try *Ted Naifeh's Courtney Crumrin* graphic novels.

For **science fiction**, try *Shockrocks* by *Busiek*, *Astro Boy* by *Osamu Tezuka* (appropriate for all ages) or **Trigun** by *Yasuhiro Nightow* (whose work isn't listed below, but is in the library).

For video game-, rock music- and manga-influenced weirdness, try the hilarious, highly original **Scott Pilgrim** graphic novels by Torontonians *Bryan Lee O'Malley*

For well-told superhero stories, check out the work of *Brian Michael Bendis* (Spider-Man and Fantastic Four), *Mark Millar* (X-Men), Kurt BUSIEK (the Astro City tales), *Joss Whedon* (Astonishing X-Men), *Warren Ellis* (Fantastic Four, The Authority), *Greg Rucka* and *Alan Moore*. For dark superhero fare, read titles by *Frank Miller*, especially **Batman: the dark knight returns** and **Batman : Year One**.

## North American/European graphic novels:

Y BEN

### **Ultimate Spider-Man**

by *Brian Michael Bendis*

Bendis retells the Spider-Man story from the beginning, updating the setting to the modern day in one of Marvel Comics' signature series. The art is slick, the writing is smart and the dialogue crackles with pop culture references. Also look for **Ultimate Fantastic Four** by Bendis in the graphic novels area.

Y BRU

### **The Death of Captain America**

by Ed Brubaker

Seems strange to read a graphic novel in which the title character dies near the beginning, but the talented Brubaker keeps the ball rolling with characters such as Iron Man, the Falcon, Bucky Barnes and the Captain's old nemeses, Red Skull and Arnim Zola. In two volumes. (2007)

Y BUS

**Conan: the frost giant's daughter and other stories**

by Kurt Busiek

Robert E. Howard's burly Cimmerian battles fur-clad warriors on mountainsides, meets a dangerous damsel in the cold northern wastes and finds himself enslaved by the mysterious Hyperboreans (2005). For compelling superhero fare, try Busiek's *Astro City* titles in the graphic novels area at City Centre library.

Y CLO

**Ice Haven**

by Daniel Clowes

The artist/author of **Ghost World** (1998) writes a satirical collection of stories about the strange inhabitants of a small town. *Located in the adult fiction collection.* (2005)

Y ELL

**The Authority: under new management**

by Warren Ellis

A squabbling superteam protects the world from extra-dimensional menaces. (2000) If you like this, read **The Authority : relentless**. Both are for mature readers. Ellis has also written **Ultimate Fantastic Four**, **Hellblazer : haunted** (2003) and the weird but funny **Nextwave : Agents of H.A.T.E.** (2007)

Y GAI

**Sandman: Preludes and Nocturnes**

by Neil Gaiman

By imprisoning the Lord of Dreams, also known as the Sandman, a self-centered sorcerer brings calamity to the world. The first volume in Gaiman's highly acclaimed Sandman series, Preludes and Nocturnes features sharp writing, adult themes, disturbing scenes, violence and occasional nudity. It is intended for older teens and adults. (1995) Look for other **Sandman** titles in the graphic novels area. Gaiman also wrote **The books of magic** (1993), which is about a boy named Timothy Hunter who may become the most powerful magician in the world.

Y JOH

**Green Lantern Corps: Recharge**

by Geoff Johns

While experienced Green Lanterns help train new corps members, a deadly, star-devouring peril approaches the planet Oa, home of the Guardians of the Universe. (2006)

Y MIG

**Hellboy: The Chained Coffin and Others**

by Mike Mignola

A seven-foot demon who works for the government, Hellboy travels the world, pounding supernatural creatures that step out of line. *The Chained Coffin and Others* features stories about Irish fairies, a family of werewolves and the Baba Yaga, among others. Look for other **Hellboy** titles under Y MIG in the graphic novels area. If you'd rather read short stories and novels about Hellboy, try Christopher GOLDEN's books **The Lost Army** and **The Bones of Giants**.

Y MIL

**Ultimate X-Men**

by Mark Millar and others

Professor X and his plucky protégés -- including Wolverine, Cyclops, Angel, Jean Grey, and Colossus -- battle Magneto and other menaces, while trying to improve relations with the humans who hate and fear them. Like the other Ultimate series, this one has excellent storytelling and art.

Y MIL

**Batman: The Dark Knight Returns**

by Frank Miller

Now in his 50s, Batman comes out of retirement when Gotham City—and the world around it—teeters on the brink of chaos. Written for adults, Dark Knight features gruesome violence and disturbing themes. (1996) *Miller's Sin City series is located in the adult fiction collection at Poirier.*

Y MOO

**Top 10**

by Alan Moore

In a city where every citizen has superpowers, police officers face some unusual problems, from rampaging mega-lizards to a family squabble among Norse gods. Playful and funny, but also violent and disturbing, **Top 10** is appropriate for older teens. In two volumes. (2002) Moore's **Watchmen** (1987) is possibly the most acclaimed superhero comic ever written.

Y NAI

**Courtney Crumrin and the Night Things**

by Ted Naifeh

After moving into her mysterious uncle's creepy mansion, young Courtney Crumrin discovers his books of magic. Thinking that magic will allow her to turn the tables on some school bullies, she soon learns that dabbling in the dark arts can be dangerous. Followed by two more volumes. (2002)

Y OMA

**Scott Pilgrim's Precious Little Life**

by Bryan Lee O'Malley

A twenty-something slacker meets the girl of his dreams, but learns that in order to stay with her, he must defeat her seven evil ex-boyfriends in single combat. (2004) Followed by **Scott Pilgrim vs. the World** (2005), **Scott Pilgrim and the Infinite Sadness** (2006), and **Scott Pilgrim Gets It Together** (2007). Written for older teens and adults, O'Malley's manga-and video game-influenced graphic novels are hilarious, romantic, truly original and (best of all!) Canadian.

Y RAB

**Paul Has a Summer Job**

by Michel Rabagliati

A disaffected teenager finds work as a camp counselor one summer. While at the camp, he bonds with the kids, learns about himself and meets his first love. (2003) Rabagliati's next volume, **Paul moves out** (2005), is located in the Adult Fiction area.

Y SAK

**The "Usagi Yojimbo" series**

by Stan Sakai

Warrior-rabbit Miyamoto Usagi walks the lonely roads of medieval Japan, helping the downtrodden and battling evil. Featuring fascinating bits of Japanese folklore and wonderful black-and-white line art, the series now runs to 20+ volumes.

SET

**It's a good life, if you don't weaken**

by Seth

Obsessing over the career of a long-forgotten New Yorker cartoonist, an artist tries to trace his life and times. *Located in the adult fiction collection.* (2004)

Y SMI

**Out from Boneville**

by Jeff Smith

The exiled Bone cousins fall into a magical valley, where they meet new friends and evade the evil rat creatures, which seem to be encroaching more than ever. (2005) Smith's wonderful, beautifully illustrated, for-all-ages series includes nine volumes total.

Y TAL

**The tale of one bad rat**

by Bryan Talbot

After fleeing her sexually abusive father, teenaged Helen Potter embarks on a journey to find a new home. (1995).

Y VAU

**Ex Machina: the first hundred days**

by Brian K. Vaughan

The newly elected mayor of New York City, a former superhero who wasn't that super, learns the perils of public office. (2005) Also look for **Y : The Last Man** and **Pride of Baghdad**. All are recommended for older teens and adults.

## North American/European Non-Fiction Graphic Novels

940.5318 SPI

**Maus: a survivor's tale**

by Art Spiegelman

The only graphic novel to win a Pulitzer Prize, *Maus* tells the story of Spiegelman's father and mother, who were imprisoned and placed in a concentration camp by the Nazis. Characters throughout are represented as anthropomorphic animals: Jews as mice, Germans as cats, Americans as dogs, etc. (1997) *Located in the non-fiction collection at* **940.5318 SPI**

Y 949.703 SAC

**Safe Area Gorazde**

by Joe Sacco

Using a comic format, war correspondent Sacco tells true stories about neighbors battling neighbors and "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia during the early 1990s. (2001) *Located in the non-fiction collection at* **Y 949.703 SAC**. Sacco's graphic novel *Palestine* (**Y 956.9405 SAC**) examines the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a similar manner.

951.9343 DEL

**Pyongyang: a journey in North Korea**

by Guy Delisle

Canadian cartoonist Delisle illustrates his trip into one of the world's most repressive and sheltered countries. (2005) *Located in the adult non-fiction collection at* **951.9343 DEL**

955.05 SAT

**Persepolis**

by Marjane Satrapi

Satrapi tells her story of growing up in Iran before and after the Islamic Revolution. The book has since been turned into an animated movie. (2003) Followed by *Persepolis 2* and *Embroideries*. Located in the non-fiction collection at **955.05 SAT**

971.054 RIE

**Louis Riel: a comic-strip biography**

by Chester Brown

Brown portrays the enigmatic Metis political leader before and during the Riel Rebellion. Extensive endnotes reflect the impressive amount of research Brown did while penning his book. (2003) Located in the non-fiction collection at **971.054 RIE**

## Manga:

Y CLA

**Tsubasa : Reservoir Chronicle**

by Clamp

In order to save Princess Sakura's life, heroic Syaoran must retrieve her memories, which have been scattered across dimensions by a strange and sinister force. Also look for **xxxHolic** by CLAMP, a Japanese artistic collective.

Y HAT

**Ouran High School Host Club**

by Bisco Hatori

After breaking an expensive vase, Haruhi must cover its replacement cost by working as a member of her high school's exclusive, all-boys "host club." No one knows that Haruhi is actually a girl, and since the guys in the club are super-rich and super-cute, she doesn't want to tell.

Y HIR

**Hellsing**

by Kohta Hirano

A vampire who walks softly and carries a huge gun battles supernatural menaces for a secret British agency. Gleefully gory.

Y KAM

**Boys over Flowers**

by Yoko Kamio

From a working class family, Makino Tsukushi is the "weed" of her school. Surrounded by rich kids from powerful families, she bucks the odds to become friends with members of the "Flower 4," an inner circle of influential – and gorgeous – boys.

Y KIS

**Naruto**

by Masashi Kishimoto

With his body inhabited by a mischievous fox spirit, loudmouthed orphan Uzumaki Naruto struggles to graduate from his village's Ninja Academy.

Y KUB

**Bleach**

by Tite Kubo

When teenager Ichigo Kurosaki becomes a replacement Soul Reaper, he finds himself battling terrifying monsters and guiding lost souls to the afterlife.

Y NIS

**Cheeky Angel**

by Hiroyuki Nishimori

Given a girl's body by a meddling wizard, Meg (originally Megumi) grows into a beautiful young woman. Is the tomboyish Meg really a girl, a guy in a girl's body, or something in-between?

Y ODA

**One Piece**

by Eiichiro Oda

Having eaten the fruit of the Gum Gum tree – which allows his body to stretch to unbelievable proportions – Monkey D. Luffy sets off in search of the legendary pirate treasure, One Piece, battling villains and meeting odd companions along the way.

Y OHB

**Death Note**

by Tsugumi Ohba

Light Yagami finds a magical notebook that allows him to communicate with a death god. All he needs to do is scribble someone's name inside, and that person will die.

Y TAK

**Inu Yasha**

by Rumiko Takahashi

Fifteen-year-old Kagome gets sucked through a dimensional portal into ancient Japan, where she releases an imprisoned half-demon named Inu Yasha. The two then embark on a mystical quest. Takahashi also wrote **Ranma ½**, which is available at the City Centre library.

Y TEZ

**Astro Boy**

by Osamu Tezuka

A robot with human emotions, Astro Boy protects the world from evil masterminds and alien invaders, but is treated like an outsider. For a more challenging read, try Tezuka's fictionalized story about the life of the **Buddha**, also in the graphic novels area.

Y TSU

**Land of the Blindfolded**

by Sakura Tsukuba

When she touches other people, Outsuka Kanade can sometimes catch a glimpse of their future. But will trying to help others actually solve their problems?

Y UED

**Peach Girl**

by Miwa Ueda

Adachi Momo has a tan complexion, which spells trouble for her in school, where her classmates assume she's a girl of loose morals. Torn between two guys, Momo must decide which one is better for her, while evading the scandalous rumours started by her "friend" Sae.

Y WAT

**Fushigi Yugi**

by Yuu Watase

An old book transports best friends Miaka and Yui into ancient China, where they must track down the seven Celestial Warriors who can help them return home.

## A note on finding graphic novels ...

At the library, we divide graphic novels into a few different categories and they are shelved in different areas.

**GRAPHIC NOVELS FOR TEENS** have a code that starts with Y (for Young Adult) and ends with the first three letters of the author's last name. So, to find *Frank Miller's Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, you need to look for Y MIL. The 'Y' tells you to look on the Young Adult graphic novel shelving unit. The 'MIL' tells you to search the collection alphabetically until you hit the Ms, near the middle of the collection.

**GRAPHIC NOVELS FOR OLDER TEENS AND ADULTS** are coded with the first three letters of the author's LAST NAME only (there is no Y). For example, if you're looking for the **Sin City** graphic novels by *Frank Miller*, you would check the Adult Fiction area for MIL. You'll find them not far from books such as **Tropic of Cancer** by *Henry Miller*.

**NON-FICTION GRAPHIC NOVELS** are given a number that corresponds to a subject. They are shelved with other non-fiction books that share the same number (and are thus about the same thing).

Some of the **NEWEST GRAPHIC NOVELS** go in the Young Adult New Books area, which is marked by a sign. These new graphic novels are shelved together. Look for the blue "graphic novel" stickers along the spines. If you don't find the graphic novel you are looking for on the shelving unit, try the New Books area.

If you have any trouble finding a graphic novel, please consult a librarian at the Information Desk.

*List created December 2008*