Brave New Worlds in Graphic Novels & Comics

Presented by: P. Michael Bradshaw

CLASS HANDOUT

NO CAPES: NON-SUPERHERO

The Contract with God Trilogy:
A Contract with God + A Life Force + Dropsie Avenue
Writer: Will Eisner
Artist: Will Eisner
ISBN: 0393061051
Summary: 528 pages of inter-related stories about a run-down tenement section of New York & the people who live there. Slices of life of regular, everyday people, but it is mesmerizing. Will Eisner created the Spirit, but this may be his true triumph. Sometimes credited with coining the term “graphic novel.”

Maus: a Survivor’s Tale (aka The Complete Maus)
Writer: Art Spiegelman
Artist: Art Spiegelman
Pantheon Books, 1996
ISBN: 0679406417
Summary: A son tells the story of his father’s life, including his harrowing time in a concentration camp in World War II. To date, this is the only graphic novel to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize. This edition collects both Volume 1: My Father Bleeds History, and Volume 2: And Here My Troubles Began.

X-Men: Magneto Testament
Writer: Greg Pak
Artist: Carmine Di Giandomenico
Marvel Comics, 2009
ISBN: 0785126406
Summary: Completely divorced from the superhero world of the X-Men, this is the story of their greatest villain, Magneto. This is a harrowing account of the holocaust, Magneto’s childhood and early adult life, and his time in a Nazi death camp. An incredibly powerful book, both in story and in its artwork. It was named one of the 2010 ‘Great Graphic Novels for Teens’ by the Young Adult Library Services Association.

NOIR

100 Bullets
Writer: Brian Azzarello
Artist: Eduardo Risso
DC Comics/Vertigo, 1999-2009
Summary: A 100-issue comic book series. The individual story arcs were collected into 13 GNs, usually 2 story arcs in each GN. The premise was this:

A man you’ve never met before reveals to you the name of the person that has destroyed your life. He then gives you a briefcase containing a gun with 100 bullets. The gun & the bullets
are untraceable. If you use the gun to dispatch this person, you will never be sought by or caught by the police. This is the moral dilemma faced by person after person in 100 Bullets.

Over the course of the series, we see that an underlying story is also being told – who is the man with the briefcases? Who did he work for? Why are those people after him, now? Engaging, thrilling, & thought-provoking.

The series poses the moral quandary: If you could shoot and kill those you feel have wronged you, with no repercussions whatsoever, would you? That question is raised again and again with different characters, until one begins to wonder – who IS Agent Graves, the man who brings the gun with 100 bullets… and why?

1. First Shot, Last Call (issues 1-5, Vertigo Winter's Edge #3) – ISBN 1563896451
2. Split Second Chance (issues 6-14) – ISBN 1563897113
5. The Counterfifth Detective (issues 31-36) – ISBN 1563899485
13. Wilt (issues 89-100) – ISBN 1401222870

Blacksad
Writer: Juan Díaz Canales
Artist: Juanjo Guarnido
Dark Horse Originals, 2000
ISBN: 159582393X
Summary: Probably my favorite of the noir comics out there. It is made by two Spanish men, Juan Diaz Canales & Juanjo Guarnido, but written & published first in French.

All the characters are anthropomorphic animals: the main characters are usually talking, clothes-wearing cats & dogs, the villains snakes or weasels. It’s drawn & paced in a very cinematic style, and uses a lot of the social issues & mores of 1950s America as backdrop – conspiracy, racial tension, & the communist “red scare.”

There are 6 Blacksad GNs, collected together in English, with 2 more reported to come.
1 – Somewhere Within the Shadows,
2 – Arctic Nation,
3 – Red Soul,
4 – A Silent Hell – ISBN 1595829318
5 – Amarillo – ISBN 1616555254
6 – They All Fall Down, pt. 1 – ISBN 1506730574
* The first 3 volumes are bundled together in the U.S., simply under the name Blacksad, ISBN 159582393X.

Criminal
Writer: Ed Brubaker
Artist: Sean Phillips
Summary: An on & off again series from 2006/2007 to the present. It deals with the gritty criminal underworld in what appears to be the 1970s. It has produced 7 GNs to date, winning 2 Eisner Awards.

*Brubaker & Phillips work together on project after project. This is one of their best. Together, they’ve created a dark, seedy world that looks like the 1970’s, feels like the 1940’s, & tastes like Noir.

Parker: the Hunter
Writer: Darwyn Cooke & Richard Stark/Donald Westlake
Artist: Darwyn Cooke
IDW Publishing, 2009
ISBN: 1600104932
Summary: The original book, the Hunter, was published in 1962 by Donald Westlake, using the pseudonym Richard Stark. That book was made into a motion picture in 1967 (Point Blank, with Lee Marvin), and again in 1999 (Payback, with Mel Gibson). Rarely has the written word been translated so perfectly in this genre.
*As an aside, Jason Statham starred as the character in January 2013 in a movie just called Parker, based on the 19th Parker book, Flashfire; the first ten minutes of which were filmed at the Ohio State Fair in Columbus, Ohio.

Darwyn Cooke turned four Parker novels in graphic novels before his death in 2016:

1 – Richard Stark’s Parker: the Hunter
2 – Richard Stark’s Parker: the Outfit
Parker: the Man with the Getaway Face (short)
Parker: the Seventh (short)

Sin City
Writer: Frank Miller
Artist: Frank Miller
Summary: The new (or) Neo-Noir series by Frank Miller, the man behind Batman: the Dark Knight Returns. It is currently a 7-GN series – 1448 pages, all written AND drawn by Frank Miller, a series credited for renewing interest in Noir, once again – the New new noir.
1. The Hard Goodbye. (Episodes #1-13) ISBN 1593072937
2. A Dame to Kill For. (Issues #1-6) ISBN 1593072945
3. The Big Fat Kill. (Issues #1-5) ISBN 1593072953
4. That Yellow Bastard. (Issues #1-6) ISBN 1593072961
TRUE CRIME

The Borden Tragedy: A Memoir of the Infamous Double Murder at Fall River, Mass., 1892
Writer: Rick Geary
Artist: Rick Geary
NBM Publishing (Nantier Beall Minoustchine), 1997
ISBN: 1561631892
Summary: The artwork is beautiful, stark, and simple – like wood-cut images from the 1800’s. The plotting is pointed and precise. One might call it ‘CSI: 19th Century.’ This is both a great work of academic scholarship, and also a great work of art.

My Friend Dahmer
Writer: John “Derf” Backderf
Artist: John “Derf” Backderf
Abrams Comics Arts, 2012
ISBN: 1419702173
Summary: The author writes about his high school friendship with Jeffrey Dahmer, before he became the infamous serial killer. Backderf details Dahmer’s home life – the disconnect and isolation, the inattentiveness and self-absorption of his parents – ultimately, the makings of a monster. Remarkably, he does so in a way that reports on it without trying to soften or be sympathetic towards him.

Torso: a True Crime Graphic Novel
Writer: Brian Michael Bendis
Artist: Marc Andreyko
Image Comics, 2003
ISBN: 1582401748
Summary: Arguably the biggest writer of Marvel Comics for decades, this is an early work of his in the crime noir genre. It details the Cleveland torso murders of the 1930’s, and the true story of (then Cleveland Safety Director) Eliot Ness, trying to solve the case.

Originally published as single issues in 2000, there have been at least three attempts to make it into a motion picture, including one with David Fincher (director of Fight Club, the Social Network, House of Cards, & Zodiac) in 2013, and also Paul Greengrass (the Jason Bourne movies) scuttled in May of 2018.

Bendis all did several other crime-noir GNs, including Jinx and Goldfish: a Crime Graphic Novel.

MEDICAL

Blue Pills: A Positive Love Story
Writer: Frederik Peeters
Artist: Frederik Peeters
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2008
ISBN: 819062413X
Summary: Autobiographical story about falling in love with someone who is HIV Positive.

Depresso or: How I learned To Stop Worrying and Embrace Being Bonkers!
Writer: Brick
Artist: Brick
Fanfare/Knockabout Comics, 2010
ISBN: 0861661702
Summary: Nominated for the MIND Book Award. The journey through depression and antidepressant medicines. The blurb ends with “Depresso is only semi-fictional.”

**Epileptic**
Writer: David B.
Artist: David B.
Pantheon Press, 2005
ISBN: 0375423184
Summary: David B.’s account of a childhood lived in the shadow of his brother’s epilepsy, detailing the disease, attempted treatments, his own pain, and the effect it had on his family.

**Tangles: Alzheimer’s, My Mother, and Me**
Writer: Sarah Leavitt
Artist: Sarah Leavitt
ISBN: 1616086394
Summary: A memoir about her mother’s Alzheimer’s disease, and how it affected her family.

**With the Light: Raising an Autistic Child**
Writer: Keiko Tobe
Artist: Keiko Tobe
Yen Press, 2001 – 2010
Summary: Keiko Tobe wrote and drew “josei” manga, which is comics aimed at women in their late teens and early adulthood. A mother of two, her youngest had a friend on the autism spectrum. She would befriend his mother and eventually write this fictional/fictionalized series about the trials and tribulations in the raising of an autistic child. Published in 15 volumes in Japan, they were published as 8 volumes in the U.S., until the author’s death in January of 2010.

Vol. 1 – ISBN 0759523568
Vol. 2 – ISBN 0759523592
Vol. 3 – ISBN 0759523843
Vol. 4 – ISBN 0759523851
Vol. 5 – ISBN 0759524017
Vol. 6 – ISBN 031607733X
Vol. 7 – ISBN 0316077348
Vol. 8 – ISBN 031619445X

**Wrinkles**
Writer: Paco Roca (Francisco Martínez Roca)
Artist: Paco Roca (Francisco Martínez Roca)
ISBN: 160699932X
Summary: The story of a man with Alzheimer’s, attempting to stay active and maintain his dignity as the disease progresses. Made into an award-winning animated film in 2011.

**Psychiatric Tales: Eleven Graphic Stories about Mental Illness**
Writer: Darryl Cunningham
Artist: Darryl Cunningham
Bloomsbury USA, 2010/2011/2013
ISBN: 1608192784
Summary: The author explores a different mental health problem in each story, looking at it from
multiple points of view – the person afflicted, their friends & family, and the mental health professionals trying to help them.

**Mom's Cancer**  
Writer: Brian Fies  
Artist: Brian Fies  
Abrams Image, 2006  
ISBN: 0810958406  
Summary: This one focuses a lot on the forms, the insurance company calls, the doctor’s visits, all the things that are frustrating and enraging, but still have to be done when a parent has cancer.

**Our Cancer Year**  
Writer: Harvey Pekar and Joyce Brabner  
Artist: Frank Stack  
Four Walls Eight Windows, 1994  
ISBN: 1568580118  
Summary: Pekar, author of the ‘American Splendor’ series of comics & graphic novels (and the basis of the movie of the same name), writes about his fears and failings while facing cancer.

**Cancer Vixen: a True Story**  
Writer: Marisa Acocella Marchetto  
Artist: Marisa Acocella Marchetto  
Alfred A. Knopf, 2006  
ISBN: 0307263576  
Summary: A lot of humor, a lot of attitude, as the author details her road from diagnosis to treatment.

**Cancer Made Me a Shallower Person: A Memoir in Comics**  
Writer: Miriam Engelberg  
Artist: Miriam Engelberg  
Harper Perennial, 2006  
ISBN: 0060789735

**An Elegy for Amelia Johnson**  
Writer: Andrew J. Rostan  
Artist: Dave Valeza, Kate Kasenow  
Archaia/Archaia Studios Press/Boom! Studios, 2011  
ISBN: 1932386831  
Summary: Amelia asks her two best friends to deliver messages from her to six people before she dies of cancer.

**The Inflatable Woman**  
Writer: Rachael Ball  
Artist: Rachael Ball  
Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015  
ISBN: 140885807X  
Summary: Gritty details and magic realism combine in this story about a woman with breast cancer.

**Mammoir: A Pictorial Odyssey of the Adventures of a Fourth Grade Teacher with Breast Cancer**  
Writer: Tucky Fussell (Rosalind Fussell)
Artist: Tucky Fussell (Rosalind Fussell)
AuthorHouse, 2005
ISBN: 1420874780
Summary: Serious and funny, memoir and fantasy meet in this story. I’ve been told it is frequently used by cancer support groups.

**Relatively Indolent but Relentless: A Cancer Treatment Journal**
Writer: Matt Freedman
Artist: Matt Freedman
Seven Stories Press, 2014
ISBN: 160980516X
Summary: This is the 200+ page journal, pictures and words, created by the author as he underwent treatment for adenoid cystic carcinoma.

**Stitches: A Memoir**
Writer: David Small
Artist: David Small
W. W. Norton & Company, 2009
ISBN: 0393338967
Summary: The difficult story about a difficult childhood that leads to the author’s cancer and being mute. A benchmark work, bringing great ART to the graphic novel medium.

**When David Lost His Voice**
Writer: Judith Vanistendael
Artist: Judith Vanistendael
Abrams Publishing/SelfMadeHero, 2013
ISBN: 1906838542, 978-1-906838-54-6
Summary: Both beautiful artwork and moving prose tells the tale of David and his struggle with stage 3 supraglottic cancer.

**The Death of Captain Marvel**
Writer: Jim Starlin
Artist: Jim Starlin
Marvel Comics, 1982
ISBN: 0939766116
Summary: Even in the Marvel universe, there is no cure for cancer. Read the graphic novel that changed comics, even before *Watchmen* and *the Dark Knight Returns*.

**ARTISTS**
Neal Adams
George Perez
Brian Bolland
Stuart Immonen
Frank Quitely
Frank Cho
Jim Lee
Greg Land
Arthur Suydam
John Romita Sr.
John Romita Jr.
Jack Kirby
FOR CHILDREN

Captain Long Ears
Writer: Diana Thung
Artist: Diana Thung
SLG Publishing, 2010
ISBN: 1593621876
Summary: An eight-year old puts on his ‘Captain Long Ears’ costume and heads off on an adventure with his imaginary friend Captain Jam, a purple gorilla. Underneath the child-like, space and pirate exploits lies many layers, including the story of animal abuse and the true meaning behind the boys’ search for ‘Captain Big Nose.’
The art work for the boy is reminiscent of the boy in Maurice Sendak’s *Where the Wild Things Are*, but the story is all its own.
This may very well be the most compelling children’s book I have ever read. It is sometimes funny, often poignant, and occasionally a little sad. All and all, it is absolutely beautiful.
While the cover may make it look like it’s for children, I would rate it for slightly older children or Teens; Young Adults & all ages will love it, though!

Rapunzel's Revenge
Writer: Shannon Hale, Dean Hale
Artist: Nathan Hale
Bloomsbury USA Children's Books, 2008
ISBN: 1599902885
Summary: Rapunzel doesn’t need a prince to help her, she’s does it herself! Soon she’s out of the castle tower, and off to save her mother and the entire kingdom!

A Wrinkle in Time: the Graphic Novel
Writer: Madeleine L’Engle, Hope Larson
Artist: Hope Larson
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012
ISBN: 0374386153
Summary: The classic childrens/YA book, about 3 kids who have to find their Dad & maybe save the universe while they’re at it. 400 p., nicely done!

*Hardy Boys graphic novel series
Writer: Scott Lobdell
Artist: Daniel Rendon & others
Papercutz/ Papercutz Graphic Novels, 2005 –
Summary: Frank and Joe Hardy go graphic in new adventures written by Scott Lobdell.
Titles:
01 – The Ocean of Osyria
02 – Identity Theft
03 – Mad House
04 – Malled
05 – Sea You, Sea Me!
06 – Hyde & Shriek
07 – The Opposite
08 – Board to Death
09 – To Die or Not to Die
10 – A Hardy’s Day Night
11 – AbracaDeath
12 – Dude Ranch O’ Death!
13 – The Deadliest Stunt
14 – Haley Danelle’s Top Eight
15 – Live Free, Die Hardy!
16 – Shhhhh!
17 – Word Up!
18 – D.A.N.G.E.R. Spells the Hangman!
19 – Chaos at 30,000 Feet!
20 – Deadly Strategy

*Nancy Drew graphic novel series*
Writer: Stefan Petrucha, Sarah Kinney
Artist: Sho Murase
Papercutz, 2005 –
Summary: Nancy, Bess, and George get all new adventures in this new series of graphic novels.

Titles:
01 – The Demon of River Heights
02 – Writ in Stone
03 – The Haunted Dollhouse
04 – The Girl Who Wasn’t There
05 – The Fake Heir
06 – Mr. Cheeters is Missing
07 – The Charmed Bracelet
08 – Global Warning
09 – Ghost in the Machinery
10 – The Disoriented Express
11 – Monkey Wrench Blues
12 – Dress Reversal
13 – Doggone Town
14 – Sleight of Dan
15 – Tiger Counter
16 – What Goes Up...
17 – Night of the Living Chatchke
18 – City Under the Basement
19 – Cliffhanger
20 – High School Musical Mystery
21 – High School Musical Mystery II: the Lost Verse

Nancy Drew the New Case Files #1: Vampire Slayer, Part One
Nancy Drew the New Case Files #2: Vampire Slayer, Part Two
Nancy Drew the New Case Files #3: Together with the Hardy Boys

**POLITICS / GOVERNMENT**

**MARCH, Book One**
Writer: (Congressman) John Lewis, Andrew Aydin
Artist: Nate Powell
Summary: A first-hand account of the Civil Rights Movement in America by John Lewis, now congressman, then one of the "Big Six" leaders who organized protests and marches on Washington and Selma, Alabama.

1 – MARCH, Book One – ISBN 1603093001
2 – MARCH, Book Two – ISBN 1603094008
*Three-Book set – ISBN 1603093958

**Pride of Baghdad**

Writer: Brian K. Vaughan
Artist: Niko Henrichon
Vertigo / Perfection Learning, 2008
ISBN: 1606861727

Summary: Using the true story of four lions that escaped the Baghdad Zoo in 2003, Vaughan creates a story about those animals that’s also an allegory about Iraq, its people, the nature of freedom, & war. Warning: it IS violent.

**The 9/11 Report: A Graphic Adaptation**

Writer: Sid Jacobson
Artist: Ernie Colón
Hill and Wang/ Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006
ISBN: 0809057395

Summary: It is drawn well, & compellingly written. It takes you step by step through that day. It can be a difficult read at times, but still, important & worthwhile.

**The United States Constitution: A Graphic Adaptation**

Writer: Jonathan Hennessey
Artist: Aaron McConnell
Hill and Wang/ Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008
ISBN: 0809094703
Summary: The Constitution, Article by Article, Amendment by Amendment, explaining it all.

**MEMOIR / NON-FICTION / TRUE STORY**

**Best of American Splendor**

Writer: Harvey Pekar
Artist: R. Crumb, etc.
Ballantine Books, 2005
ISBN: 0345479386

**American Splendor: Another Day**

Writer: Harvey Pekar
Artist: Eddie Campbell Haspiel, etc.
Vertigo / DC Comics, 2007
ISBN: 1401212352

**Harvey Pekar’s Cleveland**
Fun Home: a Family Tragicomic
Writer: Alison Bechdel
Artist: Alison Bechdel
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006
ISBN: 0618477942
Summary: A family memoir, ultimately about the author’s icy relationship with her father, a high school English teacher, funeral home director, & closeted gay man. At turns funny and heartbreaking, it’s a fascinating character study that offers laughs, pathos, and redemption. It was listed as one of the best books of 2006 by the New York Times, the Times of London, New York magazine, Publishers Weekly, and Amazon.com. Time magazine and Entertainment Weekly called it the best book of the year. It was nominated for two Eisner Awards, and the National Book Critics Circle Award. It won the GLAAD Media Award for Outstanding Comic Book, the Stonewall Book Award for non-fiction, the Publishing Triangle-Judy Grahn Nonfiction Award, and the Lambda Literary Award. *The graphic novel was made into a Broadway musical, nominated for 33 different awards, winning 15 others, including Best Musical, and it won the Grammy Award for Best Musical Theater Album.

Persepolis
Writer: Marjane Satrapi
Artist: Marjane Satrapi
Pantheon Press, 2003
ISBN: 0375422307
Summary: The memoir of a childhood in Iran during the Islamic Revolution. Both political and personal, we are pulled into a world of war, public whippings, and repressive regimes, as seen through the eyes of a child. The cartoon film of Persepolis was winner of the Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival & was also nominated for the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature. *The 1st book is the Story of a Childhood, about growing up in Iran during the Islamic Revolution. In the 2nd book, The Story of a Return, Satrapi & her family flee to Vienna. After graduation, she returns to Iran as an adult & has to confront the huge changes in both Iran & herself. Like Maus, both books are now available as a single volume, The Complete Persepolis.

Pedro & Me: Friendship, Loss and what I Learned
Writer: Judd Winick
Artist: Judd Winick
Henry Holt & Co., 2000
ISBN: 0805089640
Summary: Winick, a writer/artist of many DC Comics favorites (Green Lantern, Green Arrow, Batman, Catwoman, Justice League), writes about his friendship with Pedro Zamora, one of the first openly gay men with AIDS on television. This GN would win at least 13 awards, including five from the American Library Association.

GN SERIES

The Walking Dead
**Summary:**
The zombie apocalypse has happened like in a million movies, but never quite like this. Two things I love about this series. 1) When I realized that “the Walking Dead” referred to the human characters & not the zombies, as they walk numbly through life. And 2) as they encounter more humans alive, you realize that the zombies are just doing what’s in their nature to do. That humans are the REAL monsters.

Both the comics and the TV series have gone on (for 15 and 8 years, respectively) because it is so **character-driven;** it’s not about zombies, it’s about people living in a world of zombies.

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<th>Vol.</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<td>Days Gone Bye</td>
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**Sandman**

**Writer:** Neil Gaiman  
**Artist:** Dave McKean (covers), Sam Kieth, Mike Dringenberg, Jill Thompson, Shawn McManus, Marc Hempel, Michael Zulli  
**Summary:** A series about the immortal ‘Lord of Dreams,’ that mixes real life with mythology, history, and classic literature, creating an unique universe all its own.

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<td>1</td>
<td>Preludes and Nocturnes</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Dream Country</td>
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4 – Season of Mists – ISBN 1401230423
5 – A Game of You – ISBN 1401230431
6 – Fables and Reflections – ISBN 1401231233
7 – Brief Lives – ISBN 1401232639

Fables
Writer: Bill Willingham
Artist: Mark Buckingham, Lan Medina, Steve Leialoha
DC Comics/Vertigo, 2002 – 2015
Summary: Fairy tale characters are being hunted to extinction & escape to our world.
5: The Mean Seasons – ISBN 1-4012-0486-4
7: Arabian Nights (and Days) – ISBN 1-4012-1000-7
11: War and Pieces – ISBN 1-4012-1913-6
12: The Dark Ages – ISBN 1-4012-2316-8
17: Inherit the Wind – ISBN 1-4012-3516-6
20: Camelot – ISBN 1-4012-4516-1

*There were also a number of spin-off titles from FABLES:
1001 Nights of Snowfall – ISBN 1401203698
  Cinderella (2): Fables are Forever – ISBN 1401233856
  Fairest in All the Land – ISBN 1-4012-3900-5
   *The Great Fables Crossover – ISBN 1-4012-2572-1
The Last Castle – ASIN: B000NLJSK4
Peter and Max: a Fables Novel – ISBN 1401225373
Werewolves of the Heartland – ISBN 1401224806
The Wolf Among Us, vol. 1 – ISBN 1401256848

Y: The Last Man
Writer: Brian K. Vaughan
Artist: Pia Guerra
Vertigo Comics/DC Vertigo, 2002 - 2008
A plague sweeps the planet killing every male of every species, except for unemployed Yorick, and his pet monkey. Yorick begins his journey seeking his girlfriend, and answers to why this happened.
1. Unmanned. ISBN 1-56389-980-9, collecting issues #1-5
2. Cycles. ISBN 1-4012-0076-1, collecting issues #6–10
9. Motherland. ISBN 1-4012-1351-0, collecting issues #49-54
   (or)
Y: the Last Man – Book One. ISBN 978-1401251512, collecting issues #1-10
Y: the Last Man – Book Two. ISBN 978-1401254391, collecting issues #11-23
Y: the Last Man – Book Five. ISBN 978-1401263720, collecting issues #49-60
   (or)
Y: the Last Man – Omnibus. ISBN 978-1401298159, collecting issues #1-60

Superheroes

Superman: Secret Identity
Writer: Kurt Busiek
Artist: Stuart Immonen
DC Comics, 2004
ISBN: 1401204511
Summary: How irritating would it be to be named Clark Kent, and be oppressively average? How weird would it be if one day you began gaining the powers of Superman? Each of the five issues here jumps about 10 years, giving you a long life story of this Clark Kent. Excellently written, and beautifully drawn, this should be the next Superman movie.
Superior
Writer: Mark Millar
Artist: Leinil Yu
Image Comics/MillarWorld, 2012
ISBN: 1534308083
Summary: Superior is a Superman-like character, and in the story, he’s fictional. The story is really about a kid in a wheelchair. He has multiple sclerosis, and like in the movie BIG, he wishes he was SUPERIOR. And the next day, HE IS.

Umbrella Academy: the Apocalypse Suite
Writer: Gerard Way (of the band My Chemical Romance)
Artist: Gabriel Bá
Dark Horse, 2007
ISBN: 1593079788
Summary: This is like a British novel from the 1800’s, mixed with the Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy, with a team of kid superheroes, written by a rockstar, the singer from My Chemical Romance. 1st time I’ve read something, closed it, opened it up, & read it again.

The Unbeatable Squirrel Girl & the Great Lakes Avengers
Writer: Steve Ditko, Dan Slott, Fabian Nicieza
Artist: Georges jeanty, Kieron Dwyer, Staz johnson
Marvel Comics, 2005/2016
ISBN: 1302900668
Summary: A compilation of several series in which Squirrel Girl appears. Fairly dark humor and repeated deaths make this more appropriate to older teens and adults.

Watchmen
Writer: Alan Moore
Artist: Dave Gibbons
DC Comics, 1986
ISBN: 1852860243
Summary: Along with the Dark Knight Returns, perhaps the greatest deconstruction of the superhero mythos. Ever. A big story, covering multiple generations of heroes, a multitude of characters, and a surprise around every corner. Sad, poignant, beautiful, and absolutely brilliant.

Webcomics

1) Webcomics to read:  

2) Webcomics now in Print:  
**Titles Discovered over Covid**

**House of X / Powers of X**  
Writer: Jonathan Hickman  
Artist: Pepe Larraz, R.B. Silva  
Marvel Comics, 2019/2020  
ASIN: B07Z8HGWC3  
Summary:

**Five Ghosts, Deluxe Edition, Volume 1**  
Writer: Frank J. Barbiere  
Artist: Chris Mooneyham  
Image Comics, 2015  
Summary: Fabian Gray is a 1940s or 50s adventurer that has five ghosts (and their skills/powers) inside him. Though, they're not named, they appear to be Dracula, Robin Hood, Sherlock Holmes, a Shogun warrior, and Merlin? Great concept, not completely pulled off, but good retro fun nonetheless.

**Saga of the Swamp Thing: Book One**  
Writer: Alan Moore  
Artist: Stephen Bissette, John Totleben, Dan Day, Rick Veitch  
DC Comics, 2012  
Summary:

**Ironheart: Those with Courage**  
Writer: Eve L. Ewing  
Artist: Luciano Vecchio, Kevin Libranda  
Marvel Comics, 2019  
Summary:

**Arrowsmith: So Smart in their Fine Uniforms**  
Writer: Kurt Busiek  
Artist: Carlos Pacheco  
Wildstorm/DC Comics, 2004  
ASIN: B005KFFIE8  
ISBN: 978-1401202996  
Summary: An alternate history where we follow young Fletcher Arrowsmith into World War I, but one with magic, flying men, wizards, and vampires. A surprisingly good allegory on war and innocence lost.

**The Old Guard, Book One: Opening Fire**  
Writer: Greg Rucka  
Artist: Leandro Fernandez  
Image Comics, 2017  
Summary: Introduces Andy and her team of (possibly) immortal assassins. A fun action comic with dissertations on the nature of life, of death, and living beyond our loved ones. (#1 of a planned 3.)

**The Old Guard, Book Two: Force Multiplied**

Writer: Greg Rucka  
Artist: Leandro Fernandez  
Image Comics, 2020  
ISBN: 978-1534313774  
Summary: Andy finds someone from her past is not gone after all. Discusses the nature of good and evil, loyalty, and loneliness. (#2 of a planned 3.)

**VARGR aka Ian Fleming's James Bond 007 in VARGR**

Writer: Warren Ellis  
Artist: Jason Masters  
Dynamite Entertainment, 2016  
ISBN: 978-1-60690-901-0  
Summary: A very gritty, new tale of James Bond 007. Mr. Ellis should be asked to pen the next Bond movie, this is so good. The best Bond I've seen in years. And the artwork of Jason Masters is top notch, setting the pace, and artfully doing action at its best.

**EIDOLON aka Ian Fleming's James Bond 007 in EIDOLON**

Writer: Warren Ellis  
Artist: Jason Masters  
Dynamite Entertainment, 2017  
Summary: Is Spectre raising its ugly head once more? Also: Moneypenny with a gun!

**The Mueller Report Illustrated: the Obstruction Investigation**

Writer: Rosalind S. Helderman, the Washington Post  
Artist: Jan Feindt  
Scriber/Simon & Schuster, 2019  
ISBN: 978-1-9821-4927-7  
Summary: Graphic novel presentation of the findings of the Mueller Report - investigating charges of obstruction of justice by President Donald Trump and those in his employ.

**VELVET**

Writer: Ed Brubaker  
Artist: Steve Epting  
Image Comics  
Velvet, vol. 1: Before the Living End, 2014  
ISBN: 978-1-63215-727-0  
Summary: Do you like James Bond? What if Moneypenny had been a secret agent way back when? And when Bond ends up dead, she decides to find out why. It's Brubaker's version of this, of course, but it's done with gritty aplomb. Check it out of your local library. 3 graphic novels, or 1 deluxe edition of the whole story.
Paper Girls (series)
Summary: Four girls delivering their newspapers one morning start an adventure with time travel, monsters, and a future war. Hijinks ensue.
Writer: Brian K. Vaughan
Artist: Cliff Chiang
Image Comics, 2016 - 2019
Vol. 6, ISBN: 978-1-5343-1324-8

Star Wars: Darth Vader (series)
Summary: Taking place between the first two movies, Star Wars and the Empire Strikes Back, this is a character study in one of the most famous villains in film: Darth Vader. Extra points for creating an exciting new character in Doctor Aphra.
Writer: Kieron Gillen
Artist: Salvador Larroca
Marvel Comics, 2015 - 2016
Vader Down, ISBN: 978-0785197898
Vol. 4: End of Games, ISBN: 978-0785199786

Fangs
Writer: Sarah Andersen
Artist: Sarah Andersen
Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2020
ISBN: 978-1524860677
Summary: The cute story of a vampire and a werewolf in love.

Jupiter's Circle
Writer: Mark Millar
Artist: Wilfredo Torres
Image Comics, 2015, 2016
Summary: Prequel to Jupiter's Legacy. Follows a group of six superheroes in the 1950s and 60s,

Kick-Ass: the New Girl (Book One)
Writer: Mark Millar
Artist: John Romita Jr.
Image Comics, 2018
Summary: Patience Lee returns from her latest tour in Afghanistan to find her home life in shambles. Maybe the guise of Kick-Ass can put it right.
**Old Man Logan**
Writer: Mark Millar  
Artist: Steve McNiven  
Marvel Comics, 2009  
ISBN: 978-0-7851-3172-4  
Summary: In a possible future, Wolverine is a pacifist, a man with family scraping out a living under the thumb of ruling villains. Old friend Hawkeye, offers him a job... and an adventure.

**Starlight**
Writer: Mark Millar  
Artist: Goran Parlov  
Image Comics, 2015  
ISBN: 978-1-63215-017-2  
Summary: Duke McQueen is basically Flash Gordon. Nobody on earth believes his outer space adventures happened, and 40 years have passed. Now, the alien race he saved has returned, needing his help.

**BANG!**
Writer: Matt Kindt  
Artist: Wilfredo Torres  
Dark Horse Comics, 2020  
Summary: Four characters (similar to/doppelgangers of James Bond, Die Hard, Bat Girl, and an Agatha Christie sleuth) team up to solve a case. And find out who they, in fact, are.

**Cross Over, vol. 1: Kids Love Chains**
Writer: Donny Cates  
Artist: Geoff Shaw  
Image Comics, 2021  
Summary: The sky opens up over Denver and all the heroes and villains of comic books cross over into our world, fighting. A dome is built to contain them. Ellie wants to get inside the dome and find her parents, trapped there.

**Y, the Last Man**
Writer: Brian K. Vaughan  
Artist: Pia Guerra  
DC Comics/Vertigo, 2002 - 2008  
Book Four, ISBN: 978-1-4012-2888-0  
Summary: Yorick is about to propose to his girlfriend (on a trip to Australia), when the line goes dead. Actually, all the males in the world are suddenly dead, except for Yorick and his pet monkey. Thus launches an adventure to cross the globe for his girl and answers to what happened.

**The Magic Order (Book One)**
Summary: Regular people with regular jobs, but they also belong to the Magic Order, a group of magicians that have held the forces of evil at bay for thousands of years. But now, there is a warring faction aiming to take over control of the Order, and one very special book.

**Huck (Book 1: All American)**

Writer: Mark Millar  
Artist: Rafael Albuquerque  
Image Comics, 2016  
ISBN: 978-1-63215-729-4  
Summary: Huck is gas station attendant that tries to do one good deed every day. He also has the ability to find any lost item, has super strength, and can run across the entire country. Somewhat of a play on 'what is Superman never left his small town,' Huck is a warm-hearted story about friends and family.

**Basketful of Heads**

Writer: Joe Hill  
Artist: Leomacs  
DC Comics, 2020  
ISBN: 978-1-77950-297-1  
Summary: It's the end of the summer season on Brody Island, and the summer deputy is about to hand up his badge and leave with his girl. But a huge storm hits and four inmates go on the run. A fairly short graphic novel, but fantastic author, Joe Hill, fills it with surprises and twists. A great read.

**The Sleeper and the Spindle**

Writer: Neil Gaiman  
Artist: Chris Riddell  
HarperCollins, 2015  
ISBN: 978-0-06-239824-6  
Summary: This may or may not be seen, technically, as a graphic novel. It's more of a short story with illustrations, like a classic children's book. The story combines Sleeping Beauty with a bit of Snow White, and adds some delightful Gaiman twists and turns along the way. A wonderful new look at an old tale (or two).

**Meadowlark: A Coming-of-Age Crime Story**

Writer: Ethan Hawke (yes, THAT Ethan Hawke)  
Artist: Greg Ruth  
Hachette Book Group/Grand Central Publishing, 2021  
ISBN: 978-1-5387-1457-7  
Summary: Cooper is the product of divorced parents, and a bit of a troublemaker. He learns who his father really is, versus who he thought he was, in a crime story that should be made into a film.

**Something is Killing the Children**

Writer: James Tynion IV  
Artist: Werther Dell’edera & Miguel Muerto  
BOOM! Studios, 2020-21  
Summary: The title says it all, really. Something is killing the children of Archer’s Peak, Wisconsin. And someone has shown up to stop it. Gritty, raw, and human. Definitely not for kids. Adults only.

**Planet Hulk**
Writer: Greg Pak  
Artist: Greg Pagulayan  
Marvel Comics, 2007  
ISBN: 978-0785120124  
Summary: The Hulk is shot into space because it believed that his power and rage will one day lead to tragedy here on earth. He lands on the planet Sakaar, where he is enslaved and made to fight in gladiator battles. Hulk fights for his own, and others freedom.

**World War Hulk**
Writer: Greg Pak  
Artist: John Romita Jr.  
Marvel Comics, 2008  
Summary: Back on earth, Hulk seeks revenge on those that shot him into space.