

WHAT ARE SOME
CONTEMPORARY CLASSIC
GRAPHIC NOVELS THAT TEENS
WILL LOVE?

Blackmark (Gil Kane & Archie
Goodwin, 1971)



Blackmark is a tale that blends science and fantasy. It tells the story of a warrior who tries to unite the warring factions of his world. He is forced to battle against selfish lords, and other warriors who exercise ruthless power over the population. It is hailed as one of the first American graphic novels, and was reissued in 2002 with the planned second book *The Mind Demons* and an historical afterward appended to the end of the original story.

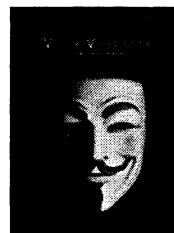


Watchmen (Alan Moore & Dave
Gibbons & John Higgins, 1987)

Watchmen establishes an
alternative history where

superheroes helped the United States win the Vietnam War. Superheroes at the time of the story have become unpopular, and the use of

their powers has been outlawed. It begins with investigating the murder of Edward Blake, and results in four superheroes fighting against Dr. Manhattan in the Antarctic. The graphic novel is known for its political commentary and stylized writing. It won the Hugo Award (Science Fiction/Fantasy) in 1988, and was adapted into a movie in 2009.



V for Vendetta (Alan Moore
& David Lloyd, 1982)

Set in a post nuclear war era, Great Britain is ruled by a fascist party called "Norsefire." A vigilante named "V" wearing a Guy Fawkes mask tries to disrupt the Norsefire's plots to subjugate the British people. In his personal rebellion against the state, "V" murders all the individuals involved with his incarceration at Larkhill and the medical experiments inflicted upon innocent people and criminals. Eventually, "V"'s companion Evey questions his

methods of urging political change, but in the end helps him realise his dream of freeing the British people from the “eye”, “ear”, and “mouth” that dominated their lives. *V for Vendetta* was made into a



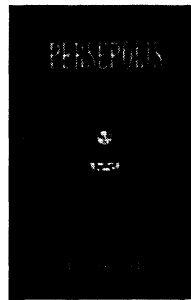
successful movie in 2006.

*Maus I: A Survivor's Tale:
My Father Bleeds History*

(Art Spiegelman, 1986)

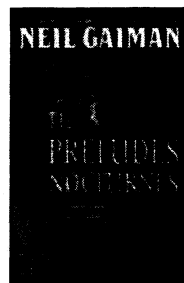
Spiegelman's story is that of his father's survival of World War II, and his life as a polish Jew in New York City. The novel examines Spiegelman's difficulty in trying to understand his father who is a stingy and difficult man. Although having suffered at the hands of the Germans, Vladek ,Spiegelman's father, feels racism towards others. All the characters are depicted as animals (Jews as mice, Germans as cats, American's as dogs, etc.) In 1992, it won the Pulitzer Prize.

Persepolis 1 &2 (Marjane Satrapi, 2000)



Persepolis is set in Iran during and after the Islamic Revolution; it tells the story of protagonist Satrapi's childhood and burgeoning

adulthood. In the first book, Satrapi focuses on her childhood and talks about her struggle to develop her sense of faith, understand the revolution, and cope with the changing world of Iran. In the second book, Satrapi focuses on her early adulthood, her time spent in Vienna, her struggles to understand a new culture, and her fear for her family's safety. The graphic novels have been translated from French into English, and were made into an animated movie in 2007.



The Sandman Vol. 1:

Preludes & Nocturnes (Neil

Gaiman & Sam Kieth &

Mike Dringenberg &

Malcolm Jones III, 1988-9)

Preludes & Nocturnes is a collection of the first 8 comics in the *Sandman* Saga. It tells the story of Dream's imprisonment by an occultist who seeks immortality. When Dream escapes, he embarks on a journey to reclaim his objects of power: a pouch of sand, a helm, and a ruby. In the quest to gather his totems, Dream deals with John Constantine's girlfriend, Lucifer, and Doctor Destiny. Many characters that Dream encounters can be found in other comic series (ex: Dr. Destiny is from the *Justice League of America*) and makes for excellent cross series plotlines and intrigues. The comic was reissued in 2010, and you can find the first 20 issues of *Sandman* collected within the *Absolute Sandman Vol. 1*

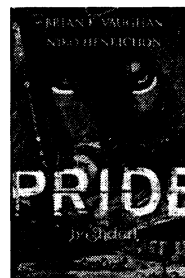
relationship with her father and her burgeoning life as a lesbian. Bechdel relates the story of her father's closet homosexuality and the brief moments he was honest with himself. Their relationship was strained, and his court trial over an encounter with a young boy causes Bechdel's growth into womanhood to be overshadowed. Bechdel uses wit and intimacy to tell a story of real life difficulties and how forgiveness oftentimes takes longer than one wishes to admit. The novel was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award, and won the Eisner Award in 2007 for Best Reality-Based Work. Bechdel is also known for her popular syndicated comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For*.

Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic (Alison



Bechdel, 2006)

In this autobiography, Bechdel tells about her



Pride of Baghdad (Brian K. Vaughan & Niko Henrichon, 2006)

Pride of Baghdad is based on the true event of four African lions that escaped from the Baghdad Zoo after the United States bombed Baghdad in 2003. As the four lions prowl around the city looking for food and safety, their different personalities begin to emerge. Zill is the male lion and yearns to once again see the African horizon, Noor (Zill's current mate) has schemed for a long time to get out of the Zoo, Ali is impulsive and curious of the new world into which she has been released, and Safa is an old lioness that wants to return to the safety of the zoo. It is a story of family, survival, and questions about the price of freedom. The novel won the IGN award for best original graphic novel in 2006.

**MODERN CLASSIC NOVELS FOR TEENS:
A LIST**

Classics In the Making:

Harry Potter (J.K. Rowling, 2000)
The Hunger Games (Suzanne Collins, 2010)
Discworld Series (Terry Pratchett,)

Science Fiction

Fahrenheit 451 (Ray Bradbury, 1953)
Flowers for Algernon (Daniel Keyes, 1966)
Anna to the Infinite Power
 (Mildred Ames, 1986)
His Dark Materials (Philip Pullman, 1995-2000)

Dystopian

1984 (George Orwell, 1949)
The Giver (Lois Lowry, 1993)
Noughts & Crosses
 (Malorie Blackman, 2001)

Fantasy

Chronicles of Narnia (C.S. Lewis, 1950-1956)
The Princess Bride (William Goldman, 1973).
Sabriel(Garth Nix, 1995)

Romance

Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones (Ann Head, 1968)
Puberty Blues (Kathy Lette & Gabrielle Carey, 1979)
Sooner or Later (Bruce & Carole Hart, 1983)
Undercover (Beth Kephart, 1998)

Realistic Fiction

The Catcher in the Rye (J.D. Salinger, 1951)