

Jewish Graphic Novels: A Selected Bibliography

By Wendy Wasman

Graphic Novels for Younger Readers

Baraitser, Marion and Anna Evans. *Home Number One: A Graphic Novel*. Loki Books, 2006. Dinah, a bored Jewish girl living in the repressed city of Utopia in the imagined America of 2020, is sent on a life-changing journey to 1943, where she joins her distant cousin Gonda and two friends in Theresienstadt. This graphic novel offers a unique way for teen readers to explore the Holocaust.

Burstein, Chaya. *The Kids' Cartoon Bible*. Jewish Publication Society of America, 2002. Using a comic book style format, Burstein offers familiar Bible stories in an easy and accessible format for children ages 9 and up.

Gunderson, Jessica. *The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire* (Graphic Library). Capstone Press, 2006. With easy-to-read text and large, brightly-colored illustrations, this exciting retelling of the Triangle fire provides a good introduction to the topic for readers ages 8-10.

Hudson-Goff, Elizabeth and Jonatha A. Brown. *Anne Frank* (Graphic Biographies). World Almanac Library, 2006. The well-known story of Anne Frank is given a new twist as a graphic novel. Because of the subject matter and some disturbing images of concentration camp victims, this book is recommended for ages 10-12.

Kubert, Joe. *The Adventures of Yaacov & Isaac*. Mahrwood Press (distributed in the U.S. by Feldheim Publishers), 2004. Kubert's stories about two young brothers impart Torah values and Jewish history lessons in an exciting action-adventure comic book style that is likely to appeal to elementary school boys ages 10 and up.

Mahr, Aryeh. *Shmuel Ha Nagid: a Tale of the Golden Age*. Mahrwood Press, 2005. The life of Shmuel Ha Nagid, a Talmudic scholar, statesman, and warrior, is told in a vibrantly-illustrated style, and is most suitable for an Orthodox audience ages 9-12.

Lutes, Jason and Nick Bertozzi. *Houdini: The Handcuff King*. Hyperion, 2007. This snapshot of one day in the life of the famous showman offers an edge-of-your-seat reading experience for children ages 10 and up.

Moscowitz, Moshe. *Miracle Lights: The Chanukah Story*. Shazak Productions, 2004. Benny learns the story of Chanukah from his grandfather in this "animated" book, suitable for children as young as 6.

Moscowitz, Moshe. *Out of Egypt*. Shazak Productions/Feldheim, 2007. Shazak Productions newest book focuses on the story of Exodus. Some scary images make this book more appropriate for children 10 and up.

Moscowitz, Moshe. *The Queen of Persia: An Illustrated Adaptation of an Ancient Story*. Shazak Productions, 2003. Bold cartoon-style illustrations retell the story of Queen Esther. Since this version is somewhat irreverent, it may be more suitable for children older than 12.

Pollack, Gadi. *Once Upon a Tale: Twelve Illustrated Parables from the Dubno Maggid*. Feldheim Publishers, 2004. This beautifully-illustrated book offers parables and lessons from the Torah for children ages 10 and up.

Sheinkin, Steve. *The Adventures of Rabbi Harvey: A Graphic Novel of Jewish Wisdom and Wit in the Wild West*. Jewish Lights Publishing, 2006. These ten gems about Rabbi Harvey are told in the manner of classic Jewish folktales and are illustrated in a sepia-toned graphic novel format. The humor is aimed at teens and adults.

Sturm, James. *The Golem's Mighty Swing*. Drawn and Quarterly, 2003. This graphic novel follows a Jewish baseball team as they travel through the Midwest in the 1920's. Beset with a losing record, they conjure a golem to help draw the crowds, but instead face fierce anti-Semitism. This novel is a good choice for teenage boys.

Graphic Novels for Older Teens and Adults

Croci, Pascal. *Auschwitz*. Harry N. Abrams, 2003. This intense graphic novel depicts an elderly couple as they recall their experiences and heartbreaking losses in Auschwitz. Because of the disturbing nature of the images and text, this book is most suitable for adults.

Eisenstein, Bernice. *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors*. Riverhead Books, 2006. In part a graphic novel and in part a memoir, Eisenstein's book is a unique and, at times, humorous look at a sober topic.

Eisner, Will. *The Contract with God Trilogy: Life on Dropsie Avenue*. W.W. Norton, 2005. Contains *A Contract with God and Other Tenement Stories* (originally published in 1978); *A Life Force* (1988); and *Dropsie Avenue: the Neighborhood* (1995). Three classic Eisner works are contained in this new trilogy, published as a tribute to the "grandfather of graphic novels."

Eisner, Will. *Fagin the Jew*. Doubleday, 2003. A graphic retelling of the story of Oliver Twist from the point of the view of the only Jew in the book.

Eisner, Will. *The Name of the Game*. DC Comics, 2001. A multigenerational saga of a German Jewish family as they make their way in America.

Eisner, Will. *The Plot: The Secret Story of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. W.W. Norton, 2005. Eisner's only graphic nonfiction is a history of the document that has fanned the flames of anti-Semitism for decades.

Eisner, Will. *To the Heart of the Storm*. Kitchen Sink Press, 1991; DC Comics, 2000. An autobiographical look at the effects of anti-Semitism on a young man's life.

Eisner, Will. *Will Eisner's New York: Life in the Big City*. W.W. Norton, 2006. Contains four graphic novels originally published between 1981 and 1992: *New York: The Big City*; *The Building*; *City People Notebook*; and *Invisible People*.

Engelberg, Miriam. *Cancer Made Me a Shallower Person: A Memoir in Comics*. Harper, 2006. Humorous, poignant, witty, and offbeat, Engelberg details her experiences with breast cancer in comic strip format.

Gantz, David. *Jews in America: A Cartoon History*. Jewish Publication Society of America, 2006 (rev. ed.) This grandiose, comic book style history of Jews in America could be suitable for younger teens as well as adults. See below for the link to Gantz's excellent article on JBooks.com.

Katchor, Ben. *The Jew of New York*. Pantheon Books, 1998. Katchor's dizzying novel brings together a cast of humorous characters in New York City in the 1830's.

Katin, Miriam. *We Are On Our Own*. Drawn and Quarterly, 2006. Miriam Katin's first graphic novel, told from the perspective of a young child, is a poignant memoir of her escape from Budapest with her mother during World War II.

Keret, Etgar and Actus Comics. *Jetlag*. Stories translated by Dan Ofri. The Toby Press, 2006. These stories, by one of Israel's most popular writers, are very intense and full of violent and disturbing images, and are therefore most suitable for adult readers.

Kleid, Neil and Jake Allen. *Brownsville*. ComicsLit, 2006.

Kubert, Joe. *Jew Gangster*. iBooks, 2005.

These two graphic novels shed light on a relatively unknown period of time in Jewish history, when Jewish gangsters violently ruled the streets.

Kleid, Neil. *Migdal David*. Seraphic Press, forthcoming. This memoir by a noted graphic novelist focuses on his brother's struggle with developmental disabilities and his family's life in their Orthodox community. See sample pages at

http://www.seraphicpress.com/archives/2005/09/migdal_david_1.php

Kubert, Joe. *Yossel, April 19, 1943: A Story of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising*. iBooks, 2003. Kubert imagines what his life would have been like had his parents not left Europe before the Holocaust. His namesake, Yossel, chronicles his time in the Warsaw Ghetto by illustrating the life and death around him.

Lemelman, Martin. *Mendel's Daughter: A Memoir*. Free Press, 2006. Lemelman tells his mother's story of survival during the Holocaust.

Modan, Rutu. *Exit Wounds*. Drawn and Quarterly, forthcoming. Set in modern-day Tel Aviv, Modan's graphic novel tells the story of a young man looking for his estranged father who may have been a victim of a suicide bombing. See sample pages at <http://www.drawnandquarterly.com/shopCatalogLong.php?item=a451165f22c05b>

Pekar, Harvey. *The Quitter*. Vertigo, 2006. Pekar examines his childhood and adolescence growing up as a Jewish boy in an increasing African American community in Cleveland. Teenagers will find much to relate to in this graphic memoir, but as in his other autobiographical comics, adults are his main audience.

Sfar, Joann. *Klezmer: Book One: Tales of the Wild East*. Translated by Alexis Siegel. First Second, 2006. Sfar takes his readers on a wild tour of the snowy forests and shtetls of pre-World War II Eastern Europe as he follows a ragged band of klezmer musicians on their adventures. Because of some nudity, this book is better suited for adults only.

Sfar, Joann. *The Rabbi's Cat*. Pantheon, 2005. This richly-illustrated graphic novel tells the story of a widowed rabbi and his daughter in 1930's Algeria. Narrated by their precocious cat, the book depicts a time when Arabs and Jews peacefully coexisted and learned from each other's differences.

Spiegelman, Art. *Maus I: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History*. Pantheon, 1986 and *Maus II: A Survivor's Tale: And Here My Troubles Began*. Pantheon, 1992. Spiegelman's masterful two-volume graphic novel tells the story of his father's experiences during the Holocaust. Both volumes are widely available and should be required reading for high school students and adults.

Waldman, J.T. *Megillat Esther*. Jewish Publication Society, 2006. The story of Esther is rendered in breathtaking graphic novel format.

Wolfman, Marv. *Homeland: The Illustrated History of the State of Israel*. Nachshon Press, 2007. The publishers hope to "revolutionize the understanding of Israel for everyone, regardless of religious background" in this graphic novel.

Books about Graphic Novels and Comics

Chabon, Michael. *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*. Random House, 2000. Chabon's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel is a perfect place to start for an entertaining behind-the-scenes look at the creation of comic books.

Eisner, Will. *Comics & Sequential Art*. Poorhouse Press, 1985. Written by the recognized master of graphic novels, Eisner's textbook is an excellent introduction to the format.

Gorman, Michele. *Getting Graphic! Using Graphic Novels to Promote Literacy with Preteens and Teens*. Linworth Publishing, 2003. Gorman's much-needed guide provides a solid foundation for school and public librarians looking to build and use a graphic novel collection.

Gravett, Paul. *Graphic Novels: Everything You Need to Know*. CollinsDesign, 2005. The title says it all! This book is an excellent guidebook with a plethora of colorful examples and detailed descriptions of all types of graphic novels.

Hatfield, Charles. *Alternative Comics: An Emerging Literature*. University Press of Mississippi, 2005. A scholarly look at comics and graphic novels, with an analysis of Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, among others.

Howe, Sean, ed. *Give Our Regards to the Atomsmashers! Writers on Comics*. Pantheon Books, 2004. Includes essays about comics by Brad Meltzer, Myla Goldberg, and many other authors.

Jones, Gerard. *Men of Tomorrow: Geeks, Gangsters and the Birth of the Comic Book*. Basic Books, 2004. A detailed history of comic books in the United States and the mostly Jewish immigrants that created them.

Kaplan, Arie. *Masters of the Comic Book Universe Revealed!* Chicago Review Press, 2006. An informal history of the comic book industry based on interviews with creators such as Will Eisner and Art Spiegelman.

Lyga, Allyson A.W. and Barry Lyga. *Graphic Novels in Your Media Center*. Libraries Unlimited, 2004. This comprehensive resource guide provides a solid foundation for librarians and teachers, and even includes lesson plans and lists of recommended reading.

McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics*. Kitchen Sink Press, 1993 (reprinted by Harper, 1994). The ultimate book about comics written in comic book format was soon followed by two other McCloud creations: *Reinventing Comics* (Harper, 2000) and *Making Comics* (Harper, 2006).

Using Graphic Novels in the Classroom: A Guide for Teachers and Librarians. Scholastic, 2006. Available to download from the Scholastic website:
<http://www.scholastic.com/librarians/printables/downloads/graphicnovels.pdf>

Weinstein, Simcha. *Up, Up, and Oy Vey! How Jewish History, Culture, and Values Shaped the Comic Book Superhero.* Leviathan Press, 2006. Weinstein's valuable contribution to superhero literature is a must-read for teens and adults alike.

Websites/Blogs

Comic Books for Young Adults: A Guide for Librarians provides good background material and arguments for having comics and graphic novels in libraries. It can be found at <http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/units/lml/comics/pages/addressing.html>

Jews and the Graphic Novel is a spectacular visual history of Jewish graphic novels, created by David Gantz for JBooks.com. Access it at:
http://jbooks.com/common/uploads/graphic_novel/index.html.

Jews in Comics is a bibliography maintained by Steven Bergson, Past President of the Ontario Chapter of the AJL. Check it out at: <http://www.geocities.com/safran-can/JWISHC.HTM/>. Bergson also has a blog titled *Jewish Comics*, <http://jewishcomics.blogspot.com/>, in which he reviews recent graphic novels and comics that have a Jewish focus and makes announcements about upcoming events of interest to readers of graphic novels.

No Flying, No Tights: A Web Site Reviewing Graphic Novels for Teens, <http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/units/lml/comics/pages/addressing.html>, also offers reviews of graphic novels for younger children and adults.