



***In the Library With a Comic Book Presents:***

**Favorite Graphic Novels of 2016**

**by Jack Baur and Amanda Jacobs Foust**

**BAYA Reading Without Walls Presentation, 10/24/16**

**Note!** This list is totally subjective and far from exhaustive!

Did we miss your favorites? Let us know!

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## **Kids**

**Fontana, Shea (auth.) and Yancey Labat (illus.) DC Super Hero Girls.** DC Comics, 2016. 2 volumes, ongoing.

Based on the multimedia franchise of toys, television shows, and novels, this adorable series is a fantastic introduction to the DC Universe, reimagining the women of DC Comics as students at Super Hero High School in Metropolis where they learn to perfect their powers under the watchful eye of Principal Amanda Waller. The storylines generally predate the division of the characters into heroes and villains with a strong focus on friendship and teamwork. The tone is light-hearted and fun; the plot is fast-paced and clever; the art is crisp and clean. While the intended audience is younger toy-playing children, the series has an all-ages appeal and anyone looking for some light-hearted superhero fare should enjoy it.

***Finals Crisis*.** 2016. 128p. 978-1401262471

***Hits and Myths*.** 2016. 978-1401267612.

**Green, John Patrick. *Hippopotamister*.** First Second, 2016. 96p. 978-1626722002.

Hippopotamister lives in a dilapidated zoo until one day he decides to join his best friend, Red Panda, in getting a job in the human world. A series of odd jobs follow until Hippopotamister realizes that he and Red Panda can use their new skills to improve the zoo. Green uses a repetitive storyline and simple vocabulary expertly to create a high interest and accessible title for early readers that also serves as an outstanding transition from picture books to graphic novels. His energetic and lively drawings are rendered in graphite and colored in soft pastels that will engage young readers.

**Hatke, Ben. *Mighty Jack*.** First Second, 2016. 208p. 978-1626722644.

In this retelling of the Jack and the Beanstalk tale, Jack trades the family car for magic seeds at the urging of his autistic sister, Maddy. The car is recovered, but the temporary loss strains his family's precarious financial situation. His mother is working two jobs over the summer while Jack takes care of Maddy. They plant the seeds and a strange yet majestic garden flourishes, attracting the attention of fantastic and sometimes dangerous creatures including an informative dragon. Over the course of the summer, the garden becomes

more ominous and dangerous until Jack must decide if they can continue the garden. Hatke has a knack for developing characters, pacing the action of the story and showing, rather than telling. The story is punctuated with quiet, nuanced moments, like when Jack and his Mom share an early morning cup of coffee. Hatke's use of black ink and watercolor is beautiful and brings to life both the mundane day-to-day details, the garden and creatures that inhabit it.

**Holm, Jennifer L. (auth) and Matthew Holm (illus.). My First Comics.** Random House for Young Readers, 2016. 2 volumes, ongoing.

These unique board books offer a developmentally appropriate introduction to comics for babies and toddlers, from the sibling creators of **Babymouse** and **Squish**. The straightforward storylines focus on managing emotions, and are told with simple color palettes and traditional comics elements such as panels, word balloons and sound effects. The bold, exaggerated art supports the words, and reinforces the information literacy skill of reading pictures to follow the stories.

*I'm Sunny!* 2016. 22p. 978-0553533460.

*I'm Grumpy!* 2016. 22p. 978-0553533446.

**Larson, Hope (auth.) and Brittany Williams (illus.). *Goldie Vance, Vol. 1*.** BOOM! Box, 2016. 112p. 978-1608868988.

Goldie Vance's dad is the manager of a swanky Florida hotel during the mid-Twentieth Century. When she's not hobnobbing with her friends on the staff, Goldie is volunteering her services to the hotel's detective (whether he likes it or not) and helping to crack the abundance of mysteries that plague the hotel's high-class guests. A necklace goes missing and before long Goldie finds herself drag racing greasers and tangling with Russian spies! Larson brings a period snappiness to the dialogue, and Williams' art is light and inviting. There's a refreshingly casual multiculturalism in the book; Goldie's dad is Black, her mom is white, and her friends have skin tones of pretty much every shade. Combine that with the Nancy Drew-esque pluck of the heroine and you've got a winning series opener on your hands!

**O'Neill, Katie. *Princess Princess Ever After*.** Oni Press, 2016. 56p. 978-1620103401.

A simple and sweetly romantic story about two princesses who are unsure about their respective roles until they meet each other. Princess Amira is tomboyish and dark-skinned, and has fled the duties of her kingdom to rove around on a unicorn in search of adventure. Sadie is a more feminine princess whose sister has locked her in a tower and continuously shames her abilities as well as her body. Amira frees Sadie and the two set off together to find their places in the world. It's a breezy story that moves perhaps too quickly, but is a valuable addition for open-minded collections thanks to its straightforward handling of self-acceptance and same-sex relationships. That it ends with the two princesses having an adorable wedding should surprise no one and delight everyone.

**Reeder, Amy (auth.), Brandon Montclare (Auth.) and Natasha Bustos (illus.). *Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur, Vol. 1: BFF*.** Marvel Comics, 2016. 136p. 978-1302900052.

The creative team from Image Comics' **Rocket Girl** are taking their time travel storytelling skills to the Marvel universe to reboot this dormant Jack Kirby creation. Moon Girl is Lunella Lafayette, a nine-year old Black girl who lives in Manhattan. She is a brilliant kid who is obsessed with using her knowledge and skills to prevent herself from becoming Inhuman. Meanwhile, through the magic of time travel, Devil Dinosaur is transported

(along with prehistoric humanoids) to Luna's time. Chaos ensues and Luna and Devil Dinosaur become unlikely allies and friends. The story tackles Luna's increasing isolation as both the smartest person in the room and a potential Inhuman. She's terrified of becoming something other than what she already is, the skin she is already comfortable in. Her singular focus and her firm grounding in science prevent her from being scared or intimidated by either Devil Dinosaur or the humanoids. The action scenes are fast paced and fun and the character designs -- particularly of Luna -- are detailed and loving.

**Seagle, Steven T. (auth.) and Jason Adam Katzenstein (illus.). *Camp Midnight*.** Image Comics, 2016. 248p. 978-1632155559.

Skye is being reluctantly shipped off to summer camp, only she gets on the wrong bus and accidentally ends up at the camp for literal monsters. Faced with few options, Skye decides to stick it out and ultimately makes some unexpected friends and matures in unexpected ways. Katzenstein's art is bold with a strong color palette that really sets the mood of the camp which has its creepy and icky moments but is never too scary. Skye is a delight of a character, snarky and fueled by anger that her parents have divorced and her father remarried. Seeing her develop over the course of the book while staying true to her snarky nature offers a satisfying conclusion.

**Various authors and illustrators. Science Comics.** First Second, 2016. 3 volumes, ongoing.

Each title in this series focuses on providing the reader with a complete introduction to basic scientific topics, and is brought to you by a different creative team. The subjects are written and drawn with care to be engaging, readable and presented in a way that is accessible to readers of all ages while remaining firmly based in scientific fact. For example, the volume ***Dinosaurs: Fossils and Feathers*** uses a recurring theme of how humans interact with or interpret fossils through time. Sometimes those interpretations are proven wrong, such as when the scientific minds of a certain time thought they had found proof of the existence of dragons. Other times scientists find the evidence they need to prove a theory, such as the belief that iguanodons walked on their hind legs, through the discovery of new fossils. The focus on the development of scientific thought through the gathering of evidence over time mixed with the clear presentation of engaging facts make these books wonderful supplements to science curricula.

***Dinosaurs: Fossils and Feathers*.** 2016. 128p. 978-1626721432.

***Coral Reefs: Cities of the Ocean*.** 2016. 128p. 978-1626721456.

***Volcanoes: Fire and Life*.** 2016. 128p. 978-1626723603.

**Waid, Mark (auth.), Fiona Staples (illus.), Annie Wu (illus.), and Veronica Fish (illus.). *Archie, Vol. 1*.** Archie Comics, 2016. 176p. 978-1627388672.

Who could have predicted that one of the most exciting titles of 2015 would be an *ARCHIE* book? Isn't Archie just a load of toothless and hokey jokes about hamburgers and a goodie-goodie kid who can't decide if he likes blondes or brunettes? What could this 75-year old perpetual teenager possibly have to offer The Kids Today? In the hands of veteran comics scribe Mark Waid, quite a lot it turns out. Waid reintroduces the Riverdale Gang to the 21st Century, letting his story zip along with boundless energy and sly humor while keeping the characters and the drama squarely in focus. Fiona Staples (of Saga fame) leads a pack of superstar artists building out a surprisingly diverse cast and making everyone look hip as heck. **Archie** is the rare relaunch of a classic property that old school fans will still recognize and the new generation will positively gobble up. Also look out for the newly relaunched **Jughead** series by Chip Zdarsky and Erica Henderson!

## Teens

**Aaron, Jason (auth.), Kieron Gillen (auth.), Mike Deodato (illus.) and Salvador Larroca (illus.). *Star Wars: Vader Down*.** Marvel Comics, 2016. 152p. 978-0785197898.

The first year of Marvel's excellent new line of *Star Wars* titles reached an incredible climax in this volume, as stories that had been building in volumes 1 and 2 of both Jason Aaron's **Star Wars** and Kieron Gillen's **Darth Vader** series collide! Lord Vader is desperately trying to save his reputation after the disastrous loss of the first Death Star at the end of the original **Star Wars** film. The Rebel Alliance is also tracking Vader and, finding him stranded on an inhospitable planet, send their forces to take him out for good. They don't stand a chance. This book (along with the rest of the series) boasts sharp writing that gives readily identifiable voices to classic *Star Wars* characters paired with picture perfect art. But the very best thing here is that readers get a chance to witness Vader TEARING IT UP. In the movies you hear about what a fearsome fighter Vader is, but seeing him in action is glorious. Fans will be in heaven.

**Bennett, Marguerite (auth.) and Marguerite Sauvage (illus.). DC Bombshells.** DC Comics, 2016. 2 volumes, ongoing.

The women of DC Comics are reimagined as the central players of an alternate universe set in World War II, and redesigned to incorporate a classic pin-up aesthetic that works in large part because of the strength of Bennet's and Sauvage's clearly feminist perspective. The core characteristics of the individual characters remain but they are reimagined in fun and inventive ways that keep the women firmly and consistently center stage. The series is just warming up, dedicating the bulk of its two existing volumes to introductions and assembling the team, but it's clear that this will continue to be an enjoyable read.

***Vol. 1: Enlisted*.** 2016. 144p. 978-1401261320.

***Vol. 2: Allies*.** 144p. 978-1401264482.

**Fletcher, Branden (auth.) and Annie Wu (illus.). *Black Canary, Vol. 1: Kicking and Screaming*.** DC Comics, 2016. 168p. 978-1401261177.

In this reboot, the moniker Black Canary is not being used as the superhero identity of Dinah Lance, but as the name of the band she is fronting -- a band that ends most of its sets inadvertently destroying its venue and/or physically fighting the other bands. When it is revealed that one of its members is in danger, Dinah shares her superhero past and the band comes together to protect one another. Annie Wu's art bristles with energy, incorporating bold lines, creative page layouts, eye-popping colors (by Lee Loughridge), and style for days. Wu manages to take Black Canary's traditional corset-and-fishnets costume and reimagine it as realistic punk rock everyday wear that is practical, cool, and begging for cosplay. In Fletcher's hands Dinah works as both rock star and warrior, and the supporting cast is diverse, interesting and integral to the storyline and plot development. Overall, it's one of the more enjoyable superhero stories of the year.

**Hawke, Ethan (auth.) and Greg Ruth (illus.). *Indeh: The Story of the Apache Wars*.** Grand Central Publishing, 2016. 240p. 978-1401310998.

***Indeh*** is a heartbreaking account of the Apache Wars of the late 1800s, told from the perspective of Cochise, Naiche, and Geronimo and consciously stripped of the standard Western conventions which casts the cowboys as heroes and the Indians as savages. Neither Hawke nor Ruth shy away from the horrors and atrocities of the war, and approach the Apache natives with respect. Their extensive and informed research is evident. Ruth's stunning art cannot be credited enough for the respectful treatment of the Apaches. His muted art is vibrant

and exquisitely detailed and rendered in soft shades of black and white careful and considerate portrayal of the Apache Nation. This book, which includes a comprehensive bibliography, should be considered an essential addition to all teen collections.

**Houser, Jody (auth.) and Sauvage, Marguerite (illus.). Faith.** Valiant Entertainment, 2016. 2 volumes, ongoing.

Faith, publicly known as the superhero Zephyr, has relocated to Los Angeles after a bad breakup and assumed a new civilian identity as an entertainment blogger. She still fights crime during her off hours and soon finds herself investigating a series of missing-persons cases. Houser writes Faith as a smart, dedicated geek girl in a way that feels authentic while Sauvage ably draws Faith as a real, full-figured woman. The result is a comic that is as fun as it is uniquely body positive.

**Vol. 1: *Hollywood and Vine*.** 2016. 112p. 978-1682151211.

**Vol. 2: *California Scheming*.** 2016. 112p. 978-1682151631.

**Leth, Kate (auth.) and Williams, Brittany (illus.). *Patsy Walker A.K.A. Hellcat! Vol. 1: Hooked on a Feline*.** Marvel Comics, 2016. 136p. 978-1302900359.

Patsy Walker doesn't really have it together. She's working for Jennifer Walter's (She-Hulk's) law firm, but she needs to find a new place to live, make new friends and reconnect with her past all while fighting crimes. Unfortunately, Patsy's past includes an embarrassing series of teen romance novels based on her life and written by her mother, now republished by her former friend. Patsy has a complicated and dark past in the Marvel Comics universe, but Leth smartly and efficiently pushes that to the side in order to focus on the fun and light-hearted aspects of the character. Williams draws Patsy in a playful way that complements Leth's pun-filled dialogue. Overall, this is a fun introduction to superhero comics or a companion to quirky titles like Unbeatable Squirrel Girl and Howard the Duck.

**Lewis, John (auth.), Andrew Ayden (auth.) and Nate Powell (illus.). March.** Top Shelf Productions. 2013-2016. 3 volumes.

The publication of the final volume of this 3-volume graphic memoir by Civil Rights icon and Congressman John Lewis makes it clear that this series will be remembered as one of the major graphic novel events of the decade, if not the century. March is the account of Lewis' life from his childhood in rural Alabama; his early involvement with the Civil Rights Movement; his eventual ascension as one of the leaders of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC); the atrocities and the courage he witnessed in the struggle; to the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. All of this is framed by scenes set on January 20th, 2009, when Lewis was at the side of the first African-American person to be inaugurated as President of the United States. It is an essential story of American history that shows young readers not just how far we've come, but how much *work* and courage went into getting us here. The genius of the book is the way it is able to keep its focus constantly shifting between the micro and the macro, the sacrifices of individuals to the movements of many, dramatizing some of the most iconic events and speeches of the 1960s in the process. The story is told through the expressive and expressionistic art of Nate Powell, whose lines go from smooth and controlled to jagged and askew as the emotions of the scene demand. It is a stunning work of historical comic art that deserves to be read for generations.

**Book One.** 2013. 128p. 978-1603093002

**Book Two.** 2015. 192p. 978-1603094009.

**Book Three.** 2016. 256p. 978-1603094023.

**Panetta, Kevin (auth.) and Paulina Ganucheau (illus.). *Zodiac Starforce. By the Power of Astra.*** Dark Horse Books, 2016. 136p. 978-1616559137.

This elite team of teenage girls have sworn to protect the earth from monsters and dark forces using powers they access through their star signs. At the start of the book, they've just successfully saved the world and retired to complete their high school years. But evil has other ideas and soon enough the team is back together. This series has a strong look and feel of anime and leans heavily into the "magical girl" genre. It's also bright, fun and features a diverse cast of characters with a wide range of body types. It also includes a blossoming romance between two girls. Hand this to a reader looking for a fun read with some surprising depth and an inclusive cast.

**Russell, Mark (auth.) and Ben Caldwell (illus.). *Prez, Vol. 1: Corndog-in-Chief.*** DC Comics, 2016. 144p. 978-1401259792.

Set in a completely wired near future where social media infiltrates everything and popularity rules all, an Oregon teenager-turned-viral video star named Beth Ross suddenly finds herself elected as the country's first teenaged President! Her first order of business? Going on a worldwide tour apologizing to all of the countries that the US has wronged. *Prez* is a blistering satire of American culture and politics, with corporate greed and corruption run amok and nobody caring about much beyond their own self-interests and second-to-second approval ratings. In this climate, President Ross' sensitivity and pragmatism make her a hero in a world gone mad. The comic also features a humanoid robot combat drone named "War Beast" who flees their post and finds themselves at a LGBTQ support group where they decide they want to identify as female and go by "Tina." Nothing is sacred in the world of *Prez* and savvy teens will definitely see the connections between this story and the contemporary politics.

**Walker, David F. (auth.) and Stanford Greene (illus.). *Power Man and Iron Fist, Vol. 1: The Boys are Back in Town.*** Marvel Comics, 2016. 112p. 978-1302901141.

Just in time for the successful Netflix television series starring one of Marvel's most prominent Black heroes, this funny series brings back the odd couple pairing of Luke "Power Man" Cage and Danny "Iron Fist" Rand -- the original Heroes for Hire! Though it's been awhile since they've been a crime-fighting duo, Cage and Rand get together to pick up their old office assistant Jenny as she is released from prison. When Jenny implores the two to get a necklace that supposedly belonged to her grandmother back from the crime boss Tombstone, Rand jumps at the chance for some action and Cage reluctantly follows along. Soon the two find themselves in waaaay over their heads and have to reform their super team-up to save the people close to them. The book features a Black writer and artist, and just about all of the characters are POC. The banter between Cage and Iron Fist is incredibly fun, and the art has a unique grittiness to it. Iron Fist is also about to get his own Netflix series, so this is a perfect place for your patrons to get on board!

## Adults

**Asselin, Janelle (ed.) with various authors and various illustrators. *Fresh Romance, Volume 1.*** Rosy Press, 2016. 224p. 978-1620103463.

This romance anthology has something to offer for every reader. Featuring a high school romance between teen girls with a magical twist; an Austen-esque Edwardian romance between a reluctant bride and her new groom; a coffee shop barista with special powers to connect lovers; and finishing with a Beauty and the Beast inspired fantasy, any and all romance readers will find a story that will get their heart racing. Each story is engrossing and the wide range of artists give each a unique feel. When your romance readers have exhausted

your prose collection, you'll want to hand them **Fresh Romance**. This volume collects the first batch of stories from the Kickstarter-funded digital comics anthology. Not all the stories are complete in this volume, so readers hungry for more should head to [www.rosypress.com](http://www.rosypress.com) to complete the stories online. The project was nominated for the Dwayne McDuffie Award for Diversity in Comics.

**Clowes, Daniel. *Patience***. Fantagraphics, 2016. 180p. 978-1606999059.

After he is framed for the murder of his pregnant wife Patience, Jack spends decades in jail and emerges bitter, jaded, and alone into a Technicolor future world. When he discovers that an unknown inventor has created a time travel device, Jack sees in it his chance to save Patience and set everything right. He steals the device, and that's when things get *really* messy. Because this is Clowes, ***Patience*** is populated by angry, broken, and disappointed people. The pulpy trappings of the time travel revenge plot open up the story to explore existential musings and deep human dread. However, within the selfish mistakes of the characters there is also room for a bit of redemption, which is rare in Clowes' work. Topped off by wonderfully cheesy designs, bright colors, and some staggeringly psychedelic layouts, this might be Clowes' most accessible and successful book since his beloved 1998 masterpiece ***Ghost World***.

**Coates, Ta-Nehisi (auth.) and Brian Stelfreeze (illus.). *Black Panther: A Nation Under Our Feet, Book 1***. Marvel Comics, 2016. 144p. 978-1302900533.

It was a major coup for Marvel to land the MacArthur Genius Grant-winning author of ***Between the World and Me*** (and avowed nerd) to helm this new ongoing series about Marvel's most recognizable Black hero, the African warrior king Black Panther. While the art by veteran creator Stelfreeze is utterly gorgeous, this is not a particularly easy book to get into. Rather than your average superhero romp, ***A Nation Under Our Feet*** is a thoughtful meditation on the nature of nation-building and leadership, shot through with Afrofuturism and punctuated by terrorist violence. Newcomers to the fictional nation of Wakanda might find themselves a little lost, but stick with it and you will notice many of Coates' overarching concerns boil to the surface along with his beautiful wordsmithing. This is very clearly Act One of a much larger story. Volumes 2 and 3 are due out in January and April 2017, respectively, and a companion series co-written by the poet Roxanne Gay should hit in June 2017.

**Gaiman, Neil (auth.), Gabriel Bá (illus.) and Fábio Moon (illus.). *How to Talk to Girls at Parties***. Dark Horse Books, 2016. 64p. 978-1616559557.

This charming short story is classic Gaiman. Told with a hazy sense of nostalgia, it is a remembered account of the adult narrator's teenage experience crashing a house party filled with out-of-towners. The narrator is awkward and inexperienced with girls while his best friend is more comfortable and cocky. It soon becomes clear however that the girls they're hitting on aren't just visiting from other towns, but from whole other worlds. Gaiman's storytelling is sparse, yet masterful. The watercolor illustrations feature some great designs, and are moody and expressive. Overall the book conveys a sense longing for those moments of naive romantic connections and the ease of young friendships.

**Ha, Robin. *Cook Korean! A Comic Book with Recipes***. Ten Speed Press, 2016. 176p. 978-1607748878.

Ha starts us off with a succinct biography about how she taught herself to cook Korean food and a brief overview of the main tenets of Korean cooking before launching into the main primary part of the book, comprised of colorfully illustrated recipes. The writing and cooking descriptions are accessible and easy to follow, leaving the reader confident in their ability to cook Korean. The recipes are also adaptable to the

palate of the cook and can be made vegetarian or vegan. Ha's vibrant art and bold colors bring the recipes to life and bind the book together.

**King, Tim (auth.) and Gabriel Hernandez Walta (illus.). *Vision, Vol 1: Little Worse Than a Man*.** Marvel Comics, 2016. 136p. 978-0785196570.

The synthetic humanoid hero from the Avengers known as Vision has created himself a robot wife and two robot kids and the new family has moved to the suburbs to attempt to join mainstream middle class American life. While Vision himself continues to live his superhero life, his family is met by prejudice and misunderstanding, but try to put on a brave face to keep the illusion of normalcy alive for dad. Unfortunately one accidental death begets a string of murders, causing things to unravel with shocking speed and horrible inevitability. Walta does an excellent job visually crafting the Visions' strangely normal home, populating their world with believably average people, and giving the Visions both an eerie uncanniness and a relatable emotional range. What makes this story sing, though, is the writing. The story is told by an omniscient narrator who, after a quaint opening scene wherein the Visions meet their neighbors, delivers the line "Later, near the end of our story, one of the Visions will set George and Nora's house on fire. They will die in the flames." This kind of narration is rare in modern comics, and its use here gives the story a sense of gravitas and dread. This is a domestic horror story in a superhero cape and we love it. The concluding second volume is due in December.

As an aside, one plot point involves the mascot at the Vision kids' school, which is an angry red-faced Native American stereotype that shares an offensive name with an NFL team. Some reviewers were put off by the inclusion of this plot, but given that its use is pointedly ironic and deployed with commentary, we felt like it had a place in the story. Other readers may disagree.

**Lu, Marjorie (auth.) and Sana Takeda (illus.). *Monstress, Vol. 1: Awakening*.** Image Comics, 2016. 192p. 978-1632157096.

This dark and lush fantasy series opener sets us in a world in which human sorceresses known as Cumea enslave and dissect members of a half-animal race known as the Arcana for the life giving Liliium that can be harvested from their bodies. At the story's beginning, an Arcana named Maika has willingly let herself be captured by the Cumea in an attempt to infiltrate their stronghold and exact revenge. Maika has a mysterious connection to an ancient power that could shift the balance of the war between the Cumea and the Arcana, a power that she can barely control and that everyone wants! **Monstress** is easily one of the most gorgeous books on the stands, with a breathtaking mix of manga expressiveness and Art Deco design, topped off with rich colors. The story fires on all cylinders, offering a fully realized world, believably flawed characters, and a lot to say about the way we dehumanize the Other in times of war. This series also features a cast that is nearly entirely made up of women of color, and Liu has talked about how important it is to her to depict a wide array of female characters and believable female friendships. This is a major winner for grown-up readers, with lots more to come!

**Rokudenashiko. *What is Obscenity? The Story of a Good for Nothing Artist and Her Pussy*.** Koyama Press, 2016. 168p. 978-1927668313.

By turns charming and challenging, this is one of the most important graphic novels of the year. Rokudenashiko (which translates from Japanese to "good-for-nothing") is the working name of real-life fine artist and mangaka Megumi Igarishi. She is best known in Japan for the work she has created around molds of her own vagina to challenge the notion that Japanese art can feature so much phallic imagery while vaginal imagery is taboo and considered obscene. In this manga, Rokudenashiko recounts her rise to infamy when,



after successfully running a crowdfunding campaign to make a vagina-shaped kayak, she was arrested for obscenity and spent several months in prison. Her case won her international recognition and continues to challenge artistic repression in Japan. Delivered in a light tone that expresses both the artist's disbelief at her circumstances and an anarchic glee at the discomfort she causes in her would-be censors, this is an accessible and vital book about free expression which, for obvious reasons, will need to be handled with some care in your library's collection.

**Rucka, Greg (auth.) and Nicola Scott (illus.). *Black Magick, Vol. 1: Awakening, Part One*.** Image Comics, 2016. 128p. 978-1632156754.

Rowan Black is both a homicide detective and a witch, two identities that she has taken great pains to keep separate. That is until she is called to a crime scene where the suspect reveals he knows her true name. From there, it becomes clear that someone or something is targeting Rowan and her secrets are in danger of being revealed. Rucka has developed yet another realistic and strong heroine in Rowan and a full supporting cast of predominantly female characters. However it's Scott's powerful artwork -- primarily presented in soft shades of gray with selective color only deployed to depict the use of magic -- that makes this comic really shine. After this first volume the creative team took a break to work together on a new **Wonder Woman** series for DC, but will return in April 2017.

**Vaughan, Brian K. (auth.) and Marcos Martin (illus.). *The Private Eye*.** Image Comics, 2016. 300p. 978-1632155726.

This gorgeous oversize volume might be a little unwieldy on your library shelves, but the story is as pointed and timely as anything Vaughan (**Y: The Last Man**, **Ex Machina**, **Saga**) has ever done. Mixing noir trappings and timely sci-fi concerns, ***Private Eye*** takes place in 2076, years after the digital cloud has burst and everyone's darkest secrets were spilled across every corner of the Internet. This has led to a totally *disconnected* society where people are so worried about their privacy that everyone goes out in public as a colorful alter ego. Journalism is now a function of the government (like policing) where state-sanctioned agents collect facts and issue the official news. The protagonist is a freelance paparazzo operating outside the law who gets pulled into a murder investigation. The book boasts incredible art by Martin and many characters of color, but what is most amazing is the sharpness of its observations and the brilliant extrapolations Vaughan makes from our media-saturated world. It is predictive science fiction at its best, and librarians especially should love how carefully this book looks at the long-term effects of our current information culture, and the value and price of privacy.