



## Faster Than a Speeding Bullet: The Rise of the Graphic Novel

By Stephen Weiner

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It took a few years of false starts but now it's official: the graphic novel form is the fastest growing new category of publishing, rising like a meteor. Stephen (*The 101 Best Graphic Novels*) Weiner takes us on a historical tour of this format with a bit of background on comics as a whole.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

A quickie guide to the history of comics by the author of *The 101 Best Graphic Novels*, this slim tome covers the usual ground in few new ways. Weiner begins with the rise of the commercial comic strip, follows the medium into comic books and superheroes, then up through the turbulent 1960s underground, and on into Will Eisner's work, the mature superheroics of the '80s, the epochal *Maus* and the new alternative comics. Along the way, Weiner does something unique: he describes the history of the graphic novel in the book trade. Though his facts are a little fuzzy (e.g., the first graphic novel from a mainstream publisher remains far murkier than his claim for Eisner's *A Contract With God*), this is a noteworthy attempt to trace the current boom in the industry and to distance thematic and commercial relatives such as Eisner, or Jules Feiffer's *Tantrum*. But this one diversion aside, the effort reeks of a quick cash-in. Although it purports to be history, it focuses only on what's strong in the marketplace today (e.g., Neil Gaiman, *Bone*, etc.), and ignores lesser known but equally available titles. And so while Weiner can put all those bestsellers in some context, his book won't take readers, buyers or librarians anywhere new. The graphic novel is, as Weiner claims, an exciting new frontier with old roots, and as such it needs a stronger treatment than this.

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About the Author

#### Stephen Weiner

is the director of a library in Massachusetts and renowned pioneering expert in the field of graphic novels for two decades, as well as the author of *101 Best Graphic Novels*.

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