

## BOOKLIST

### Recommended comic trade paperbacks



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The following is a list of the most popular comic trades available. Besides being huge fan favourites they've also been well received by comic book and mainstream literary critics.

### ALL AGES

#### DC

##### Superman

Superman is cool again. After the runaway success of the *Death and life of Superman* series (circa 1992 to 1993), the comic went into decline. Poor sales and lacklustre stories failed to raise fan expectations.

But in the last three years, Superman has been invigorated by a new group of writers and artists. The following comic trades are the best collection of the works of these talented writers and artists.

**Superman: The death of Superman** (Dan Jurgens, et al.)

**Superman: World without Superman** (Dan Jurgens, et al.)

**Superman: The return of Superman** (Dan Jurgens, et al.)

**Superman: Exile** (Ed McGuiness and Jeph Loeb, et al.)

**Superman: Endgame** (Ed McGuiness and Jeph Loeb, et al.)

**Superman: Our worlds at war. Volume 1** (Ed McGuiness and Jeph Loeb, et al.)

**Superman: Our worlds at war. Volume 2** (Ed McGuiness and Jeph Loeb, et al.)

##### Batman

The success of Batman over the last twenty years has never wavered. Every Batman story has always been a hit and a good quality purchase.

**Bruce Wayne: Murderer?** (Greg Rucka, et al.)

**Batman: Knightfall** (Denny O'Neil, et al.)

**Part 1: Broken bat**

**Part 2: Who rules the night?**

**Part 3: Knight's end**

**Batman: No man's land. Volumes 1 to 5** (Greg Rucka, Scott McDaniel, et al.)

**Batman: Officer down** (Greg Rucka, et al.)

#### Other DC Comic Trades

##### The Flash

Wally West is the Flash, the fastest man alive (yes, even faster than Superman). Since the early nineties, the Flash along with Batman has been one of the consistent best sellers for the company. The reason for this - writer Mark Waid and his inexplicable ability to write a really good story. Subsequently Waid has handed over writing responsibilities to Geoff Johns, who, along with writing partner David Goyer, a very successful Hollywood screen writer, have taken the industry by storm.

**Flash: Born to run** (Mark Waid)

**Flash: The return of Barry Allen** (Mark Waid)

**Flash: Terminal velocity** (Mark Waid)

**Flash: Blood will run** (Geoff Johns)

**Flash: Iron heights** (Geoff Johns).

##### Justice League of America (JLA)

Is the first superhero team-up book that brought Superman and Batman, amongst others, into one book. The Justice League is almost as old as DC.

The JLA was one of the biggest surprises for fans and parent company DC. It became, and still is, so popular that it outsells big name books like Superman and Batman. Justice League featured hot British writer Grant Morrison, crafting epic stories that propelled this comic up the sales charts. Even after Morrison left to write X-Men, JLA has still maintained it's best seller status - scribes Mark Waid and Joe Kelley have seen to that.

**JLA Volume 1: New world order** (Grant Morrison)

**JLA Volume 2: American dreams** (Grant Morrison)

**JLA Volume 3: Rock of ages** (Grant Morrison)

**JLA Volume 4: Strength in number** (Grant Morrison)

**JLA Volume 5: Justice for all** (Grant Morrison)

**JLA Volume 6: World War 3** (Grant Morrison)

**JLA Volume 7: Tower of Babel** (Mark Waid)

**JLA Volume 8: Divided we fall** (Mark Waid).

#### Green Arrow Quiver (Kevin Smith)

Writer and independent film director, Kevin Smith's second foray into mainstream comics, proved to be such a hit it put Green Arrow in the number one slot on the sales chart for the first time ever. This comic trade collects the first eight issue story arc, written by Smith.

#### Nightwing (Chuck Dixon and Scott McDaniel)

'Featuring high-octane action, lots of cool villains and a Superman team up' (Wizard 2002:64) Nightwing rocks. Dick Grayson, Robin in his youth, has carved out a world for himself away from his mentor, Batman as Nightwing. In these trades Dick proves that he can stand on his own two feet and finally be out of the shadow of Batman.

**Nightwing Volume 1: A knight in Bludhaven**

**Nightwing Volume 2: Rough justice**

**Nightwing Volume 3: Love and bullets**

**Nightwing Volume 4: A darker shade of justice.**

#### Kingdom come (Mark Waid and Alex Ross)

One of the best award-winning works of the nineties, it is also considered to be one of the best-painted (not drawn) comics in the history of comics. Comic book painter, Alex Ross cemented his reputation as the best in the business and Mark Waid earned his title as Uber-scribe.

#### MARVEL

Marvel comics has an uncanny ability to reinvent their comic books. Fans' reaction are usually mixed but lately Marvel comics can do no wrong. Its two imprints, Marvel Knights and the Ultimate line, have become even more popular than their main line comics. However, the money makers and fan favourite will always be the X-Men.

#### Ultimate Line

Marvel comics' Ultimate line, is a re-envisioning of main line comic book characters. Writers are given creative licence to reinvent and redefine old characters and create new stories for them. The stories are all targeted for a wider audience and are

less edgier than other Marvel titles and imprints.

- Mark Millar

**Ultimate X-Men Volume 1: The tomorrow people**

**The Ultimates Volume 1** (Marvel re-  
visioning of *The Avengers*)

- Brian Michael Bendis

**Ultimate Spider-Man Volume 1**

**Ultimate Spider-Man Volume 2.**

## MARVEL Knights

MK is the imprint that started the Marvel renaissance that pushed Joe Quesada in the editor-in-chief's chair, who in turn moved Marvel into the number one position as best comic book company for 2001.

- Kevin Smith

**Daredevil Visionaries**

Collecting the issues of Kevin Smith's first foray into comics. Featuring fantastic art by Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti, this comic launched the Marvel Knights imprint.

## Main line Marvel

- J Michael Straczynski

**Amazing Spider-Man: Revelations**

'In this collection read the moving September 11 story as well as Aunt May's discovery of Peter Parker's Spider-Man identity' (Wizard 2002:71).

- Joe Madureira

**X-Men Visionaries**

Featuring all the issues Joe Madureira drew, using his hybrid manga style.

- Joe Casey

**X-Men: Poptopia**

- Kurt Busiek and George Perez

**Avengers: Ultron Unlimited**

Earth's mightiest heroes must rally to save the world from the reawakened menace of Ultron. A brilliant superhero story that is a must see...

- Alex Ross and Jim Krueger

**Earth X**

**Universe X Volume 1**

**Universe X Volume 2** (forthcoming)

**Paradise X** (forthcoming)

What Kingdom Come did for DC, Earth X did for Marvel. Which is: create a single history and future using all the characters in the Marvel Universe. Although the scope is of an unheard of scale, this mammoth trade is just part one of an ongoing series that hasn't reached its end yet. Not to worry, on it's own **Earth X** is brilliant.

## YOUNG ADULTS (TEENS)/ ADULTS

### DC

- Garth Ennis

**Hit man: Volume 1**

**Hit man Volume 2: Ten thousand bullets**

**Hit man Volume 3: Local heroes**

**Hit man Volume 4: Ace of killers**

**Hit man olume 5: Who dares wins.**

### Wildstorm

Wildstorm Studios was once part of Image but due to creative differences, Jim Lee took his Wildstorm Studios to DC. Lee sold Wildstorm Studios for an undisclosed sum that that reputedly numbered in the tens of millions. With the sound financial backing provided by DC and a strong creative base consisting of incredible writers like Warren Ellis and Alan Moore and phenomenal artistic talents like John Cassaday and Frank Quitely, Wildstorm Studios continued to thrill their fans with their works that are all creator owned.

- Warren Ellis

Warren Ellis has a reputation as a spin doctor. His uncanny ability to recreate whole worlds has garnered him a place as one of the most influential writers in the comics industry.

These are his best works to date:

**Stormwatch**

**Stormwatch Volume 1: Force of nature**

**Stormwatch Volume 2: Lightning strikes**

**Stormwatch Volume 3: Change or die**

**Stormwatch Volume 4: A finer world**

**Stormwatch Volume 5: Change or die**

From the ashes of Stormwatch comes the *Authority*, the most controversial supergroup in comics history. And featuring one of the first openly gay super-hero couples.

**The Authority: Relentless**

**The Authority: Under new management**

**The Authority: Earth inferno and other stories**

*Planetary* is a clandestine and powerful group that investigates the hidden history of the Wildstorm Universe. Part science fiction, part superhero thriller, *Planetary* is one of those works that has best traits of both.

**Planetary: All over the world and other stories**

**Planetary: The fourth man**

**Planetary / Authority: Ruling the world**

- Jim Lee

Jim Lee's *Divine Right* is a tongue-in-cheek superhero coming of age story that is

as funny as it is sad. Max Faraday, a teenager working his way through college, love and demon creatures after his soul.

**Divine Right Book 1**

- Joe Kelley

This is the work that gave Joe Kelley and artist Ed McGuinness the opportunity to work on Superman. This is the works that started it all for them as they tell the tale of a superman like being, who has to save the world and get over the life and love that he has lost.

**Mr Majestic**

## America's best comics

- Alan Moore

Alan Moore is a super star writer, so it was no surprise that head of Wildstorm Studios Jim Lee gave him his own comic imprint called American Best Comics.

**The league of extraordinary gentleman bumper compendium, edition number 1.**

Moore brings together the best literary creations of our time to save the world and British Empire. Alain Quartermain, Captain Nemo, Dr Jeckyll, Mina Harker and the Invisible Man are brought together in this fantastic story. **The league of extraordinary gentleman** is a comic classic.

**Top ten book one**

Moore indulges his love for cop shows, with this intriguing series that can only be described as NYPD Blue with superheroes.

## Cliffhanger

A comic imprint created by Joe Madureira, Cliffhanger Studios specialises in non-superhero fare.

- Joe Madureira

**Battlechasers: A gathering of heroes**

**Battlechasers** combines epic high fantasy with Madureira's excellent hybrid manga style. The resulting fusion is a powerful story that is visually striking and utterly engrossing.

- Humberto Ramos

**Crimson**

Tells the story of an unwilling fledgling vampire, fighting for his soul and humanity. Combining manga art with dark horror fantasy and tongue in cheek humour (shades of *Buffy the vampire slayer* and *Angel*) **Crimson** was a best seller during its original comic run. These are comic trades of its entire run.

**Crimson: Earth Angel**

**Crimson: Heaven and Earth**

**Crimson: Loyalty and loss**

**Crimson: Redemption.**

- Peter David

*Out there*

'Four disparate teens must defend their town from the demonic forces trying to take over the world' (Wizard 2002:71).

### Homage

**Desperadoes: A moments sunlight (Brian Azzarello)**

A tough as nails western story that bristles with suspense and action.

## MARVEL (Main line)

- Alex Ross

### Marvels

The seminal Ross work. This beautifully-painted trade tells the story of one man's journey of self-discovery as he encounters heroes and villains in the Marvel Universe.

- Grant Morrison and Frank Quitely

**New X-Men Volume 1: E is for extinction**

**New X-Men Volume 2: Imperial**

Collecting the first run of Grant Morrison's writing on X-Men, possibly the most eagerly-awaited relauches of a comic book title in a long time. The X-Men have been taken to new heights thanks to Morrison's excellent writing abilities.

- Brian Azzarello

### Banner

'Banner redefined what the Hulk was and defined what the character would be down the road at Marvel. The book stories stands out as one of the best Hulk stories ever told.' (Quesada, Joe 2002:71).

## Marvel Knights

- Brian Michael Bendis (See below)

**Daredevil: Wake up**

**Daredevil: Underboss**

## Image Comics.

- Brian Michael Bendis

He is the winner of the Will Eisner Award for best comic series 2001. Bendis is one of the most prolific comic book writers in the comic book industry. His sharp, dramatic and insightful writing on *Daredevil*, *Ultimate Spider-Man* and *Alias* (an adults only comic book) has ensured great financial success for himself and Marvel. However, these works have garnered financial and critical success for Bendis.

*Powers* (owned by Bendis) is a comic book series that deals with two cops solving murders in a city populated by super-heroes. Detectives Walker and Pilgrim are assigned to a squad that investigates super-hero deaths. *Powers* combines the hard-boiled world of the cop drama with

superhero fare into an edgy, funny and dramatic hybrid that never fails to impress.

**Powers: Volume 1: Who killed retro-girl?**

**Powers: Volume 2: Roleplay**

**Powers: Volume 3: Little deaths**

- J Michael Straczynski

J Michael Straczynski is best known for television creation, *Babylon 5*. But with *Rising Stars* he has created one of the seminal works of our time. *Rising Stars* follows the lives of 113 individuals all granted super powers, by a passing comet. They are conceived on the night of the comets passing, and receive abilities that not only shape them but the world as we know it.

Straczynski has created an epic visionary saga of superhero's that has steadily gained recognition to be considered a true classic of our age.

**Rising Stars Volume 1: Born to fire**

**Rising Stars Volume 2: Power**

**Rising Stars Volume 3:** (forthcoming).

- Christian Gossett

'You say you want a revolution? Look no further than Christian Gossett's *The Red Star*. When an evil sorcerer orders the murder of millions of his own people and single-handedly destroys a utopian empire, a revolution takes place and the people of the United Republic of the Red Star rise to once and for all destroy the wicked dictator. Look beneath the surface and it's clear that the Red Star offers up commentary of the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Regardless the art of Red Star is truly groundbreaking thanks to computer-generated graphics' (The Wizard Staff 2002:63).

**The Red Star: Volume 1.**

## ADULTS ONLY

### DC

- Alan Moore

**Watchmen** (available in WCPLS)

- Frank Miller

**Batman: The Dark Knight Returns** (available in WCPLS).

### DC Vertigo

DC Vertigo is a mature reader's line of DC Comics. The content for this line is indefinable. Westerns, fantasy, horror, science fiction, the genres that creators and writers have delved into is limitless. The one consistent characteristic in all of the Vertigo lines, is that they are written with a style and excellence that takes one's breath away. The mastery of the art of comic book

writing that these writers have is utterly astounding. Their works are simply sublime, and they will always illicit a reaction.

- Neil Gaiman

The *Sandman* series was the lynchpin of the Vertigo line. Through his beautifully lyrical and powerful writing, Neil Gaiman has created the standard for Vertigo. Without the success of the *Sandman* series there, there is no doubt in my mind that the Vertigo line would've failed. It's that good.

**The Sandman Volume 1: Preludes and nocturnes**

**The Sandman Volume 2: The doll's house**

**The Sandman Volume 3: Dream country**

**The Sandman Volume 4: Season of mist**

**The Sandman Volume 5: A game of you**

**The Sandman Volume 6: Fables and reflections**

**The Sandman Volume 7: Brief lives**

**The Sandman Volume 8: World's end**

**The Sandman Volume 9: The kindly ones**

**The Sandman Volume 10: The wake**

**Death: The high cost of living**

This trade features not the grim reaper we all know, but a happy-go-lucky goth girl, sister of the Sandman, who shuffles people off their mortal coil. Created by Neil Gaiman, this story recounts a day in the life of Death as she becomes human for one day.

- Neil Gaiman and John Ney Reiber

### The Books Of Magic

Before Harry Potter, there was Timothy Hunter, who is given the a tour of magic in the modern world and then given a choice as to whether he would like to be a part of that world or not. Gaiman creates an enchanting awe-inspiring coming of age story that is then continued by writer John Ney Reiber.

**The Books of Magic (Limited Series)**

**The Books of Magic Volume 1: Bindings**

**The Books of Magic Volume 2: Summoning**

**The Books of Magic Volume 3: Reckonings**

**The Books of Magic Volume 4: Transformations**

**The Books of Magic Volume 5: Girl in the box**

**The Books of Magic Volume 6: The burning girl**

**The Books of Magic Volume 7: Death after death.**

- Garth Ennis

With *Sandman* ending its run in the late 90s and Gaiman leaving to work on other projects, parent company DC was afraid that without its flag title the Vertigo line

would lose its readership base. It was with mixed feelings that they agreed to publish *Preacher*, the creation of a British writer with a penchant for graphic violence and westerns. Ennis, one of a talented group

of English writers making their mark in American comics, and his subsequent success was controversial to say the least. *Preacher* tells the story of a man who speaks with the voice of God. Along with a former lover and a Welsh vampire, the trio set off across America and the world, looking for God, who has abandoned heaven. Custers' purpose for his search, to hold God accountable for his behaviour.

*Preacher* has been called blasphemous, horrible, graphically violent, sinful, disgusting and just plain evil but what most agree on, is that Ennis and artist Steve Dillon, have created and told an excellent story. Be warned, these trades are not for the faint of heart and certainly adults only.

**Preacher Volume 1: Gone to Texas**

**Preacher Volume 2: Until the end of the world**

**Preacher Volume 3: Proud Americans**

**Preacher Volume 4: Ancient history**

**Preacher Volume 5: Dixie fried**

**Preacher Volume 6: War in the sun**

**Preacher Volume 7: Salvation**

**Preacher Volume 8: All hell's a' comin'**

**Preacher Volume 9: Alamo**

Before *Preacher*, Ennis cut his teeth on Vertigo's other staple title, *Hellblazer*. With his trademark style, Ennis tells the continuing story of occult investigator and bad boy, John Constantine. Not quite possessing any particular supernatural power, Constantine one of the most feared beings in Britain besides, you know who, tries to lead a relatively normal self-destructive life while still handling all the 'other things' in his life.

Ennis puts Constantine through his paces and it's a brilliant read.

**Hellblazer: Original sins**

**Hellblazer: Damnation's flame**

**Hellblazer: Tainted love**

**Hellblazer: Dangerous habits**

**Hellblazer: Fear and loathing**

- Brian Azzarello

When Ennis left *Hellblazer* for *Preacher*, Azzarello had the hard job of taking over a book at the height of its popularity and didn't disappoint fans at all. Azzarello's broody, hard-hitting style tears the lid off of the darkness that lurks in the souls of men. Coupling a brilliant mystery and an unexpected conclusion to a journey

through America, Azzarello has had one of the most successful runs on Constantine since Ennis started writing the title.

**Hellblazer: Hard times**

**Hellblazer: Good intentions**

**100 Bullets**

Azzarello continues his winning streak, with this excellent crime story that has a vicious exciting twist in the tale. What if you could kill the one person who did you wrong, the one person who to all intents and purposes has irrevocably changed your life for the worst. What if someone gave you 100 bullets and said that they are untraceable and that you could kill this person without reprisal. What would you do?

- Grant Morrison

Before Morrison led the JLA to unexpected heights, he created this series. *The Invisibles* tells the story of a group of down-and-out revolutionaries trying to overthrow the system. It's typical mind-bending vintage Morrison, that leaves you breathless. (Apparently Morrison sued the creators of *The Matrix*, the hit-action movie, because he felt they stole the idea from his work, *The Invisibles*).

**The Invisibles Book 1: Say you want a revolution**

**The Invisibles Book 2: Apocalipstick**

**The Invisibles Book 3: Entropy in the UK**

**The Invisibles Book 4: Bloody hell in America**

**The Invisibles Book 5: Counting to none**

- Warren Ellis

Another dystopian story, told by another brilliant British writer. *Transmetropolitan* has received numerous accolades for its brilliant writing. *Transmetropolitan* tells the story of journalist Spider Jerusalem and his attempts to bring President Gary (the Smiler) to justice. A bit of a feat when you're a lowly journalist and the biggest criminal around is the president.

Funny, hard hitting and insightful, Ellis never gives an inch and never lets it get dull.

**Transmetropolitan Volume 1: Back on the street**

**Transmetropolitan Volume 2: Lust for life**

**Transmetropolitan Volume 3: Year of the bastard**

**Transmetropolitan Volume 4: The new scum**

**Transmetropolitan Volume 5: Lonely city**

**Transmetropolitan Volume 6: Gouge away**

**Image**

- Brian Holguin and Jay Anacleto, artist

**Aria**

This beautifully-painted story tells the story of elven princess Kildare who lives in modern-day New York. Along with friends Pug (a beardless dwarf) and cousin Rose (partially insane and mildly schizophrenic), Lady Kildare must investigate an encroaching darkness threatening elven lands. An enchanting tale that breathes beauty and life into the elven mythos.

- Joshua Dysart

**Violent Messiahs Volume 1: The Book of Job**

Featuring the ultra-violent vigilante Citizen Pain as he hunts down the serial killer known as the Family Man. Not for the faint of heart,

- Dan Jolley

**Obergeist Directors cut**

A truly horrifying story about one man's attempt to redeem himself in the face of horrible sins he committed when working for the Nazis in World War II. Jurgen Steinholtz wakes up in 2147, where the US is being torn apart by a neo-Nazi intent on seceding. It's up to Jurgen to redeem himself, thwart the Nazis and save the world.

These trade paperbacks are available at your nearest comic book store. The two nearest happen to be both in Cape Town.

Outer Limits, 4th Fourth Floor, Strand Towers, Strand Street, Cape Town, telephone (021) 418-5394.

Readers Den, Shop G10, Stadium on Main, Main Road, Claremont, telephone (021) 671-9551, e-mail: <readersden@iafrica.com>, [www.readersden.trading.net](http://www.readersden.trading.net).

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