

# LGBTQ+ Graphic Novels Resource Guide

For Young Adult and Adult Readers

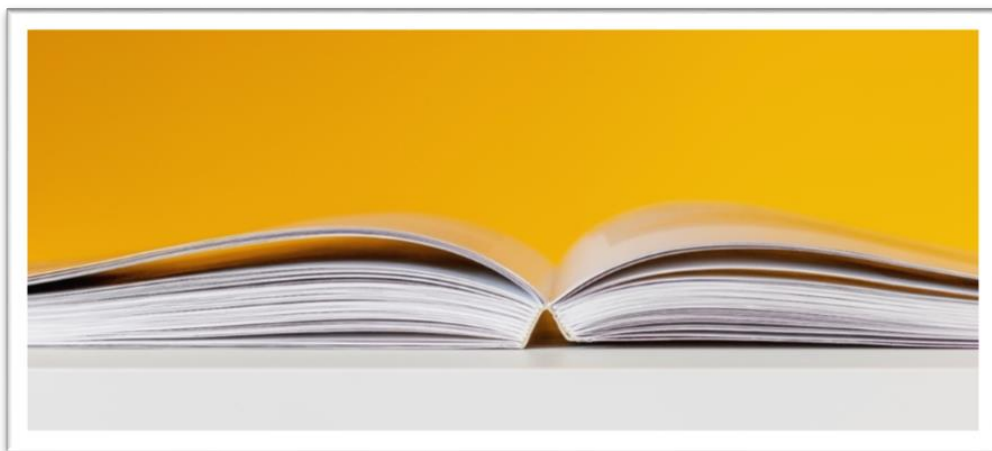
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*Beth Hall / July 20, 2021*

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Graphic novels are a visual and unique way of sharing stories, expressing emotion, and presenting information. LGBTQ+ graphic novels are a wide and diverse form of literature, so there is surely one to fit the reading needs of any interested reader. The purpose for this guide's creation was to compile a list of some LGBTQ+ graphic novels. The world of graphic novels is large so be sure to check out other graphic novels that aren't in this list!

The reading list is divided up by selected meta-genres within the LGBTQ+ genre of graphic novels: nonfiction, fiction, fantasy, and science fiction.



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# Nonfiction

## Memoirs

Memoirs are a way for a person to express ideas and stories using their own words, and reading them allow us to step into their shoes.

- 1) Chabbert, I., & Maurel, C. (2019). *Waves*. Archaia, a division of Boom Entertainment, Inc.

Two women take on the journey of having a child together in this graphic novel following a young woman becoming pregnant after having years of difficulty with her wife. Ingrid Chabbert tells her true story by painting a dreamy visual world.

- 2) Kobabe, M. (2020). *Gender Queer: a memoir*. Oni-Lion Forge Publishing Group.

The author of this memoir, who goes by e/em/ei pronouns, reflects on sexuality, gender, and self-identity. The true story of Maia's life, this graphic novel explores the deeply personal aspects of being nonbinary and asexual, and the complexities of coming out to family and friends. This is not only a relatable story for many but also helpful in understanding being gender queer.

- 3) Nagata, Kabi (2017) *My Lesbian Experience with Loneliness*. Seven Seas Entertainment.

The author Kabi Nagata vulnerably depicts her inner most struggles and anxieties in this memoir and graphic novel. Readers will see a woman struggling with personal life difficulties while suffering from mental health problems. Personal issues and mental health struggles are relatable topics in this memoir.

- 4) Thrash, Maggie (2017) *Honor Girl: A Memoir*. Candlewick Press, U.S.

This graphic novel memoir recounts Maggie Thrash's childhood memories as a teenager during a time of self-discovery. The story follows Maggie one summer away at Camp Bellflower for Girls, an all-girls Catholic summer camp, where she begins to fall in love. In her memoir, Maggie is a normal teenager enthralled with Backstreet Boys and is busy navigating teen friendships and complicated emotions.

## History & Politics

Reading historical accounts of events and stories is important in learning and preserving culture and history. It promotes facts, critical thinking, empathy, understanding, and can foster positive change.

- 1) Barker, M.-J., & Scheele, J. (2016). *Queer: a graphic history*. Icon Books.

The authors Meg-John Barker and Julie Scheel critically examine identity politics and gender roles in-depth with this graphic introduction to queer theory and thought. This educational graphic novel explores topics of sex, sexuality, identity, and gender (Hardwick, 2018).

- 2) Bongiovanni, A., Jimerson, T., & Yarwood, A. (2018). *A quick & easy guide to they/them pronouns*. Limerence Press.

Archie Bongiovanni and Tristan Jimerson team up to guide readers through using gender neutral pronouns, and tips for keeping safe as a nonbinary person in today's world. A helpful guide in modern times.

- 3) Hughes, K. (2020). *Displacement*. First Second.

A true story set during WWII in the 1940's, Kiku Hughes lets us watch as she goes into the past to observe her grandmother's experience while being held against her will in a Japanese internment camp. Kiku tries to figure out what it must have been like for her grandmother to have gone through such a traumatic experience as a young girl. This eye-opening graphic novel concerns family, generational gaps, intergenerational trauma, and shared memory.

- 4) Ottaviani, J., & Purvis, L. (2019). *The imitation game: Alan Turing decoded*. Abrams ComicArts.

This graphic novel depicts the life and work of British mathematician Alan Turing. Not only is this story about computer science and mathematics, but it's also about Turing's personal life. As a gay man around WWII, a time when he was also in the military, Turing was persecuted by the British government for his sexuality and identity. Before his suicide, he made great advancements in computer science and mathematics.

## Fiction

Fictional stories are not real accounts of events, like nonfiction; however because of this their stories are limitless with creative characters and sceneries.

- 1) Bechdel, A. (2020). *The essential dykes to watch out for*. Mariner Books/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Set between 1987 and 2008, a group of gay, queer, and trans characters form complicated and carefully woven relationships between each other. Alison Bechdel illustrates this funny and charming group of individuals for over a span of almost twenty years. Readers will be entertained and enamored by this soap opera of characters.

- 2) Crenshaw, E. T., & Venable, C. (2019). *Kiss number 8*. First Second.

This graphic novel depicts a young high school girl named Mads. Mads enjoys going to "church with her family, and minor baseball games with her dad" (Watson & Fagen, 2020). Soon she finds out something lifechanging about her father, but before she can focus on that she must reconcile with the eight horrible kisses she's experienced. A funny and charming story.

- 3) Franklin, T., Bennett, M., Simone, G., Pryor, S., St-Onge, J., Alfageeh, S., Ganucheau, P., Johnson, B., & Kristantina, A. (2018). *Bingo love*. Image Comics.

A heartfelt story of a same-sex marriage. Hazel Johnson and Mari McCray fall in love when they rekindle their old relationship with each other. They meet at bingo in their mid-60's after both going through a divorce when their "families demand 'straightness' from them" (Bhuvaneswar, 2019). The same love they felt when they were younger pulls them back together again in this heartfelt tale.

4) Oseman, A. (2019). *Heartstopper*. Hodder Children's Books.

This graphic novel is a story about a romance that forms from a close friendship between two boys at a British all-boys grammar school, Truham Grammar School for Boys (Kelly, 2020). Charlie Spring and Nick Nelson knew of each other before meeting, and their friendship sprouted from curiosity and empathy. Charlie has been bullied for most of his schooling and is an anxious person; Nick is on the rugby team and becomes interested in Charlie from afar (Kelly, 2020). Once they meet, their love begins to grow.

5) Shimura, T., & Thorn, R. (2011). *Wandering son*. Fantagraphics.

This story is set in the fifth grade and follows two trans characters, Shuichi Nitori and Yoshino Takatsuki. The two friends share innocent, funny, awkward, and relatable moments together as they navigate everyday life. Takako Shimura and Matt Thorn create a heartwarming coming of age story.

6) Weaver, E. K. (2012). *The less than epic adventures of Tj and Amal*. E.K. Weaver.

An adventure starts as soon as Amal and TJ first meet after waking up from a drunken night to find out that they made a pact to travel from Berkeley, California to Providence, Rhode Island. The two must decide what to do moving forward and what they can't remember from the night before. The two become closer and reveal vulnerable emotions. A funny and entertaining story.

7) Wild, de Kali (2015) *Griever Belt*. <https://grieverbeltcomic.com/>.

A band of queer criminals get together to commit villainous crimes. This group of criminals are just that – it's obvious they're not looking to be on the good side. A "slice of life comic, but this time with a twist" (Kelly, 2020). Best suited for mature audiences as the series contains graphic content like violence, foul language, and sexual references.

## Fantasy & Science Fiction

Fantasy and science fiction stories can create unique and exciting universes for readers to get lost in. Science fiction often features advanced technology and the distant future; fantasy sometimes contains mythology and magic. Both genres feature creative and exciting characters and worlds.

1) Monster Sfé R., Stotts, T., Reed, G., Dukes, R., Smith, N., Black, R., Goudreau, C., Closson, T., MacLean, W. B., Delliquanti, B., Khor, S. Y., Hughes, K., Cairns, J., Ebensteiner, K., Thomas, B., Horrocks, S., Martins, A. J., Edwards, D., Handwerker, K. M., ... Dahm, E. (2015). *Beyond: the queer sci-fi & fantasy comic anthology*. Beyond Press.

A collection of science fiction and fantasy comics and stories that feature queer characters. The stories are also written by authors from the LGBTQ+ community. Each story is as unique and exciting as the next within this special collection.

2) Nguyen, T. L. (2020). *The Magic Fish*. Random House Graphic.

A fairytale weaves through this realistic story about Tien, a young Vietnamese American who is struggling with coming out to his mother. Trung Le Nguyen writes an inspiring and extraordinary tale of what it's like to be struggle with identity and how it connects to family.

- 3) Rivera, G., Villarrubia José, Quinones, J., Doyle, M., Lee, S., Villalobos, R., Wong, W., Bonvillain, T., Peer, B., & Lanham, T. (2017). *America: the life and times of America Chavez*. Marvel Worldwide, Inc.

This graphic novel is about a powerful and determined Young Avenger named America. Despite being a superhero, America Chavez is still a young adult who decides that she wants to go to college. That doesn't stop her from being a superhero though. The story that Gabby Rivers and Joe Quiñones illustrate "possesses an awareness and authenticity of Latinx culture and lesbian identity that was nothing less than revolutionary" (Jiménez, 2018).

- 4) Spurrier, S., & Kelly, R. (2016). *Cry havoc*. Image Comics, Inc.

This deeply personal science fiction story follows Lou, a soldier in Afghanistan with a "unit of shapeshifting soldiers [and] a monstress held captive by the rogue beast" that Lou must kill (Watson & Fagen, 2020). The graphic novel spans over the lifetime of one woman in a supernatural world of war and destruction. The story gets deeply personal, dark, and exciting.

- 5) Stevenson, N., & Manfré Mariella. (2016). *Nimona*. Blossom Books.

A magical story that follows Nimona, a young shapeshifter, and Lord Blackheart, a villain who won't kill, who team together and embark on an exciting adventure. Nimona seeks an apprenticeship from Lord Blackheart, and the two seek out on a quest that is funny, dark, and entertaining.

- 6) Walden, T. (2018). *On a Sunbeam*. Roaring Brook Press.

"Two timelines. Second changes. One love" (Watson & Fagen, 2020). Tillie Walden beautifully illustrates a story about Mia's intention to find her lost love who she met while at boarding school. This graphic novel has a futuristic setting and stunning images.

- 7) Young, K., & Colvin, A. (2017). *Taproot*. Lion Forge Comics.

Blue and Hamal are in a relationship together set in a fantasy world. There are paranormal aspects to this fantasy graphic novel; for example, Hamal can see ghosts and his partner Blue is a ghost, which is also helpful for the two. Readers follow this unique couple as they navigate their special bond.

# Reading List

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## Nonfiction

*Honor Girl: A Memoir* (2015) by Maggie Thrash

*My Lesbian Experience with Loneliness* (2017) by Kabi Nagata and Jocelyne Allen

\*contains mature content

*Waves* (2019) by Ingrid Chabbert, Carole Maurel, and Edward Gauvin

*The Imitation Game* (2014) by Jim Ottaviani and Leland Purvis

*Displacement* (2020) by Kiku Hughes

*Gender Queer: A Memoir* (2019) by Maia Kobabe

*A Quick & Easy Guide to They/Them Pronouns* (2018) by Archie Bongiovanni and

Tristan Jimerson  
*Queer: A Graphic History* (2016) by Meg-John Barker and Julie Scheel

## Fiction

*Heartstopper* (2018) by Alice Oseman and Lluís Delgado

*Kiss Number 8* (2019) by Colleen AF Venable and Ellen T. Crenshaw

*The Essential Dykes to Watch Out For* (2008) by Alison Bechdel

*The Less Than Epic Adventures of TJ and Amal* (2011) by E.K. Weaver

*Bingo Love* (2017) by Tee Franklin, Jenn St-Onge, Joy San, and Cardinal Rae

*Griefer Belt* (2015) by Kali de Wild \*contains mature content

*Wandering Son* (2011) by Takako Shimura and Matt Thorn

## Fantasy & Science Fiction

*On a Sunbeam* (2018) by Tillie Walden

*Beyond: Queer Sci-Fi & Fantasy Comic Anthology* (2015) by Sfé Monster and Taneka Stotts

*Cry Havoc* (2016) by Si Spurrier and Ryan Kelly

*Nimona* (2015) by Noelle Stevenson

*America: The Life and Times of America Chavez* (2017) by Gabby Rivera and Joe

Quiñones  
*Taproot* (2017) by Keezy Young

*The Magic Fish* (2021) by Trung Le Nguyen

## References & Resources

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