

= LGBT themes in American mainstream comics =

LGBT themes in American mainstream comics is a relatively new concept , as lesbian , gay , bisexual , and transgender (LGBT) themes and characters were historically omitted intentionally from the content of comic books , due to either formal censorship or the perception that comics were for children and thus LGBT themes were somehow inappropriate . With any mention of homosexuality in mainstream United States comics forbidden by the Comics Code Authority (CCA) until 1989 , earlier attempts at exploring these issues in the US took the form of subtle hints or subtext regarding a character 's sexual orientation . LGBT themes were tackled earlier in underground comix from the early 1970s onward . Independently published one @-@ off comic books and series , often produced by gay creators and featuring autobiographical storylines , tackled political issues of interest to LGBT readers .

Mainstream comics ? the genre of superhero comics published in the United States since the late 1930s ? have historically excluded gay characters , and the superhero genre and its two largest publishing houses , Marvel Comics and DC Comics , have been criticised for their lack of inclusivity . Transgender characters have likewise been under @-@ represented , although the common storyline of a superhero having their sex changed by magical or technological means has been regarded as an oblique reference to transgender and transsexual issues . Queer theory analyses have noted that LGBT characters in mainstream comic books are often shown as assimilated into heterosexual society , whereas in alternative comics the diversity and uniqueness of LGBT culture is at the forefront . Mainstream comics have also been labelled as " heteronormative " , in comparison to " integrationist " alternative comics . Since the 1990s LGBT themes have become more common in mainstream US comics , including in a number of titles in which a gay character is the star .

= = Censorship , criticism and inclusivity = =

For much of the 20th century , creators were strongly discouraged from depicting gay relationships in comic books , which were regarded as a medium for children . Until 1989 the Comics Code Authority (CCA) , which imposed de facto censorship on comics sold through newsstands in the United States , forbade any suggestion of homosexuality , and LGBT characters were excluded from comics bearing the CCA seal . The CCA itself came into being in response to Fredric Wertham 's *Seduction of the Innocent* , in which comic book creators were accused of attempting to negatively influence children with images of violence and sexuality , including subliminal homosexuality . Wertham claimed that Wonder Woman 's strength and independence made her a lesbian , and stated that " The Batman type of story may stimulate children to homosexual fantasies . " Storytellers subsequently had to drop subtle hints while not stating directly a character 's orientation . Overt gay and lesbian themes were first found later in underground and alternative titles which did not carry the CCA 's seal of approval .

In recent years the number of LGBT characters in mainstream superhero comics has increased greatly . At first gay characters appeared in supporting roles , but their roles have become increasingly prominent . The trend has prompted both praise from the LGBT community and organizations like the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) , and criticism from conservative groups . Critics make regular accusations that comics are attempting to subvert readers into a " gay lifestyle " , trying to " lure young American boys into the kinky web of homosexuality and AIDS " .

According to writer Devin Grayson , the amount of creative freedom allowed by editors in the portrayal of LGBT characters depends upon how popular and established a character already is . Long @-@ standing characters that would require a retcon to change their sexuality are less likely to be shown as LGBT than newer characters . When such changes to a character 's continuity are made , fans are often disgruntled , particularly when sexuality is involved , and Alan Moore suggests that creating a new character is preferable .

Scott Lobdell claims that it is more often the fans , rather than editors , that have stronger negative reaction to LGBT issues . Moore notes however , that " it 's probably quite fashionable ... to have the

odd gay character , " and that the inclusion of LGBT people continues to improve in mainstream comics , but that the characters continue to be limited by stereotypes and do not represent a varied cross @-@ section of LGBT people . Greg Rucka says that some scenes of same @-@ sex interactions are rejected by editors due to unease with sexual content in general rather than the LGBT content .

On the other hand , inclusion of LGBT issues attract media attention , in which the hype makes some fans and creators uncomfortable . Podcaster Faust points out for example , that gay marriage in a comic issue is treated almost as an ? event ? , when that series had already been significant with openly gay characters . Lobdell , while wondering about the attention media gives gay characters , hopes that in the near future , they will not ? make the news at all , because they are as common as capes and cowls . ?

= = DC = =

= = = Pre @-@ 1990s = = =

The Encyclopedia of Gay Histories and Cultures (2000) notes that gay subtext can be found in DC Comics publications as early as the Golden Age of Comic Books , with readers inferring homosexuality between superheroes and their same @-@ sex sidekicks and on the women @-@ only Paradise Island . Batman 's relationship with Robin has famously come under scrutiny , in spite of the majority of creators associated with the character denying that the character is gay . Psychologist Fredric Wertham , who in Seduction of the Innocent asserted that " Batman stories are psychologically homosexual , " claimed to find a " subtle atmosphere of homoeroticism which pervades the adventures of the mature ' Batman ' and his young friend ' Robin . ' " It has also been claimed that Batman is interesting to gay audiences because " he was one of the first fictional characters to be attacked on the grounds of his presumed homosexuality , " and " the 1960s TV series remains a touchstone of camp . " Frank Miller has described the Joker as a " homophobic nightmare , " and views the character as sublimating his sexual urges into crime fighting . Burt Ward has also remarked upon this interpretation in his autobiography , noting that the relationship between the two could be interpreted as a sexual one . When creating the character of Jericho in Teen Titans , Marv Wolfman and George Perez considered making him gay , which would have marked one of the first appearances of a gay character in a major super hero book . However , they ultimately passed on the idea after concluding that it would be too stereotypical to make the sensitive , artistic , effeminate featured Jericho a homosexual .

The first obviously gay character was Extraño , an effeminate Hispanic man whose name means " Strange " in Spanish , who was created by Steve Englehart and Joe Staton and appeared in Millennium and New Guardians in 1987 . New Guardians was not successful , but during its short run it also featured a character dying of AIDS . An official aftermath to Millennium , The Spectre (vol . 2) # 11 , depicted a " mostly male and mostly gay " AIDS rally . Several characters , including the Enchantress (describing them as " filthy disgusting men ") and a police helicopter pilot named Ed (screaming about " fags ") are influenced into attempting to crush the rally by a seven @-@ headed spirit . Thanks to the actions of the Spectre , Doctor Fate , Deadman , Madame Xanadu , and Ben Turner , the men are saved . Previous to this , in the hugely influential Watchmen (1986) , one of the central characters , Ozymandias , is referred to as " possibly homosexual " by Rorschach , who critics have interpreted as asexual . The series also strongly implied that minor characters the Hooded Justice and Captain Metropolis were gay , and that Silhouette was kicked off the Minutemen superhero team when she was publicly outed as a lesbian . In Watchmen and Philosophy , Mark White and William Irwin write that the gay relationships in Watchmen remain ambiguous as " lots of heteros are icked out by homos " , and also that Watchmen is particularly surprising and challenges preconceptions of homosexuality , as " if it 's true that Hooded Justice and Captain Metropolis are gay , they sure as heck don 't act or look like they are gay " . Alan Moore was described by AfterElton.com writer Lyle Masaki as " very gay friendly " , due to his inclusion of

complex LGBT characters and realistic treatment of LGBT issues in Watchmen and V for Vendetta .

== 1990s ==

The early 1990s saw a few more LGBT minor characters portrayed in DC titles . Transsexual themes were explored in a 1992 storyline in Legion of Super @-@ Heroes , in which Element Lad finds out that Shvaughn Erin , the woman he is in love with , is actually a man who has taken a sex @-@ change drug to be with him ; Element Lad subsequently reveals that he prefers Shvaughn as a male . A lesbian relationship was also implied between the Legion of Super @-@ Heroes ' Shrinking Violet and Lightning Lass , but all these non @-@ heterosexual characters were retconned during the Zero Hour " reboot " to be straight . Camelot 3000 also explored transsexual themes by having Sir Tristan reincarnated into the body of a woman , to his initial dismay . Notable storylines featuring LGBT themes include the 1991 ? s The Flash (vol . 2) # 53 , which had received the first GLAAD Award for Best Comic Book in 1992 . Here , the reformed villain Pied Piper was revealed as gay . Another is the coming out of Kyle Rayner 's assistant and an arc about his " gay bashing " in Green Lantern , both written by Judd Winick . These stories earned the writer title two GLAAD awards and a Gaylactic Spectrum Awards (and a further nomination) . Green Lantern also has a lesbian couple , Lee and Li , as supporting characters .

The 1990s title Doom Patrol introduced a number of LGBT characters and explored transsexual themes . Doom Patrol 's base of operations in later stories is the sentient transvestite street Danny the Street . Danny is named after British female impersonator Danny La Rue , and " dresses in drag " by hosting typically masculine shops (such as gun shops) , but decorating them in bright frilly patterns and pastel curtains . " His inclusion is described by Timothy Callahan as part of the " increasingly absurd " tone of the book from the twentieth issue . One member of the team is the transsexual , bisexual Coagula , who can coagulate liquids and dissolve solids , created by transsexual fantasy writer Rachel Pollack . Coagula gains her powers while working as a prostitute : One of her customers is Rebis , a radioactive hermaphrodite and Coagula gains her powers after having sex with them .

DC Comics has a number of imprints , including Wildstorm and Vertigo . Wildstorm was originally a studio producing work for Image Comics , which is noted to have a greater proportion of LGBT characters . Vertigo is an imprint that produces comics for more mature audiences , allowing more sexual themes . George Haggerty notes in Gay histories and cultures : an encyclopedia that " substantive mainstream presentation of gay themes in the future seems most likely in DC 's adult @-@ orientated Vertigo titles . " Vertigo titles that have tackled LGBT themes include the Sandman , Shade , The Changing Man and Enigma . The Sandman : A Game of You (1991) had a transsexual character , and its creator Neil Gaiman said that he included transgender characters in his works in response to the lack of realistic representation of such people in comics . The title character of Shade , the Changing Man was an alien who could change his surface form : This resulted in people sometimes perceiving him as female , and although he remained essentially male , it was implied that he had relationships with both genders . Enigma (1992) deconstructed the superhero genre , with the title characters homosexuality playing a large part . John Constantine , the protagonist of Hellblazer was first hinted as bisexual in 1992 , and confirmed in 2002 . In the television series however , Constantine was portrayed straight due to NBC guidelines , which brought on criticism from both critics and fans .

An example of a gay character in a starring role is the violent vigilante superhero Midnighter , who appears in comic books first published by Wildstorm . The Batman @-@ like Midnighter was revealed to be in a relationship with the Superman @-@ like Apollo during their time as members of the superhero team The Authority . The portrayal of the relationship was initially subtle , with writer Warren Ellis not informing the artist of his intentions . However , the DC editorial board still censored a kiss between the two characters in 2000 . Described as the " first openly gay couple in comics , " Midnighter and Apollo married in a later issue and have an adopted daughter . Midnighter starred in his own solo title from 2006 ; the Midnighter comic was criticised by François Peneaud for ignoring the protagonist 's relationship with his husband , and also for the continual use of homophobic

insults by villains . Criticism has also been leveled at a storyline in which Apollo is raped , with critics saying that straight superheroes are never subjected to such treatment . Alan Moore pointed to the characters as an example of comics ' " strange attitude " towards LGBT themes , describing them as " vicious muscle queens . " Starting 2015 , Midnighter once again stars in his own solo series , published from DC Comics , making him the first gay male superhero to have his own series in a mainstream publisher .

= = = 2000s = = =

Manhunter , created by Mark Andreyko in 2004 , caused reaction in the fan community when it was revealed that the boyfriend of the title character 's gay co @-@ counsel was long @-@ time Infinity , Inc. member Obsidian . Obsidian had a number of failed heterosexual romances in Infinity , Inc. and while a member of the Justice League , and later struggled to come to terms with his sexuality , but it wasn 't until his appearances Manhunter that the character was revealed to be gay and to have accepted his homosexuality . Andreyko said that making the character openly gay could be seen as a retcon , but that this seemed a logical step in character 's growth .

Homosexual interpretations of Batman have continued into the 21st century . One notable example occurred in 2000 , when DC Comics refused permission for the reprinting of four panels (from Batman # 79 , 92 , 105 , and 139) to illustrate Christopher York 's paper All in the Family : Homophobia and Batman Comics in the 1950s . In summer 2005 , painter Mark Chamberlain displayed a number of watercolours depicting both Batman and Robin in suggestive and sexually explicit poses . DC threatened both the artist and the Kathleen Cullen Fine Arts gallery with legal action if they did not cease selling the works and demanded the surrender of all remaining art , as well as any profits derived from them .

In 2006 DC drew widespread media attention by announcing a new , lesbian incarnation of the well @-@ known character Batwoman even while openly lesbian characters such as Gotham City police officer Renee Montoya already existed in DC Comics . It was revealed at the 2009 New York Comic Con that she would be DC Comics ' highest profile gay superhero , appearing in a new Justice League comic book written by James Robinson and taking over as the lead character in Detective Comics with issue # 854 . Greg Rucka said that DC 's editors had no problem with his writing Montoya or Batwoman as lesbian , but the media controversy over Batwoman 's sexuality " nullified any positive effect Batwoman might have had on the industry " and forced the character into minor roles during major crossover storylines . In 2011 Batwoman gained her own title as part of The New 52 DC comics relaunch . This makes her the first LGBT character to headline a monthly series in the DC Universe .

In 2006 , Gail Simone brought back the Secret Six as a team of villains with new members , in which many are LGBT , including lesbian Scandal Savage , her lover Knockout , pansexual Rag Doll , bisexual Jeannette , and Catman , who is also bisexual . Secret Six relaunched in December 2014 , with Gail Simone returning as the writer . Scandal Savage , Rag Doll , and Jeannette return as recurring characters . The team consists of new members save Catman , and among them , Porcelain is genderfluid .

= = = 2010s = = =

In Earth 2 , Green Lantern Alan Scott was revealed as gay . In issue 3 , Scott is revealed to have a boyfriend named Sam , to whom he intends to propose while on vacation in China . Before he can do so , however , the train on which the couple is travelling is suddenly wrecked . A mysterious green flame protects Scott and heals him ; a disembodied voice informs him that the crash was caused by a force that threatens the whole world , and that Sam did not survive . The grief @-@ stricken Scott is then told that he will be given the power to avenge his love and protect the world .

Alongside Batwoman , DC also released a series starring Voodoo , a bisexual African American woman , as part of The New 52 relaunch . The same relaunch also introduced Bunker , an openly @-@ gay Latino superhero , as part of the core cast of the new Teen Titans series . Demon Knights

brought back Shining Knight , who previously appeared in Grant Morrison ' s Seven Soldiers of Victory as a girl crossdressing as a male knight . In the new series however , The Shining Knight says that he is ? not just a man or a woman [, but] both . ? This makes him the possible first intersex hero .

The number of minor DC characters being identified as LGBT continues to increase , including bisexual superheroes Sarah Rainmaker and Icemaider , as well as major ones such as Catwoman . In Catwoman # 39 , she was confirmed bisexual , which critics claim iconic , as she is one of the most famous characters in the DC Universe . Furthermore , DC Comics officially stated that Harley Quinn and Poison Ivy , whose relationship many fans have speculated as romantic or sexual , are ? girlfriends without the jealousy of monogamy . ?

= = Marvel = =

= = = 1990s = = =

Marvel Comics ' incorporation of LGBT themes has been unfavorably compared with that of DC ; its use of gay characters has been described as " less prolific but more deliberate " . Marvel reportedly had a " No Gays in the Marvel Universe " policy during Jim Shooter ' s 1980s tenure , and Marvel ' s policy from the 1990s had stated that all series emphasizing solo gay characters must carry an " Adults Only " label , in response to conservative protests . Yet in 2006 publisher Joe Quesada claimed that this policy is no longer in force . Although same @-@ sex couples are depicted occasionally kissing , intimate or sexual scenes have not been shown , even in Marvel ' s " Adult only " imprint . The use of mutants and the discrimination they face in the X @-@ Men comics has been seen as a metaphor for the real @-@ world discrimination directed at minority groups including LGBT people .

Alpha Flight ' s Northstar , a member of the original Alpha Flight superhero team , was the first major gay character created by Marvel Comics . Creator John Byrne said that Northstar was planned to be gay from his inception in 1979 , but although hints about Northstar ' s sexual identity appeared during 1983 in issues 7 and 8 of Alpha Flight , his apparent lack of interest in women was attributed to his obsessive drive to win as a ski champion . The character was finally revealed to be gay in 1992 ' s Alpha Flight issue 106 , the only comic book issue to have been inducted into the Gaylactic Hall of Fame . Storylines involving Northstar have included an illness seen by some readers as a metaphor for AIDS , which was cured when it revealed that the character is actually a part " fairy " , a race of non @-@ human beings . Northstar also adopts an abandoned baby , which soon dies of AIDS . Criticism has been levelled at the fact that in 30 years Northstar has never been shown kissing another man , although many interactions with other gay characters are shown , as in the Marvel Swimsuit Special , in which he is shown socializing with the gay Pantheon member Hector .

After the cancellation of Alpha Flight Northstar appeared in his own miniseries , which mostly ignored his sexuality , and eventually became a member of the X @-@ Men . During his time in this team he became a mentor to gay teenage mutant Anole , who later became a Young X @-@ Men member along with another gay teen , Graymalkin . Notable also in Northstar ' s tenure in the X @-@ Men was his death in three separate continuities in the same month . Other LGBT members of Marvel ' s mutant teams were X @-@ Statix ' s Phat , Vivisector , and Bloke (until their deaths) and the villain Mystique , the latter having been in a relationship with the character Destiny , although this was not explicitly revealed until years after the relationship had ended with Destiny ' s murder .

= = = 2000s = = =

Freedom Ring was a character depicted as gay from his debut by his creator Robert Kirkman . Joe Quesada touted him as Marvel Comics ' leading gay hero , with stories dedicated to his adventures in Marvel Team @-@ Up . Despite this , the character was killed one month later . His death and

general treatment was met with some negative reactions , including accusations of homophobia , particularly with respect to the phallic imagery of the death , with the character being killed by being impaled with spikes . Kirkman commented on the controversy , stating " Freedom Ring was always planned as an inexperienced hero who would get beaten up constantly and probably die . I wanted to comment on the fact that most superheroes get their powers and are okay at it ... and that 's not how life works . During working on the book , I was also noticing that most gay characters ... are all about being gay . Straight characters are well @-@ rounded characters who like chicks . So I wanted to do a well @-@ rounded character who just happened to like dudes . Then I decided to combine the two ideas . In hindsight , yeah , killing a gay character is no good when there are so few of them ... but I really had only the best of intentions in mind . " Kirkman later stated , " Frankly , with the SMALL amount of gay characters in comics in general , and how unfortunate the portrayals have been thus far , whether intentional or not ? I completely understand the backlash on the death of Freedom Ring , regardless of my intentions . If I had it to do all over again ... I wouldn 't kill him . I regret it more and more as time goes on . I got rid of what ? 20 % of the gay characters at Marvel by killing off this ONE character . I just never took that stuff into consideration while I was writing . "

In 2002 , Marvel revived Rawhide Kid in their Marvel MAX imprint , introducing the first openly gay comic book character to star in his own magazine . The first edition of the Rawhide Kid 's gay saga was called Slap Leather . According to a CNN.com article , " The new series pairs the original artist , John Severin , now 86 , with Ron Zimmerman , a television writer . Making the Rawhide Kid gay was Zimmerman 's idea . The character 's sexuality is conveyed indirectly , through euphemisms and puns , and the comic 's style is campy . Conservative groups protested the gay take on the character , which they claimed would corrupt children , and the covers carried an " Adults only " label .

The Young Avengers series , which debuted in 2005 , featured two gay teenager major characters , Hulkling and Wiccan , from its inception . The characters ' sexuality was criticised by some readers and defended by the writers in an extended series of letters on the title 's letters page . The Young Avengers earned Marvel its first (and to date only) GLAAD Award Best Comic Book Award in 2005 . Hulkling was originally planned to be a female character : According to Tom Brevoort , " Originally , Allan pitched Hulkling as a female character using her shape @-@ changing abilities to pose as a man . I suspect this was as close as Allan felt he could get to depicting an openly gay relationship in a Marvel comic . But as we got underway ... he started to have second thoughts and approached me about maintaining Hulkling and Wiccan as two involved male characters . "

In the latest incarnation of X @-@ Factor , written by Peter David , depowered mutant Rictor and his longtime friend Shatterstar (with whom he 'd had an ambiguous relationship) were shown in an on @-@ panel kiss . After the issue was published , Peter David confirmed Rictor and Shatterstar 's bisexuality in his blog and expressed his desire to develop the relationship between them further . Shortly after , one of Shatterstar 's creators , Rob Liefeld , expressed his disapproval of Peter David 's decision . Despite his complaints , however , both Peter David and Marvel editor @-@ in @-@ chief Joe Quesada have defended the development , and the story will most likely go on as planned .

== = 2010s == =

2012 's Astonishing X @-@ Men # 51 held Northstar and his long @-@ term partner , Kyle Jinadu 's wedding . Though it is not the first same @-@ sex marriage to be featured in superhero comics , as Apollo and Midnighter had married in The Authority , this is the first in mainstream comics .

Due to flirtations with characters of various genders and sexuality , fans have speculated Deadpool as pan- or omnisexual . Writers Gerry Duggan and Gail Simone , as well as Terry Miller , the director of the Deadpool film , accepts the fan theory . However , Fabian Nicieza , one of the creators of the character , stated on Twitter that such speculation on his sexuality is invalid because his ? brain cells are in CONSTANT FLUX . He can be gay one minute , hetero the next , etc . ? The comment upset many fans , for it suggests that Deadpool 's sexuality is linked to his mental disorder .

Hercules , in previous works such as Hercules : Fall of an Avenger and X @-@ Treme X @-@ Men

have been portrayed as bisexual . However , Marvel 's editor @-@ in @-@ chief Axel Alonso stated that Hercules in the new series will be heterosexual , which disappointed fans and critics for ? straightwashing ? an LGBT character .

Other recent major characters that have confirmed to be LGBT include Iceman , who came out as gay , and Loki , who is now genderfluid and bisexual .

= = Other publishers : Malibu , Image , Dark Horse = =

The 1990s saw the creation of a number of independent publishing houses with output that competed with the giants of mainstream comics publishing , Marvel and DC . The companies included Malibu Comics , Image Comics and later , Dark Horse Comics . These companies gave greater artistic freedom to their writers and artists and chose not to ascribe to the Comics Code , allowing exploration of more mature themes . As a result , comics from these companies included a greater relative number of LGBT characters and storylines than their more traditional competitors . LGBT superhero characters include Spectral and Turbo Charge (from Malibu comics) , and Promethea and Gen13 's Sarah Rainmaker (both created by Wildstorm for Image Comics before being taken over by DC) . Image comic 's A Distant Soil , written by Colleen Doran , depicts an alien culture with exotic gender and sexual mores and gay romances that gained the series a Gaylactic Spectrum Award nomination .

Dark Horse 's Buffy the Vampire Slayer @-@ related comics feature the lesbian characters of Willow , Tara and Kennedy and the closeted character Andrew from the television series . The Buffy Season Eight comics attracted media attention when the title character has a one night stand with another girl who had fallen in love with her . The encounter was repeated , but both the character and the creators denied that this made Buffy gay , with Joss Whedon saying : " We 're not going to make her gay , nor are we going to take the next 50 issues explaining that she 's not . She 's young and experimenting , and did I mention open @-@ minded ? " .

Archie featured their first gay character , Kevin Keller , in 2010 . The American Family Association spoke out against the character and issues containing same @-@ sex romance , but Veronica # 202 had been so popular it sold out , resulting in his own solo series .

= = Fandom and Awards = =

As the visibility of LGBT comic book creators and characters has increased , comic book fandom has taken notice . Panels discussing LGBT topics occur regularly at comic book and LGBT conventions such as Comicon and Gaylaxicon , and conventions also feature stands dedicated to LGBT comics . Ted Abenheim , event chair of Prism Comics said in 2008 , " We 're in our sixth year of exhibiting at Comic @-@ Con , presenting a larger booth and more panels and events than ever before . " A number of websites dedicated to LGBT comic book fandom and featuring content from staff writers exist , such as Prismcomics.org , Pinkkryptonite.com and Gayleague.com.

= = = GLAAD awards = = =

The first GLAAD Award for " outstanding comic book " was awarded in 1992 (to DC 's The Flash) . Since then , a number of GLAAD awards have been awarded to mainstream titles , including for DC 's Green Lantern and The Authority titles , and Marvel 's Young Avengers . According to Paul Lopez , LGBT fans and creators have " debated whether the awards for mainstream comics were more about media hype than the actual content of the comic 's stories . "

= = = Gaylactic Spectrum Awards = = =

The Gaylactic Spectrum Awards are given to works of science fiction , fantasy or horror published in the United States , and their " other works " category allows nomination of comic book series or individual issues . Comic book winners include issues of DC 's Green Lantern , The Authority and

Gotham Central , and nominations have been given to titles from Marvel (X @-@ Force , X @-@ Statix) , Dark Horse (Buffy Season Eight) and Image Comics (A Distant Soil) .

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