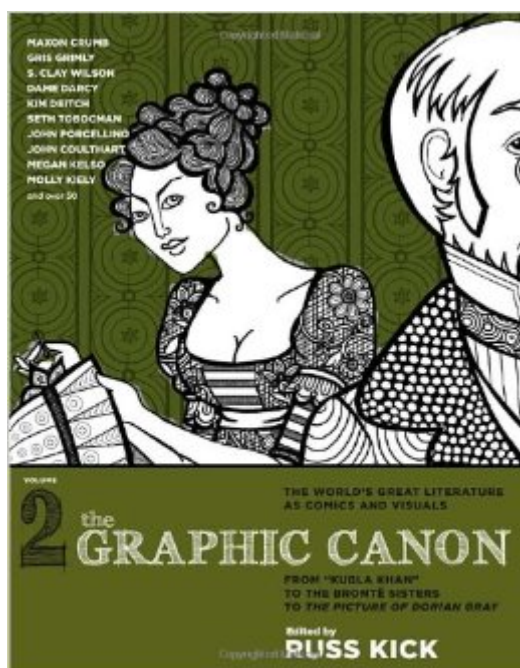


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# The Graphic Canon, Vol. 2: From "Kubla Khan" To The Bronte Sisters To The Picture Of Dorian Gray (The Graphic Canon Series)



## Synopsis

The Graphic Canon, Volume 2 gives us a visual cornucopia based on the wealth of literature from the 1800s. Several artists including Maxon Crumb and Gris Grimly present their versions of Edgar Allan Poe's visions. The great American novel *Huckleberry Finn* is adapted uncensored for the first time, as Twain wrote it. The bad boys of Romanticism—Shelley, Keats, and Byron—are visualized here, and so are the Brontë sisters. We see both of Coleridge's most famous poems: "Kubla Khan" and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (the latter by British comics legend Hunt Emerson). Philosophy and science are ably represented by ink versions of Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. *Frankenstein*, *Moby-Dick*, *Les Misérables*, *Great Expectations*, *Middlemarch*, *Anna Karenina*, *Crime and Punishment* (a hallucinatory take on the pivotal murder scene), Thoreau's *Walden* (in spare line art by John Porcellino of King-Cat Comics fame), "The Drunken Boat" by Rimbaud, *Leaves of Grass* by Whitman, and two of Emily Dickinson's greatest poems are all present and accounted for. John Coulthart has created ten magnificent full-page collages that tell the story of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde. And *Pride and Prejudice* has never looked this splendid! This volume is a special treat for Lewis Carroll fans. Dame Darcy puts her unmistakable stamp on "what else?" the Alice books in a new 16-page tour-de-force, while a dozen other artists present their versions of the most famous characters and moments from *Wonderland*. There's also a gorgeous silhouetted telling of "Jabberwocky" and Mahendra Singh's surrealistic take on "The Hunting of the Snark." Curveballs in this volume include fairy tales illustrated by the untameable S. Clay Wilson, a fiery speech from freed slave Frederick Douglass (rendered in stark black and white by Seth Tobocman), a letter on reincarnation from Flaubert, the Victorian erotic classic *Venus in Furs*, the drug classic *The Hasheesh Eater*, and silk-screened illustrations for the ghastly children's classic *Der Struwwelpeter*. Among many other canonical works.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

LOVE this book. Bought this in an attempt to introduce my preteen brother to Keats and Tolstoy, but I might end up keeping this for myself. The illustrations are AMAZING. Some of my current favorites are the ones for Ambrose Bierce's *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* (watercolors, I think. Really beautiful and colorful) and Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (surreal, geometric). Some of the artistic interpretations of the works are really interesting (i.e. William Wordsworth's *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*) as well. The illustrations are varied enough that I think everyone would be able to find something they really like. If you are in any way an *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* Fan, there is an entire section devoted to Alice Art! Overall, highly recommended. I look forward to the release of volume 3!

Here are some things I noticed when I got the books (I bought volumes 1 and 2) that I misunderstood or was misled about when I ordered: The book is not full color. There are a few sections with full color but there are \*way more\* sections of black and white and spot color (spot color is one or two additional colors added to a black and white page-- not full color). I had the impression the book was all color. Not even close. The stories are not complete. Instead of a story, you get a chapter, part, paragraph, or sometimes even just a sentence is illustrated out of a whole work. That's okay, I guess. But again, I had the impression from reading the description that a story or tale was being told, not a fraction of a story. I should have known better, I suppose, but it seems like they could have been honest in the description. Instead of saying "*Midsummer Night's Dream*" they could have said "the first page of Act Two of *Midsummer Night's Dream*" or even just "a highlight from" or something like that. I am enjoying the wide selection from history and the huge variety of styles on display. I recommend these books but I wish they would be honest in the description. I hope this review gives you realistic expectations so you can enjoy these books 100% when you receive them.

...but still worth buying. The artwork in this volume isn't as good as the art in the first volume, but the editorial notes and the choice of material make reading this book a compelling and enriching experience.

I wondered how they would possibly get all of these stories into one book, but they are indeed there. A variety of styles of illustration keeps it from getting redundant. It is fun to pick it up, read a quick story and then move onto something else. Quite an enjoyable read.

In my review of the first volume of this series, I said the story of it was a story of soaring success and dismal failure. This volume is much the same, though there are fewer failures and the valleys are not so low as before. I had expected this volume would not be quite as entertaining to me personally as the previous one (I've always been personally fascinated more with ancient literature than 19th Century lit) but I was pleasantly surprised. Most of the art is, again, stunning, such as the gorgeous illustrations of Kubla Khan, Frankenstein, Jabberwocky and The Picture of Dorian Gray, just to name a few. Almost everything in the Alice in Wonderland gallery is breathtaking. Other works are not breathtaking, but interesting and well-suited to the literary piece they represent; the treatment of Walden is a perfect, charming example of this. But some works are just plain ugly. Art that is ugly is often good art, but in these cases the grotesque nature of the illustrations seems to do nothing except...well, sit there and be grotesque. In at least one other case, the illustration work is perfect, but then silly political extremism ruins the entire impact. I literally laughed out loud when I reached the panels where Seth Tobocman, in illustrating the words of Frederick Douglass, portrays the well-fed, unthinkingly violent, ineffective and intellectually bankrupt vandals of the anarchist black bloc as the heirs of Douglass' abolitionism. The problems with story choice that occurred in the first volume are not nearly as common here, though a full treatment of any number of 19th Century works (such as a second Dickens work, Madame Bovary, even Uncle Tom's Cabin) could have replaced Venus in Furs or either of the opium fantasy works included here. It's also strange to see there's no Longfellow. This may be due to the disdain for his work among academics who now see him as a popular poet rather than a great one, but given his popularity and influence in his time, leaving him out is somewhat glaring. On the other hand, one very good feature of this volume is that a number of short works (Poe short stories, Grimm fairy tales) are not only illustrated, but included in their entirety. Despite the flaws, this volume is well worth your time. Those soaring successes come just as often, and if you find yourself in a valley, a mountaintop of great literature paired with

wonderful art is just a few pages away.

While my family has enjoyed these works, this book is not the volume that we would want to treasure. Some truly great and memorable illustrations are included in this book, but the book itself seems overwhelmed by opium addicts and Alice in Wonderland. The excerpted portions of the books are strange - why those chapters, in particular? I think neither "Pride and Prejudice," "Jane Eyre," nor "Anna Karenina" (three of my annual re-reads) were well-represented by the lackluster chapters being portrayed. However, as far as Huck Finn, Poe, and some of the other poets go, my kids LOVED the visual representations. Readers must suffer through editorial comments before each selection that reinforce juvenile leftist fundamentalism. Russ Kick should know better -- this is not a book about him. The commentary is unoriginal and dull. However, it's a good book to borrow from the library for a week or two.

Another excellent book from Russ Kick!! I believe this book more extraordinary than the last. I love the combination of literature and art and how he is rolling along the great works of our past!! I enjoyed this book just as much as the first. I can't wait for the next one to come out. My whole family has enjoyed these works.

Unusual approach to abbreviating the classics through the use of art. It is well done and quite creative.

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