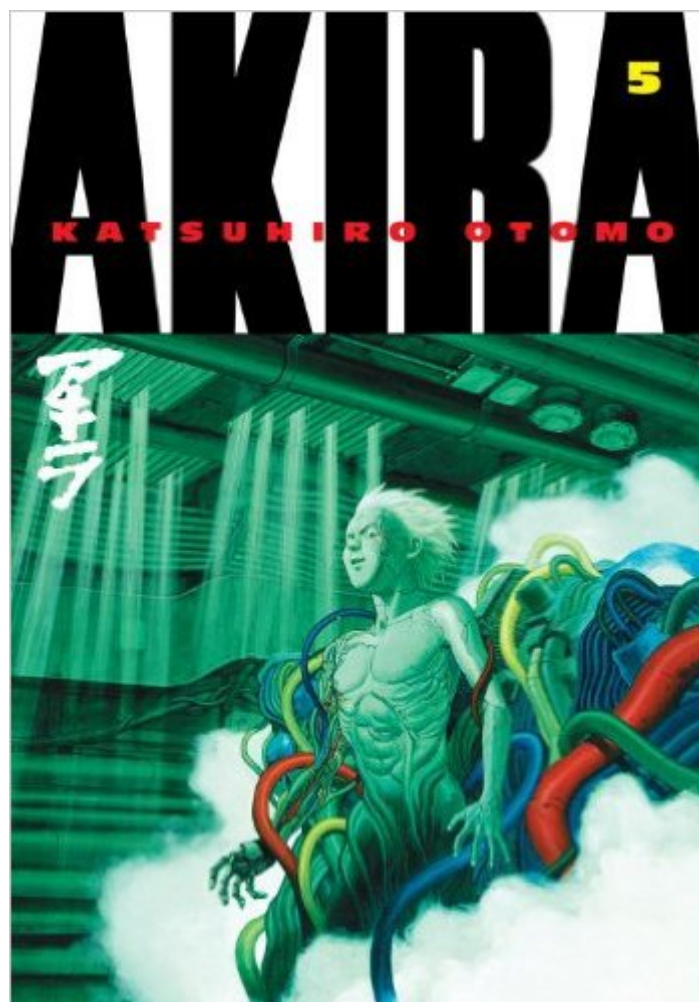


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Akira, Vol. 5



Synopsis

IN THE 21ST CENTURY, the once glittering Neo-Tokyo lies in ruin, leveled in minutes by the infinite power of the child psychic Akira. From the flooded wasteland of rubble and anarchy rises the Great Tokyo Empire, populated by a ragtag army of zealots and crazies who worship and fear Akira and his mad prime minister, Tetsuo, and angry teen with immense powers of his own “ and equally immense, twisted ambitions. The world at large is not taking the threat lying down, and the military strength of the planet is massing to take on the empire, but will technology’s most advanced weaponry be enough to destroy Akira? And are Tetsuo’s rapidly growing paranormal abilities a potentially greater threat? A mind-blowing epic, Akira is a sweeping graphic-novel tour de force of awe-inspiring vision and gut-wrenching intensity “ and the inspiration for the brilliant Akira animated film. Creator Katsuhiro Otomo has influenced a generation of graphic novelists and animators and is universally acknowledged as a storyteller of extraordinary skill, standing alongside the finest writers and directors of science fiction.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is the Barnes and Noble edition of Dark Horse’s American release of Akira. As a collector of Akira graphic novels, I’ve had a hands-on with all the American releases and this one is by far my favorite. The presentation is absolutely gorgeous. It features a beautiful black and red hardcover binding with the Akira katakana logo embossed in gold. The slipcover features promotional art done by Otomo for the limited edition release of the laserdisc. The katakana is again embossed on top of the slipcover. The paper quality is good. Nothing has changed on the inside from Dark Horse’s

printing. If you don't have a copy of Akira already, this is the one to get. The only problem is that Barnes and Noble never printed the rest of the series, so it will stick out from the rest of the set on your shelf. It's \$15 list price on the back makes it a smart choice, too as Dark Horse and the Kodansha reprints both retail for double that.

Could I give this six stars? When I was 13 I saw AKIRA in my local theater. Needless to say I was blown away and hooked for life. Imagine my surprise when, years later I found out about the manga! For anyone who has seen the movie but not read the manga you are missing out on about 80% of the story (The movie was condensed from over 2000 pages). The manga answers all the questions left from the movie and adds so much more to the story. The artwork is better than the movie even though the book is in black and white. The story and art crackle off of the pages like electricity. Otomo has such an amazing style that he has ruined other comics for me. Nothing quite compares to his mix of technical and human drawing prowess and his storytelling is second to none. In book 5, the special forces, American Navy, and various cult groups are all after the power of AKIRA even as Tetsuo's power continues to grow. Kaneda, Kei, and the Colonel play bigger roles in book 5, but the real star here is Tetsuo. His powers are immense and the destruction he causes is beyond belief. I won't spoil it for you but believe me it's amazing. The most enduring quality of AKIRA for me is the fact that the movies and manga require your attention. This isn't a thrown together story where nothing really holds up, if you think there are plot holes you haven't figured the story out. It's expertly crafted by Otomo-san and never strays from his vision. The story of AKIRA is excellence of the highest caliber. I love everything about AKIRA and this book is a testament to that. This is just my opinion and I happen to be a BIG AKIRA freak. I have the McFarlane toys, three versions of the movie, and even a back up DVD which has never been opened just in case.

Although it is not stated on this version, this is only the first volume of the original manga.

It's a classic and the hardcover version is nice to have sitting on the bookshelf. However, the images are "flipped" for Western readers. Everyone is suddenly left handed in the art. It made me nuts. I hope a decent "original" version is released one day.

Volume Three of Katsuhiro Otomo's epic sci-fi saga finds the newly awakened Akira being pursued by Kei and Kaneda, the Army, Nazi's militant faction, weirdly-powered flying children, strange Government robots, etc. After being freed from his cryogenic sleep by Tetsuo in the last volume,

Akira is still groggy, and so we really don't get any insight into his character, and he doesn't become an active participant in the story until the very end of the book. What an ending, though! After this, the series spins off into totally unexpected territory. This volume seemed like mostly filler, though. The story is basically just a lot of people playing "keepaway" with Akira; He's stolen from Kaneda by the flying kids, Nazu snatches him from the flying kids, etc. Like most long stories (In any medium), the middle lags. Otomo's art continues to be mind-boggling. The amount of detail in every panel is incredible, and you could just linger over the art all day. Even at three stars, Akira 3 is better than most other comics....

This is not only the longest volume in the series so far, it is also the the best and most pivotal. Characters both new and old are revisited, and IMMENSE character development is undertaken. Since Tetsuo is the main focal point for this volume, the story lets the reader see yet another side to him (as well as a rather grotesque sequence in which his fake arm takes over his body). Also, shockingly enough, Kaneda and Kei *ACTUALLY SHOW FEELINGS FOR ONE ANOTHER*!! And as if THAT wasn't enough, Kaneda's ol' pal Joker shows up again. He's changed sides, however, and reveals that he's a technical whiz, which will undoubtedly come in very handy. But enough rambling about that. The action is top-notch (as always), as the armies of the world are crouched, muscles tensed, ready to spring at a moment's notice. Kaneda has amassed a small army of his own, and they have already taken the offensive against Tetsuo. Kei undergoes psychic training by the last survivors of the Project, and is preparing to challenge the teenage time bomb herself. The cliffhanger ending shows that the dominoes are set up, needing only the hand to push the first to start the show. And I know it's going to be a spectacular display.

Why on earth are people so concerned with the number of pages? Who cares?!! This third installment of the series is by far the most emotionally and graphically charged part of the story to date. The characters and the complex web of fate that entwines them are explored in much greater depth. The political factions and their agendas are brought to light. Relationships develop between the characters and new characters shed a whole new light on understanding the world of Neo-Tokyo and its political climate. In general the story takes focus and burns a hole right through to the last page as Akira and his devastating power "awaken". Graphically stunning. An epic story that continues to grow in scope. Unbelievable. Otomo is an unrivaled master of the medium.

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