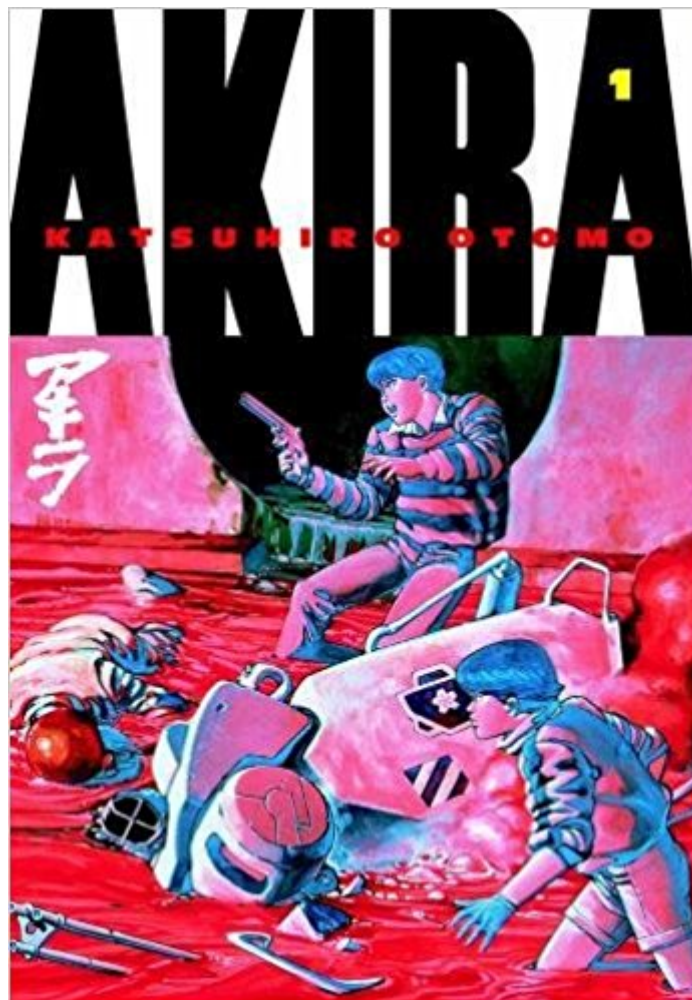


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Akira, Vol. 1



Synopsis

Welcome to Neo-Tokyo, built on the ashes of a Tokyo annihilated by a blast of unknown origin that triggered World War III. The lives of two streetwise teenage friends, Tetsuo and Kaneda, change forever when paranormal abilities begin to waken in Tetsuo, making him a target for a shadowy agency that will stop at nothing to prevent another catastrophe like the one that leveled Tokyo. At the core of the agency's motivation is a raw, all-consuming fear of an unthinkable, monstrous power known only as Akira. Katsuhiro Otomo's stunning science fiction masterpiece is considered by many to be the finest work of graphic fiction ever produced, and Otomo's brilliant animated film version is regarded worldwide as a classic. This edition includes a new foreword from the author and a postscript from Dark Horse publisher Mike Richardson!

Book Information

Series: Akira (Book 1)

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Customer Reviews

Originally serialized in Japan between 1981 and 1993, Otomo's 2,000-plus-page science fiction epic Akira was reprinted as a monthly comic book in the U.S. in the early '90s. This new six-volume series is the first time it's appeared as an English-language graphic novel. Set in Tokyo 38 years after its destruction in World War III (which, according to this story, happened in 1992), Akira eventually evolves into a philosophical investigation of time. But this first volume is all action, nonstop car chases and gun fights strung together with exaggerated speed lines and lots of gigantic machinery. The complicated plot revolves around two teenagers in a motorbike gang that

encounters a strange child with an old man's features. When one of the young bikers begins manifesting violent, supernatural powers that threaten to destroy him, both bikers find themselves enmeshed in a massive conflict between two sinister agencies (which both believe they're fighting to save the world) over some unnamed thing so terrifying it's locked away in a vault and frozen to absolute zero. Akira has been praised for "massively decompressed storytelling" a few seconds of story time can take pages and Otomo's hyperkinetic black-and-white drawings explode across the page. The translation is sometimes a bit awkward, although it still expresses the story's visceral force. The book has been adapted into an animated film that's a favorite among anime fans. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“One of the most important manga of the 1980s, Akira influenced thousands of science fiction manga and anime with its dark urban future.”
•Manga: The Complete Guide

NOTE: This description probably contains spoilers! (This review covers the first two volumes)Young, tough, motorcycle-riding gang ruffians stumble onto a bizarre government experiment in postapocalyptic Tokyo in this classic manga series from Katsuhiro Otomo. The government sequesters and essentially holds captive a few hyper-aged children with a variety of bizarre powers, keeping one of them in deep hibernation, lest another apocalypse be unleashed upon the beleaguered populace of Tokyo. Badness ensues when one of the motorcycle-riding ruffians acquires one of the unique powers the government is doing its level best to control, and his powers, of course, eclipse any that have before been observed. Our new super-powered ruffian proceeds to remove Akira, the super-weapon kept in deep hibernation, from his prison, and then a game of grab-Akira-and-run occurs with the government, the ruffian, and antigovernment forces (which, being antigovernment, are of course the good guys). The art in this book is astonishing and all completely hand-drawn, and, my art friends tell me, contains some of the best manga page spreads in existence. I confess that some of the high-action scenes (many of which being double-page spreads) such as motorcycle chases and explosions were difficult for me to "decipher," but they were extraordinary nonetheless. I'd classify this as a pretty standard postapocalyptic story, with your standard government bad guys and antigovernment good guys - but that's where "standard" stops. The "weapons" in this story are people. The character development is remarkable. It's a lot to take in while reading, if you look closely at the art, which is merited. Volumes end with cliffhangers. I will continue with this series for sure. One note: in the English version of this manga, it's printed English

style, that is, front-to-back, (or left-to-right) rather than the standard manga which reads back-to-front/right-to-left. It takes some getting used to.

Akira is one of the finest comics I've had the pleasure of reading. The art is beautiful and manages to efficiently convey both motion and personality. The writing gives depth to everyone from the bit players to the leads. And the leads! Kaneda is a real piece of work. Loudmouthed, violent, and almost nihilistic at times, he's far from a conventional hero. (At one point a girl reveals to him that she's pregnant, with the strong implication he's the father. He blows her off and never gives it another moment's thought.) At the same time, he's committed to his friends, and in a pinch he's the person you most want at your back. And EVERYONE is similarly complex. No-one is purely good, or purely evil. They're just people, pursuing their own agendas in their own ways. The only thing I regret is that the version widely available for sale isn't the colorized Epic reprints. Normally, colorized stuff is an abomination, but here it's gorgeous. Shame it isn't widely available, but if you didn't know it existed, you wouldn't miss it. Get this.

Definitely a must-read

A modern classic. One of the most epic and amazing set of illustrations ever created. Literally a jaw dropping experience (especially as you get into the later volumes). I actually saw the movie first about 10 years ago and just read the mangas this past year. I've read a lot of comics and graphic novels but as far as illustrators go Otomo is at the top of the heap when it comes to action and architecture. The movement and scale you feel with his work is just far above what you see with most comics. A brilliant piece that will continue to stand the test of time. Just a staggering output from Otomo. 10 stars would be more suitable.

First off, Akira was one of the first few animes I've ever watched (Hokuto no Ken being one of my top tier favorites) and it's without a doubt a true classic. Secondly, I knew the manga would show at the minimum 50% more than what the original video animation showed and I was VERY satisfied with the original story development and conclusion. Finally, I bought all 6 volumes and it was one of the best purchases I've ever made online. I highly recommended that you own this very unique and awesome manga collection that's easily a top 10 of all time in my opinion. And also, in my opinion, nothing beats Berserk as far as Seinen manga is concerned ;).

I watched Akira, the movie, first a few times, before even setting my eyes on the manga, but when I picked up Akira, Vol.1, I immediately loved it. The volume follows a slightly different plot from the movie, and there are 5 more volumes that follow up immersing you into a more expansive universe of Akira than the movie was ever able to do; however, even being different than the movie, the manga feels so similar. It's like getting the sequel to the movie that you always wanted.

Highly recommend to read the manga version of it. Then You will understand the movie. The quality of manga is simply extraordinary.

I've often heard it said that "The manga version of Akira is a lot better than the anime." (Actually, I think I've heard that about most animes...) Well, now that I've finally been able to read this, a good portion of the manga, I can very much see what they mean. The characters are presented with more depth, and the anime seems very superficial in comparison. There's just more information being conveyed in general. Now I'm particularly awaiting volume 2, which I understand is not only far less convoluted than the second half of the film, but also continues much further after the events which end the movie. I still love Akira the anime, but now it seems to me that the film is really more of a flashy companion piece intended for those who have read the manga.

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