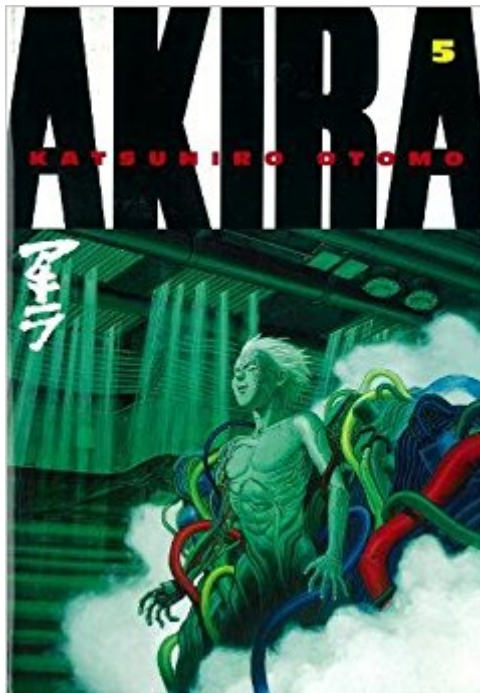


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Akira, Vol. 5



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

"One of the most important manga of the 1980s...four stars." --Manga: The Complete Guide

KATSUHIRO OTOMO is best known as the creator of the three-thousand page epic Akira. He also directed the groundbreaking animated feature film of the same name, as well as the acclaimed animated film, Steamboy. Most recently, he directed the live-action Japanese film, Mushishi.

Vol. 3 is virtually a non-stop sequence of kidnappings, pursuits, comings and goings, including caretaker robots, soldiers, cars and even a tank. Regarding the latter, we get some occasional humorous gags involving Kaneda. Here he finally comes alive as a clumsy yet hard-headed anti-hero of sorts. His down-to-earth, naughty but ultimately honest nature is depicted in great detail along the volume, adding up to what we had already seen in volumes 1 and 2. We also get to see more of Chiyoko, a character who appeared in the previous volume and who becomes more and more relevant as the story progresses. Kei also gets rounded up as an atypical heroine ('anti-heroine', maybe?), thus straying off from the 'damsel-in-distress' female character so common in shounen manga and American comic-books alike. Three characters make a brief yet crucial appearance in this volume: Sakaki, Miki and Mozu (a bunch of girls trained by Lady Miyako to develop a small amount of psychic power). Sakaki in particular plays an important role throughout the volume, right until its conclusion. But the character that really shines in this part of Otomo's long work is Nezu, the leader of the Kohmin political party, who is constantly plotting against the Colonel, the government, Lady Miyako, and practically everyone, and who is obsessed with gaining power by using Akira as a weapon. Storywise, the world of motorbikes and teenager gangs has disappeared completely, which means we will have no Kaisuke, no Joker, no Clowns... The tone for most of the volume is, admittedly, a bit lighter than the oppressive atmosphere we encountered in the previous volume, making it look more like an action/gangsters/conspiracy story than a proper futuristic cyberpunk one. Paradoxically, instead of focusing on troublesome teenager angst and gang fights the plot seems to deal with more adult-oriented themes than those displayed in volume 1, thus diversifying the change of direction that had already started in volume 2. This, however, isn't distracting in the least, and I believe Otomo manages to develop this segment of his masterpiece with just as much brilliancy as he did with the impressive sewers/laboratory/secret base sequences in volume 2. The detail in the depiction of each panel is nothing short of amazing. Indoors or outdoors, every ambiance is rendered with a rarely-seen accuracy: we get to see the inside of Chiyoko's and Kei's small shelter, Nezu's grand mansion, government offices, or even the inside of a luxury boat. Everything exhales a feeling of verisimilitude that pushes you into the story and makes the reading flow easily. The inking is brilliant, and the handling of screentones is really solid too. The black and white printing is excellent in this edition, even though the paper could certainly be better--probably a glossy paper would work wonders with this kind of printing. Technically speaking, Kodansha Comics' edition of Akira is far superior than the former coloured edition by Epic Comics (which, by the way, is just terribly hand-coloured in the part where Kei, Chiyoko and Kaneda are held in the boat). A non-flipped edition would also probably be better, even though it might be

harder to read for a western reader. At any rate, it should be black and white. In summary, this is a very worthy purchase: the story has a more down-to-earth tone, there are no motorbikes, gang fights, psychic fights or supernatural elements, yet it countermeasures the lack of those elements with a non-stop action flow, and the depiction of very diverse environments and surroundings is simply masterful. Although this volume does not end in as strong a cliffhanger as the one in volume 2, its ending just makes the term 'epic' sound like an understatement, and will certainly leave you dumbstruck. Highly recommended.

Akira still stands head and shoulders above the competition. The pivotal and compelling stories of a group of low-life juvenile friends who find their fast-riding life style come into a literal collision with destiny. Gorgeous as it is grandiose Akira is painstakingly detailed and remains one of the only graphic novels that can truly be described as "a labor of love". If you are a fan of graphic novels that somehow missed this one, you need to read it. Now. For fans of the film who don't normally read comics, the same applies. There really is nothing else like it, this work needs to be experienced and appreciated for what it is: A stunning work of art.

I'm not even sure what to say about this... It's still complete insanity. Everyone is fighting everyone. I'm not sure if anyone knows whose side they're on. Tetsuo is completely bonkers, Kaneda is back and apparently Kei is a powerful medium. The power is overwhelming Tetsuo, and still mostly nothing from Akira. I'm seriously starting to wonder if he's actually a threat. One more to go and I guess I'll find out.

As a fan of the film adaptation since childhood, I HAD to read the manga....and I am so stoked to finish out this series.

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 ;).

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The book was for my brother, but he liked it a lot. I don't know what it's about though.

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