



Contemporary Comics Storytelling (Frontiers of Narrative)

Karin Kukkonen

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What if fairy-tale characters lived in New York City? What if a superhero knew he was a fictional character? What if you could dispense your own justice with one hundred untraceable bullets? These are the questions asked and answered in the course of the challenging storytelling in *Fables*, *Tom Strong*, and *100 Bullets*, the three twenty-first-century comics series that Karin Kukkonen considers in depth in her exploration of how and why the storytelling in comics is more than merely entertaining.

Applying a cognitive approach to reading comics in all their narrative richness and intricacy, *Contemporary Comics Storytelling* opens an intriguing perspective on how these works engage the legacy of postmodernism—its subversion, self-reflexivity, and moral contingency. Its three case studies trace how contemporary comics tie into deep traditions of visual and verbal storytelling, how they reevaluate their own status as fiction, and how the fictional minds of their characters generate complex ethical thought experiments. At a time when the medium is taken more and more seriously as intricate and compelling literary art, this book lays the groundwork for an analysis of the ways in which comics challenge and engage readers' minds. It brings together comics studies with narratology and literary criticism and, in so doing, provides a new set of tools for evaluating the graphic novel as an emergent literary form.

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