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Dare to Know

Autobiographical Comics

Comics that are based on events in the author's life.

A sub-genre in which authors use narrative writing and visual components to depict facets and episodes of their own lives. Personal narratives are well-suited for the graphic medium, as linguistic and artistic styles can be employed by a creator to make individual experiences accessible to the reader. The intensely private perspective fosters an emotional connection to the story by not only reflecting the author's journey of discovery but also allows readers to make that journey themselves. Due to their focus, autobiographical comics are typically rooted in a specific historical, social, or first-hand context such as war, political movements, or personal tragedy. However, the limits of memory affect the objectivity and ultimate truthfulness of any memoir. Memory is imperfect and reflects an individual's biases, and, by their nature, autobiographical stories are hampered to various degrees in their reliability. Autobiographical comics began in Japan in the 1960s, becoming more widespread in the United States in the ensuing decade. They have since become the type of non-fiction work most widely associated with graphic novels.

Common Elements

First-hand experience
Personal topics

Autobiographical lens
Memoirs

Graphic Novel Examples

<i>Alec: The Years Have Parts</i> (2009) by Eddie Campbell
<i>American Splendor: The Life and Times of Harvey Pekar</i> (1986) by Harvey Pekar
<i>The Best We Could Do</i> (2017) by Thi Bui
<i>Binky Brown Meets the Holy Virgin Mary</i> (1972) by Justin Green
<i>Blankets</i> (2003) by Craig Thompson
<i>The Complete Crumb Comics Volume 1: The Early Years of Bitter Struggle</i> (1966) by Robert Crumb
<i>Dancing at the Pity Party</i> (2020) by Tyler Feder
<i>Dragon Hoops</i> (2020) by Gene Luen Yang
<i>Fax from Sarajevo</i> (1998) by Joe Kubert
<i>Epileptic</i> (1996) by David B.

<i>Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic</i> (2006) by Alison Bechdel
<i>The High Desert</i> (2022) by James Spooner
<i>It's a Good Life, If You Don't Weaken</i> (1996) by Seth
<i>Life, in Pictures: Autobiographical Stories</i> (2007) by Will Eisner
<i>Lucky</i> (2006) by Gabrielle Bell
<i>Maus: A Survivor's Tale</i> (1986) by Art Spiegelman
<i>Need More Love</i> (2007) by Aline Kominsky-Crumb
<i>Onward Toward Our Noble Deaths</i> (1973) by Shigeru Mizuki
<i>Our Cancer Year</i> (1994) by Harvey Pekar, Joyce Brabner, and Frank Stack

<i>Palestine</i> (2010) by Joe Sacco
<i>Pedro and Me</i> (2000) by Judd Winick
<i>Persepolis: The Story of the Childhood</i> (2000) by Marjane Satrapi
<i>Play Like a Girl</i> (2022) by Misty Wilson and David Wilson
<i>The Quitter</i> (2005) by Harvey Pekar
<i>Relish: My Life in the Kitchen</i> (2013) by Lucy Knisley

<i>A Sailor's Story</i> (1987) by Sam Glanzman
<i>Spinning</i> (2017) by Tillie Walden
<i>They Call Us Enemy; Expanded Edition</i> (2020) by George Takei, Justin Elsinger, Steven Scott, and Harmony Becker
<i>You'll Never Know Book One: A Good and Decent Man</i> (2009) by C. Tyler