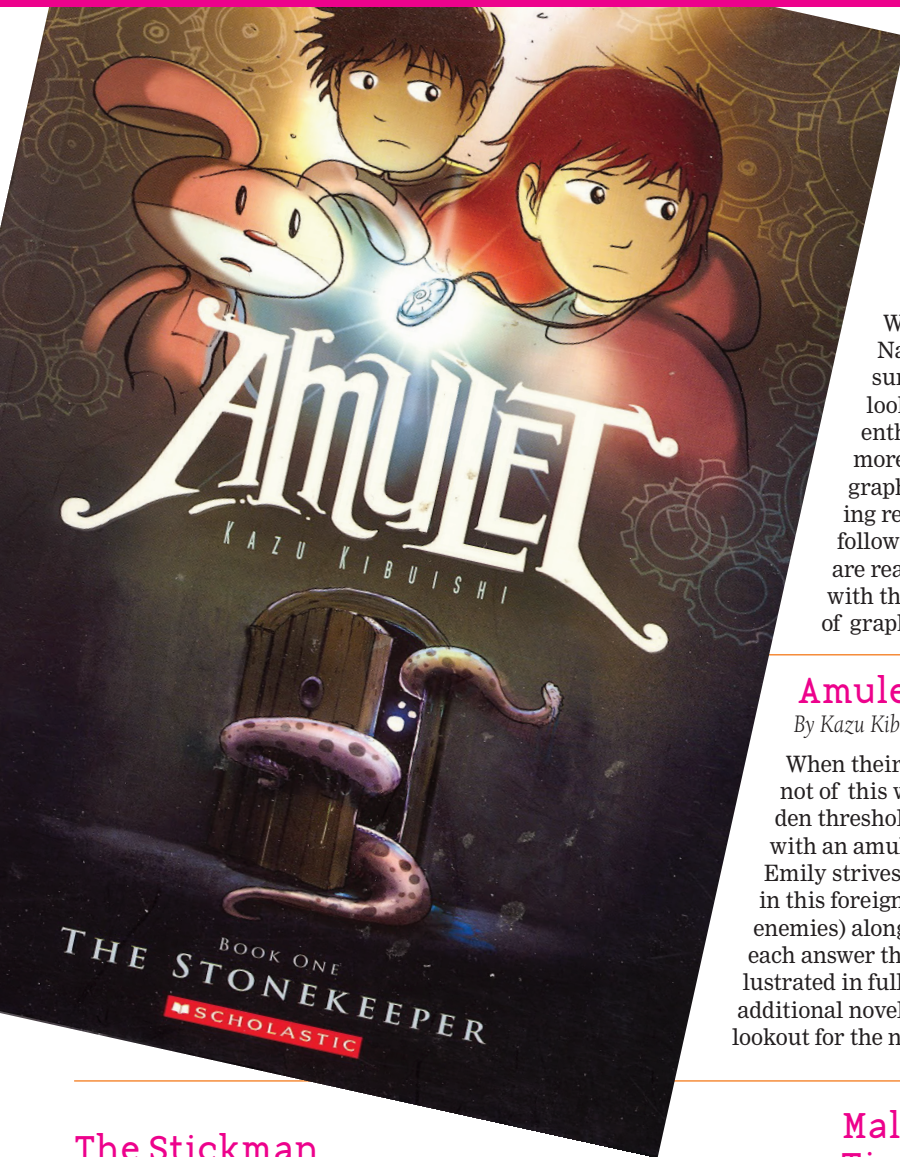


A Page in a Book[®]

RECOMMENDING THE BEST BOOKS FOR CHILDREN & TEENS

By Paige Gardner Smith



GETTING A GRIP ON GRAPHIC NOVELS

With the immense popularity of the Wimpy Kid, Big Nate and Captain Underpants graphic novels, it's no surprise that middle-grade readers and pre-teens are looking for more graphically illustrated book series with enthusiasm. Not just for comic-book compilation anymore, publishers are producing a much larger variety of graphic novels and manga to suit the tastes of these growing readers as their reading skills and tastes mature. The following titles are highly recommended for readers who are ready to move up into more advanced reading coupled with the play-by-play illustration that characterizes the best of graphic novels.

Amulet: Book One: The Stonekeeper

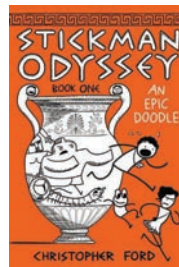
By Kazu Kibuishi (Scholastic)

When their mother is kidnapped and carried away by a creature not of this world, siblings Emily and Navin cross a fantastic hidden threshold into that world to try and rescue her. Armed only with an amulet that dispenses some degree of advice and help, Emily strives to protect her brother as they venture further afield in this foreign land to save their mom. As they discover allies (and enemies) along the way, they also find mysteries that multiply with each answer they secure. Compelling, inventive and beautifully illustrated in full color, the Amulet series offers a continuing story with additional novels that will keep readers hooked and always on the lookout for the next Amulet!

The Stickman Odyssey: An Epic Doodle

By Christopher Ford (Philomel / Penguin)

If you imagine Homer's Odyssey as the springboard for a graphic novel idea – then lose the springboard, drain the pool and turn it into a skateboard park – you'll have the beginnings of 'The Stickman Odyssey.' With only a passing nod to the original tale, Ford's take on the Greek saga introduces Zozimos who is banished from his home in Sticatha, condemned to sail upon stormy seas, slay monsters, and pursue quests – all in an effort to get back home. The stick-figure illustrations are stunningly comedic and expressive, and don't miss a beat of real character development in this book. Irreverent, irrepressible and on-target for middle-grade readers, this laugh-out-loud graphic novel will convince every reader that there's more to stick men than meets the eye!



Mal and Chad: The Biggest, Bestest Time Ever

By Stephen McCranie (Philomel / Penguin)

Mal's a brilliant kid, a genius, with a talking dog named Chad. But no one knows it. He's flying under the radar, coming across as simply a dorky kid to those around him, including Megan, the girl he's crushing on (just a little). The upside to being so smart is that when you're tasked with an assignment for school, you may have the extra talent and tools to score big. With his (man's) best friend and advisor Chad by his side, Mal takes on time travel itself to look into his future by going into the past! With shades of "Calvin and Hobbes" and elements of "Dexter's Laboratory," the 'Mal and Chad' series are ideal next-step books for reluctant readers and for graphic novel fans!

