

Resistance is Futile

Clover

by CLAMP
Tokyopop 2001

Clover also crosses the boundaries of girls or boys comics, the two audiences CLAMP commonly writes for, by packing a wrenching examination of love into an action-packed drama full of genetic experimentation and explosive battles. As is common in the best Japanese work, **Clover** explores all of the usual questions around genetic engineering people as weapons or slaves-- there's a reason Blade Runner remains one of the most recognized Western films in Japan. At the same time, **Clover's** focus on the people involved, and not their genetic make-up, makes the story a uniquely human story at it's core. [read more...](#)

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A Distant Soil

By Colleen Doran
The Gathering: ISBN: 1887279512
Image Comics 2001

Aliens are about to attack! The only ones who can save us are a motley band of humans! I can hear you all saying, "Yeah, yeah, I've heard it all before." Ha! Colleen Doran's great trick is to take a classic plot from seemingly every sci-fi novel known to man and make it new, exciting, and not just a little bit funny! Yes, there are the usual trappings of sci-fi -- advanced societies gone horribly wrong, reluctant heroes, psionic powers, political intrigue, and battles in space. Embrace the sci-fi space opera (you know you love it) and you'll find yourself sucked in to an epic full of laugh-out-loud humor, love, revenge, and loyalty.

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A Distant Soil

The Ascendant: ISBN: 1582400180
By Colleen Doran
Image Comics 2001

Colleen Doran's finely drawn and elaborately plotted epic only gets better as time goes on. In the last issue, sister and brother Liana and Jason unexpectedly inherited their long-dead father's legacy: the fate of a millennia old alien civilization mired in tradition and about to collapse into civil war. Separated and informed (and manipulated) by entirely different sides, each embarks on a quest to embrace their past and

future. Under the protection of resistance leader Seren and his motly crew of humans and Ovanans, Liana begins to see her place as a reformer and rescuer of a crumbling world. Jason, told a quite different story, is set firmly on the path of revenge and assassination for what he believes are noble ends. By the finish of this volume, long hidden secrets are revealed from both enemies and allies, leaving newly minted loyalties and a world's political system balancing on the edge of a precipice. All of this still happens, of course, while everyone is fabulously attired and sports suitably sinuous hairstyles. I dare you not to get totally obsessed with this series.

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A Distant Soil

The Aria: ISBN: 1582402019

By Colleen Doran

Image Comics 2001

Although brother and sister are finally reunited in The Aria, this brings neither accord nor safety to any involved in the struggle for Ovanan leadership. As the various factions jockey for position, our bad of heroes are ever more fractured and doubtful of their cause. At the core of the uncertainty is the double life of group leader Seren, the revelation of which is poised to both launch Liana in her destiny (perhaps prematurely) while tearing down any power or strength Seren held. The fluid artwork gives a sometimes frightening and unsettling story a softer edge, perhaps making it all the more effective and creepy. The evil side is getting ever more treacherous and unforgivable while the side of the right is blurring a bit on its own. One warning: this volume ends on a terrific cliffhanger, and as of yet, no more of the story has been printed in book form!

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Orbiter

ISBN: 1401200567

by Warren Ellis

Art by Colleen Doran, Dave Stewart and Clem Robbins

Vertigo/DC Comics 2003

I grew up with two physicists for parents. We often had great dinner conversations about subatomic particles and cosmology. When I was ten, I was allowed to stay up late to watch the first episode of **Star Trek: The Next Generation**. My friends and family can tell you that started a loyalty right then to space exploration and the Trek universe. As I grew up, I was allowed to raid my father's expansive collection of classic science fiction, from 50s era onward. I've always loved the wonder and yearning for exploration that space still holds, and it dismays me to see the lack of wonder many of my fellows feel for the possibilities space holds.

Seeing my history, you can probably guess why **Orbiter** is definitely the book for me. The basic story is classic sci-fi through and through: after a space shuttle, the Orbiter, mysteriously disappears without a whisper of warning, the U.S. manned exploration of space is completely suspended. Ten years later, that

missing shuttle returns to an abandoned Kennedy Space Center full of mysteries and carrying an apparently insane captain, the only surviving member of the mission. Old experts, from ex-astronauts, physicists, and a psychiatrist, are brought in to discover Orbiter's secrets. They, of course, discover much more than they can comprehend. Thus follows a tale of broken dreams and rerouted destinies suddenly put back on course, whether the human race is ready or not.

Warren Ellis always writes passionate, critical dynamite, and Colleen Doran, ever since I devoured [A Distant Soil](#), is an intriguing and appropriate choice for a creative collaborator. As it turns out, they're also great friends and space enthusiasts. In the end, Orbiter is a story about not giving up the dream of space. With email, voice recognition, cell phones, and the Internet, we're already living in the science fiction I grew up with. But where's the shuttle to Mars? Where are the cities on the moon? Ellis acknowledges in his introduction (which I admit made me get teary), this title had a frightening prescience within its echo of the recent loss of the Columbia shuttle and the grounding of the U. S. space program. The necessity of books like Orbiter, and their ability to make us dream, can be summed up in his words, "Human spaceflight remains experimental. It is very dangerous. It demands great ingenuity. But we are old enough, now, to do these things. Growing up is hard. But we cannot remain children, standing on the shore or in front of the TV set."

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Transmetropolitan: Back on the Street

ISBN: 1582401977

by Warren Ellis

Art by Darick Robertson

Vertigo/DC Comics 2001

Spider Jerusalem is not the kind of guy you take home to meet your parents. He's crude, offensive, and his favorite state of dress is naked. He's also very pissed off. He's just been forced to return to the city after several blissful years of almost total solitude on the side of a mountain. Unfortunately, he's spent his book advance and his publisher is making him come back and write for the City's biggest newspaper "The Word", he's even willing to throw in an assistant/photographer if it'll make Spider happy. It doesn't. Not much that's actually socially acceptable makes Spider happy. But that's okay because Spider's weekly column "I Hate It Here" is wildly popular no matter how offensive he is to everything and everyone. A fact which only disgusts him more. Warren Ellis has created a compelling and all too possible future in which all the excesses of today's world have been multiplied and carried to their logical extremes. Information and advertisements bombard you 24 hours a day, catering to every imaginable (and unimaginable) desire for pleasure. Spider is not a moralist, he fully partakes of the pleasures of the City while maintaining a cynical outlook on all of it. He can accept the excess but he can't stand hypocrisy. His goal is to make others aware of the essential vacuity and falseness of the world they live in. The art work in the comic works with the tone of the text - bright brash colors, graphic images. It's an unflinching vision of Spider's world that sees through the glamour to the dirt underneath. Through Spider Jerusalem Warren Ellis offers biting social commentary on the state of our world. Spider isn't cuddly, and he isn't polite, but he is often right and after a while, he's oddly endearing. This is not a comic for the faint of heart. Be warned this does contain very graphic language and violence, as well as frequent nudity, it is not meant for children. But, the language and violence are not gratuitous, Warren Ellis uses them as an integral part of the commentary he is making.

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Red Star: The Battle of Kar Dathra's Gate

ISBN: 1582401977

by Christian Gossett, Bradley Kayl

Image Comics 2001

This is one of the few graphic novels I've come across that made me sit back and just stare. The artwork, a combination of traditional illustration techniques and the 3D computer imaging used in the finest computer games, is absolutely stunning. Lucky for us, the story is equally brilliant. A reworking of world history, **The Battle of Kar Dathra's Gate** follows one Comrade Sorcerer through her brutal memories of the title battle in a conflict which mirrors Russia's 1979 invasion of Afghanistan. On that day, she lost both her faith in her country and, more personally, her beloved husband. Her story, however, is much more than it seems, and destiny has greater plans for both her and her husband.

review by [robin](#)