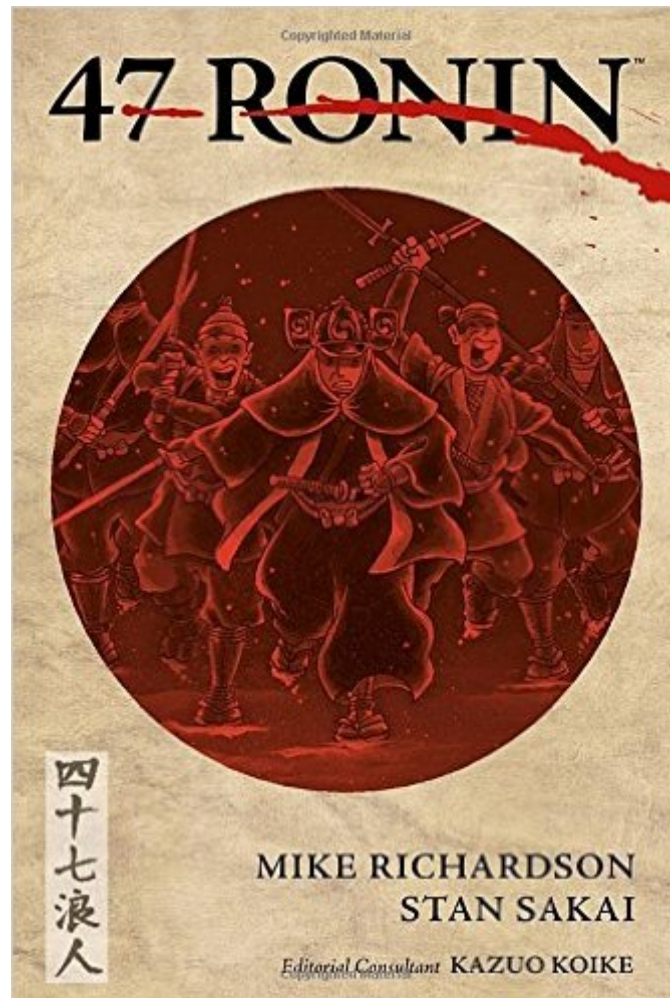


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47 Ronin



Synopsis

Japan's enduring national legend comes to comics! The tale of the 47 Ronin and their epic mission to avenge their wronged master epitomizes the samurai code of honor, and creators Mike Richardson and Stan Sakai have done justice to their story! Meticulously researched and beautifully illustrated, this collection of the acclaimed miniseries recounts this sweeping saga of honor and violence in all its grandeur. Opening with the tragic incident that sealed the fate of Lord Asano, 47 Ronin follows a dedicated group of Asano's vassals on their years-long path of vengeance! * From Mike Richardson (Star Wars: Crimson Empire) and Stan Sakai (Usagi Yojimbo)! * Tons of bonus art and behind-the-scenes extras! "If you're a fan of the samurai genre then this is a no-brainer... if you've never given it a chance then this is the perfect gateway book to the genre." —Comic Bastards "Stan Sakai makes Japan all the more exciting with this comic, and Richardson's narrative builds an epic tale reminiscent of Kurosawa's greatest films." —Graphic Policy

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

'47 Ronin' by Mike Richardson and Stan Sakai is a brilliant graphic novel version of the classic true story from Japan. The level of detail in story and art makes this a superior graphic novel. It's a revenge story with honor. Lord Asano is tragically murdered and his property sold. His loyal samurai turn ronin and seek revenge on the man who did this. It's an incredible story. Even more so because it's true. This is a famous story in Japan and has become more known in the West recently through a couple excellent graphic novel adaptations and a not so excellent movie adaptation that added

strange supernatural elements to a story that is great without them. It's a story that Mike Richardson has wanted to tell for 25 years. Having Stan Sakai do the art was a stroke of genius because his art and panels are evocative of the period and some of the original woodcuts. At the back of the graphic novel are articles and interviews with the 2 creators, as well as one about Kazuo Koike (Lone Wolf and Cub) who gave creative and historical input. There is an article about Ogata Gekko who created beautiful woodblock prints in the latter half of the 1800s to illustrate the story. There is a lot packed in and it's truly a great story. "To know this story is to know Japan." I was given a review copy of this graphic novel by Diamond Book Distributors and Netgalley in exchange for an honest review. Thank you for allowing me to review this amazing graphic novel.

My father took me to see the movie *Chûshingura* (the 47 Ronin), by the Japanese director Hiroshi Inagaki, when I was a kid. The story is based on true events, but it has gained mythical standing and has become a core tale of Japanese culture. I have seen the movie many times since. The story has been recreated by a number of artists. Here we have a telling by the graphic novelist Stan Sakai, who created the *Usagi Yojimbo* novels that I read with my son when he was young. The story that Stan Sakai tells closely follows the story of the *Chûshingura* and Sakai was clearly influenced by Inagaki's movie. There is a scene before Lord Asano commits *Seppuku*, where he walks through the blossoming cherry trees that is in both the movie and the book. This scene has always stuck in my mind for its beauty and sadness. One of the themes that is stronger in the movie is the egotism of Asano. He is goaded and abused by Lord Kira. For a time he tries to put up with the abuse, but finally he snaps, his anger overcoming his control and he attacks Kira in the Shogun's palace. By the action he causes terrible pain for all of those around him. If Asano were stronger, as strong as his 47 loyal retainers and his wife, the tragedy would not have happened. So part of the story to me has always been about Asano's weakness and flaws. I enjoyed Stan Sakai's retelling of this complex tale. It was a change to revisit the story in the medium of a graphic novel.

47 Ronin is a stirring tale of honor, loyalty, sacrifice, and vengeance. It has been told in other forms, including film and novels, but the story lends itself to a graphic format. Lord Asano has been summoned to serve the Shogun, but he refuses to bribe Kira, the instructor of court etiquette. Seeking revenge, Kira goads Asano into attacking him. After striking a court official in the Shogun's palace, Asano has no choice but to make amends for his dishonorable behavior by committing *seppuku*. Will Asano's retainers seek revenge upon Kira? Will the Shogun protect Kira? Asano's retainers could be called ronin, masterless samurai, but they see themselves as continuing to serve

Asano, even in his death. Their leader is Oishi, who was Asano's chief retainer. Oishi proves to be both noble and cunning but, above all, a loyal servant, even after his master's death. Most of the story follows Oishi as he carries out his plan for vengeance, eventually joined by 46 of Asano's retainers. The story captures the principles that enable 47 men to face death with courage and dignity. The story's emphasis on eighteenth century Japanese politics and traditions adds depth to what might otherwise be a typical story of samurai swordplay. In fact, while the story delivers a fair amount of blood, the violence is underplayed in favor of the various relationship dynamics that evolve as the story progresses. This is a story told with considerable skill. It brings a time and place to life but, more importantly, it allows the reader to see the beating hearts of honorable men who willingly accept their fates, knowing that the shogun who will judge them is likely to put politics above honor.

The writing of Mike Richardson, teamed with the art of Stan Sakai, beautifully depicting the story of the 47 Ronin in graphic novel/comic book form. If you know Usagi Yojimbo, a graphic novel written and illustrated by Stan Sakai, then you already know you'll love this book. If you don't know Stan Sakai at all, or his previous work, but are looking for a great read, get this book. If you just want to read a version of 47 Ronin, get this book. 'To Know the Story of the 47 Ronin, is to Know Japan'. This is definitely true. There is no better explanation for Japan's history than this (true) story. Get this book.

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