

Flash Forward: An Illustrated Guide to Possible (and Not So Possible) Tomorrows

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Abrams ComicArts (Mar 30, 2021)

Hardcover \$24.99 (272pp)

978-1-4197-4547-8

Flash Forward comprises a dozen thought-provoking glimpses into the future, from a variety of creators.

Inspired by the *Flash Forward* podcast, the book's twenty-page graphic stories illustrate current ideas, practices, and trends as extrapolated into a hazardous, but not quite dystopian near future. While there are some elements of *Twilight Zone*-style "getting too much of what you asked for" justice, there's also a healthy balance of good and bad; these characters are more products of their environments than they are victims of their own bad karma, and several stories showcase their chosen subjects in a positive or neutral way.

The most memorable plots center on the unchecked progression of technologies once perceived as boons, now advanced to a level where the costs of those benefits must be reconsidered. Pirates who liberate expensive therapeutic drugs; people who alter themselves to function with little or no sleep; and deepfake videos are included, all grounded in current science and society. Here, they function as both entertainment and lessons.

Each section is followed by a few pages of text analyzing subjects in greater detail, with references to experts in related fields and science fiction precedents. The full-color art changes styles with each story, helping to establish a visual sense of separate futures, each with their own problems.

Casting a wide net to cover machine-created art, the legalities of space crime, and a world of flexible gender identity, *Flash Forward* is a fascinating map to imagining the future and all it might deliver.

PETER DABBENE (March / April 2021)

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