



Crack...There aren't too many graphic novels around that successfully engage with modern anxieties but *Contraband* is one such work. It's set in Europe in the near future and concerns a TV show (which is broadcast across mobile phones) named *Contraband* which exists to thrill its viewers with shocking and outrageous clips (imagine YouTube without the talking cats and blokes demonstrating the history of dance in four and a half minutes). No; sex and violence is their stock in trade and they'll do anything to get hold of suitable clips. The back-story concerns Toby, an internet café worker, who is blackmailed by two soldiers turned cell phone video-content providers, to track down another ex-vet, Charlotte. The real focus however is the foreground white noise of a society raised on cheap thrills. A mention too for Phil Elliott's understated artwork which brings a real European sensibility to the tale. Think Hergés does punk sci-fi and you'll be on the right road. The old cover however, is quite awful. Don't let it put you off...