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Summer Blonde



Synopsis

Adrian Tomine's cult comix series Optic Nerve is finally collected into one sharp-looking hardcover graphic novel. Described as the Raymond Carver of comix, Tomine constructs tales of emotional disconnection with an ear for painfully real dialogue. Combined with his deft black and white depictions of urbane lifestyles, Tomine's fans have often accused him of eavesdropping in on their most intimate moments and, with forensic skill, laying their lives bare. The conflicts between emotional gratification, narcissistic neediness and moral discernment mark the title story - "Summer Blonde" - in which a socially crippled man nurses an obsessive crush on a young woman. He watches close up, paralyzed by his guilt, as her beauty catches the eye of his neighbor: a hip, selfish young man with a short attention span. One of Optic Nerve's most popular stories, 'Hawaiian Getaway,' features Hilary, telephone service rep who is having the worst week of her life. She lost her job, her apartment, and her grandmother. Close to the edge, she is losing her grip. Reaching out to random strangers on the phone, Hilary is looking for someone to help her. In "Alter Ego" a successful young author has writer's block. He can't, or won't, decide between another ghostwriting gig and finishing his second 'Cerebral' novel. He stalls on committing to his novel and his girlfriend when a chance postcard leads him to flirt with fantasies of changing the past. Finally, "Bomb Scare" documents the early unease of his generation by setting this coming-of-age story during the tense months of the Gulf War, the event that ushered in the 1990s.

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Customer Reviews

Tomine is at the forefront of the younger generation of alternative-comics artists; now in his

mid-twenties, he began publishing at age 16. Known for his clear, direct drawing and acute scrutiny of his contemporaries, Tomine has an understated approach, light on plot but rich with memorable characterization. The young protagonists of these four stories range from alienated to out-and-out misanthropic and include a successful but shy novelist who seeks out the girl he was obsessed with in high school; a lonely woman who loses her job and veers into erratic behavior; and a pair of high-school outcasts who improbably wind up together. Tomine shows them dealing with bad attitudes, bad choices, and bad sex. The narratives pick up at seemingly arbitrary points in the characters' lives and end just as abruptly. They are snapshots of lives just gathering steam.

Tomine's figures look a bit stiff, and sometimes his panels are cramped, but that isn't inappropriate to depicting the constricted lives of his not particularly likable but always sympathetic characters. Gordon Flagg
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“Tomine, who has become a cult figure, has brought an aura of cool realism to the world of comics with its blend of the best of independent comics and contemporary fiction.”
“Emotionally adroit...Summer Blonde is compulsive melancholy.”
“...has the kind of detail and romantic yearning which has made Tomine a cult figure to the still young and the kind of artistry which has made him a classic storyteller to anyone of any age.”
“San Francisco Chronicle

Tomine gives the reader an intimate look into the lives of about a dozen pitiful, often bordering on creepy or pathetic, characters in 4 different stories. The dialog is fluid, the landscapes are simple but well crafted, and the characters mannerisms are well articulated through the art. I'd love to give it a five star review, but the author did too good a job making me feel creeped out by the end of it.

Four stories about 20-something people with dysfunctional social lives. The Summer Blonde story is about a sexy girl who cheats on her lame boyfriend, and the obsessive loner who fantasizes about her. Hawaiian Getaway is about an overweight 27 year old, out of a job, and has trouble with men. These stories were written in the late 90's, a time when bulky computers were the norm, starbucks wasn't full of laptops, and nobody surfed the web from an iPhone. It was a time when we talked on the phone, made plans to meet and showed up, and wrote with pens and paper. I wonder if today's 20-somethings will be able to relate to any of this?

WOWTomine always makes me think when I read his work. I had to look at myself and think if I was as negative as the Summer Blonde lead character. Not only does this have stunning drawings but, Adrian really knows how to capture a person and dissect them. If you enjoy any of Adrian's work I suggest you write him an old fashioned hand letter and thank him. He doesn't believe in FB or other social Media, nor should he.....his work will be passed down like old mythology on onion skin paper through the sounds of harps--or just paper and old prints not destroyed by revolutions of the future. ENJOY

I'm a huge fan of Tomine's work (Shortcomings is one of my favorite graphic novels of all time) and I really enjoyed this work. Tomine specializes in characters who feel both utterly normal and like the worst bits of ourselves dragged up to the light -- he has a genius for portraying an awkward self-loathing that feels completely real. These four stories are about very different protagonists, but they all share a certain loneliness and an anger/resentment that bubbles up in different ways. A really fabulous read, if sometimes painful.

Just like his other two books of collections, this one is another SLAP in your FACE, when it comes to your emotions. As I read the stories I get drawn into the characters' simple events, yet complex emotions surrounding those events and feel hit when the end comes. I love how all of Tomine's stories are dreary, having and/or not having closure at the same time, depending on how you look at it. I also enjoy the fact that his stories get progressively longer (from the first book on) and so this book is full of 4 long stories. The graphics are good and do an amazing job at expressing emotions and reactions of the characters. Also, I love how all his comics are based on a miserable real world and are told truthfully.

superb!!!please buy if you have any interest and if with shipping it comes out to around \$8!!!not to say it is only worth that much, but if it will only cost you that little then please pay!!

I love Adrian so much. It's just as good as you think it'll be

I appreciated each story and enjoyed it just as much as Short Comings. There is definitely a finger print his story telling. I would recommend this book for anyone who wants to read something different and enjoys watching paneled train wrecks.

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