



# Ghost World

*Daniel Clowes*

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*Ghost World* has become a cultural and generational touchstone, and continues to enthrall and inspire readers over a decade after its original release as a graphic novel. Originally serialized in the pages of the seminal comic book *Eightball* throughout the mid-1990s, this quasi-autobiographical story (the name of one of the protagonists is famously an anagram of the author's name) follows the adventures of two teenage girls, Enid and Becky, two best friends facing the prospect of growing up, and more importantly, apart. Daniel Clowes is one of the most respected cartoonists of his generation, and *Ghost World* is his magnum opus. Adapted into a major motion picture directed by Terry Zwigoff (director of the acclaimed documentary *Crumb*), which was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay. This graphic novel is a must for any self-respecting comics fan's library.

## Ghost World Details

Date : Published April 2001 by Fantagraphics (first published March 1998)

ISBN : 9781560974277

Author : Daniel Clowes

Format : Paperback 80 pages

Genre : Sequential Art, Graphic Novels, Comics, Fiction, Graphic Novels Comics

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# From Reader Review Ghost World for online ebook

Alejandro says

**Two hours of my life that I will never get back!**

*This is the graphic novel edition of “Ghost World” by Fantagraphics Books, originally published as chapters, in the comic book series “Eightball” #11-18.*

Creative Team:

Writer & Illustrator: Daniel Clowes

## **MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING**

People who read my reviews know that I’m not usually negative (for not saying of giving 1-star ratings) when I am commenting about my readings, and being that negative, doesn’t cause me any joy, sadly when I do feel that it’s necessary, well I don’t hesitate about it, even if it’s against a generally popular and praised work.

No book is a \$100 bill to be liked by anybody.

I didn’t have a clue about what was about *Ghost World*, and after reading it...

**...I still don’t have a clue about what was about it!!!**

The main characters of *Ghost World* are Enid Coleslaw (her dad legally changed his last name from Cohn) and Rebecca (Becky) Doppelmeyer, both 18-years old girls, both just graduated from high school, best friends and still looking out for what to do with the rest of their lives.

The graphic novel doesn’t show any north, no real storyline, just a bunch of unrelated episodes without any clear purpose, where Enid and Becky basically interact with old acquaintances or new people, always commenting something negative about them.

## **MUCH NEGATIVE ABOUT EVERYTHING**

Both, Enid and Becky, are very mean to everybody, they are constantly pointing out their faults, calling them with offensive names and generally criticizing them, behind their backs and/or in their faces. Enid and Becky also have negative opinions about almost anything around them. Even, Enid and Becky comment in negative light about themselves!

In a few cases, some of the support characters deserve the negative critique, but in most cases, Enid and Becky are just mean without any provocation or justification.

So, I guess that since Enid and Becky are soooooo negative about everybody and everything, I don't feel so bad myself for being that negative in my review about the graphic novel.

I have read (and watch) a lot of black comedy products and I have laughed plenty with them, but while *Ghost World* tries to be humorous, honestly I didn't feel the impulse to laugh with it, not in the least.

### **MUCH LOST ABOUT POTENTIAL**

It's a shame (at least in my very personal opinion) that *Ghost World* didn't exploit its own storytelling potential, since the characters and ambiance were ideal to build a plot in the style of other products like the live-action film *Amélie* or the animated TV series *Daria*.

Curiously enough, *Ghost World* "born" in 1993 and lasted until 1997; *Daria* began in 1997 and *Amélie* is from 2001, so one could think that maybe, just maybe, *Ghost World* could serve as an inspiration and/or to open the road for those projects, but I don't know for sure about that, and after all, *Ghost World* is a very pale image in comparison with those mentioned wonderful masterpieces.

### **MUCH MOVIE ABOUT GRAPHIC NOVEL**

I knew that there is a film adaptation of *Ghost World*, but I haven't been able to watch it (yet). After reading this graphic novel, I wanted to check (reading it at IMDB) the premise in the movie, since I wasn't able to understand how somebody would be able to pull a movie out of this.

I wasn't surprised when I noticed that the movie had key changes in its core plot, since the graphic novel doesn't have any plot at all!

So, it's understandable that the film is different in its basics to be able to present a proper storyline to follow.

And I heard that the movie is far, FAR, **FAAAR** better product than the original graphic novel.

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### **Greta says**

I read this so-called classic years ago, and it felt like a culture clash. To me it was obvious this wasn't written by a woman. That's not the way girls talk and think, at least not in my experience.

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### **Andy says**

The worst thing that happened to "Ghost World" was that a movie was made of it, because it pawned the book effortlessly. Dan Clowes' book was so cynical and condescending towards its subject matter that the film couldn't help making the girls more likeable.

Case in point: when Enid and Rebecca are watching a lousy comic on television the Movie Enid says, “this guy rules, I want to totally do him”, it’s said with a dose of sarcasm and demented humor. The Book Enid says it with a jaded tone and a vacant facial expression. One Enid has soul and the other doesn’t. Guess which one you care about?

Ultimately the girls come off as numb and more than a little spoiled. That might be a middle-aged man’s take on teenage girls, but I’d prefer to read about two crazy girls that are Latina, gay and love punk rock. Kind of like Jaime Hernandez’ brilliant “Locas”, the original classic that influenced everyone, including “Ghost World”.

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## **Cindy says**

Don't hate me, Jayme! I liked it but didn't love it.

Two best friends since childhood fight but are inseparable sometime after high school but before college/work/life. They have no plans for the future, so they wallow in their silly lives, pushing around everyone around them. Really, they are flailing in that teenage angsty way.

Clowes captures the Essence of Hipster Friendship\*. Everybody sucks, everything is lame - but if it's extremely lame, then it becomes cool again. It's up to each hipster chick to convince the other that whatever they're into is lame. Then it's time to tug on the friend to do something bizarre because it will be amazing. It's really quite dark. But then it has the flashes of hilarity.

Also, I'd like to point out that Clowes is a middle-aged dude writing teenage girls perfectly. I saw him at a book festival recently, and he mentioned that he doesn't consider Ghost World as his best work. It just happens to be his most well-known work because of the movie. Which I never saw, because I roll like that. Also, he mentioned the distribution rights are all messed up, and that's why there's no DVD, for what it's worth.

I just can't decide if the book is just depressing or maniacally genius. That's more than enough to make me read more Clowes.

\*Now a fragrance for sale at that one small, grimy store downtown. You know, the one next to the indie record store that only has vinyl albums you've never heard of. Yeah, around the corner from the Apple store.

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## **Jeff says**

Three and a half stars rounded up.

My wife doesn’t usually make graphic novel reading “suggestions”, but when she does, in order to keep a harmonious household, I’ll read it.

What have I got to lose?

Heh.

She was spot on (read: lucky) with (randomly) choosing Daytripper, so I gave her powers of awesome comic book prophesy another go.

Summary: Two small-town adolescent best friends share snark about dudes, their future and the very meaning of life itself.

Who knew looking into the abyss could be so much fun.

Not much happens. A series of small vignettes play out and the girls slowly grow more distant from one another. The dialogue crackles with some wit and is essentially the driving force behind reading this.

Girls just want to have cranky fun and that's okay with me.

**Bottom line:** Mrs. Jeff is 2-for-2 and is batting a 1.000, so unless she picks up a volume of Aquaman next, her streak will continue. And I had no idea that there had been a movie based on this.

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## Trish says

In one of his interviews, the great graphic novelist Craig Thompson cites Daniel Clowes as a must-read graphic artist he admires. I admire Thompson's work, so it makes sense I would seek out Clowes. This graphic novel was made into a movie in 2001 starring Thora Birch and Scarlett Johansson. I haven't seen that yet, but it may well be the first sighting of Scarlett Johansson before big stardom.

A GR friend of mine wrote a deeply insightful meditation on the development of American cities in response to this work, going big in the face of adolescent alienation. As much as I enjoyed that piece, the book made a different impression on me. I'm going to go small: this is a novel of ideas that happen internally and out of sight. All we see is the petulance, the ripple on the surface of a psyche.

A young thin blond girl and a much edgier dark-haired friend who sports an aggressive haircut and heavy-framed glasses are nearing the end of high school. Contemplating their futures, the dark-haired girl wishes to become someone else. "I totally hate myself," she cries late one night lying on the couch of a boy she'd just admitted she loved. Poor guy.

At that age we are both afraid of and jealous of the complexities adults wrestle every day; we want to try out our problem-handling skills to see if they can measure up. We want the next thing to happen so that we are not merely sitting ducks when it does. Desire for the world and fear of that same world mix unsteadily in our

gut. We're not ready, but when will we ever be?

The ideas shown in this graphic novel struck me as completely within the range of normal adolescence angst, disaffection, confusion, and fear about the world and one's role in it. We're pretty obnoxious and self-absorbed at that age, as anyone with a teenager in the house will readily commiserate. Clowes actually plays it so low key we are as bored and unimpressed with their lives as the characters are.

My favorite frame comes near the end when the dark-haired girl is driving the hearse her father graciously bought for her to take to college. Despite having a vehicle and a direction, the girl says she is depressed: "Everything is all the same no matter where you go." The Buddhists say it like this: "Wherever you go, there you are."

The tricolor palette in this book works fine: black and white with a green wash. The pen drawings capture the sprawled-leg teenager-y postures, the trying-so-hard-to-be-cooler-than-thou clothing choices and the deliciously descriptive backgrounds absolutely fill in the picture. I thought Clowes was brave to take on the challenge of depicting the mind of a teenaged girl, but he caught that moment in the lifecycle of a female of the species perfectly.

This is another example, if we needed one, that the writing—including what *isn't* said—is as important as the drawing in great graphic novels. So many things have to come together to make a satisfying and lasting work. I admire the heck out of artists working in this medium and encourage anyone who hasn't picked up a graphic novel lately to try one. It's hard to read just one.

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## Lauren says

What can I say except...WOW! And, why has Daniel Clowes been hiding from me? (I suspect it's actually me failing to look hard enough!)

Ghost World (GW) is the first graphic novel by Clowes that I have had the pleasure of reading, and all I can say is that it is a delight from cover to cover. I loved the colour scheme, which is something I haven't come across before (an eerie/nostalgic blend of green and black and white), the dialogue which perfectly captured the teenage angst which prevailed throughout, and the characters which I bloody adored, especially Enid! If I had the guts, I would definitely be her!

GW focuses on the everyday antics of best friends Enid and Rebecca who seem to drift through life, commenting on creepy-looking newscasters, pervy guys in bookstores and bitching about Melorra (these latter scenes had me in stitches!) But they don't just bitch and pass judgement on others (although most of the time they do), they talk about their futures, where they see themselves, why they're still single and who they should make out with next; they (briefly) discuss politics, music...and Josh.

Their conversations are so natural and believable; they overflow with teenage angst whilst Enid, a hipster-type character, repeatedly changes her haircut throughout. To me, Enid made GW: she doesn't give a flying monkey about what people think of her, she is who she is and she dares to be different which is refreshingly charming. She is opinionated, loud, and sometimes, conceited, but again, this only adds to the lure of her character. She isn't afraid to speak plainly and that's what I find so invigorating about her. Although, it's easy to see that she does need Rebecca in her life. Together they bring out the best (and the worst) in each other which makes GW a beautiful and honest read.

At times, GW had me laughing out loud; certainly in the last quarter, I noticed that it became deeply affecting and bittersweet. Enid and Rebecca seem to drift apart when they realise they are heading towards different things and forces the reader to ask questions about their own friendships and how strong they really are.

Clowes covers myriad themes in GW from identity (which might explain Enid's ever changing haircut), sexuality (Enid and Rebecca are frequently labelled as lesbos), belonging (either together or with other people) and family (Enid's family, in particular, is pretty complicated.)

Ghost World is a richly detailed story full of wonderful scenes and razor-sharp wit, and will be definitely revisited again and again and again.

I think all that's left for me to do now is to hunt down and devour some more of Clowes's work.

A superb read for those who want a hilarious, teenage angst-ridden and heart-warming story.

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### **Jenny Gonzalez- Blitz says**

A male friend of mine once commented that the main characters of Ghost World didn't seem authentic because "their interests didn't seem to ring true for teenage girls". Actually, it's more that their interests didn't follow the spoon fed formula that most media TELLS us are the interests of most teenage girls. This is not a book about dating, makeovers, and popularity. It is the story of two sort of quirky girls who are above average intelligence (though not quite brilliant or anything) in a town that holds nothing for them. So to pass the time they snidely mock former classmates who pretty much deserve their disdain—the semi-political would be actress who betrays her ideals in a heartbeat if it gets her a spot in a commercial. Or the constantly striving-to-be-shocking zinester who seems to fancy himself the next Jim Goad with his obsessions of racism and pedophiles. Or else they spend time imagining people to be "Satanists" or what have you in order to spice up a fairly bland existence. Trouble is, Enid and Rebecca aren't exactly the lovable-outcast-against-the-system types often found in teen dramas of this sort either. They often seem as empty in their own ways as the people they goof on. Neither of them seems to have any ambitions or desires of their own as they wander about their town post high school. Enid expresses a vague desire to go to a new place and become a whole new person, but what sort of person exactly? Ultimately Enid and Rebecca aren't passionate about anything outside of their own waning friendship—every activity they consume is not because they genuinely enjoy it, but because it's oh-so "ironic" - the horrible comedian, the badly done 50's diner. Is this really living? Maybe that's why this is a "Ghost World".

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### **Lea says**

I re-read this on a whim and I'm certain I did not enjoy it this much 4 years ago. It's beautifully drawn and such an accurate description of a co-dependent adolescent best friendship. The ending made me so sad...

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### **Stacey (prettybooks) says**

*Ghost World* is the story of Enid and Becky, two best friends growing up and growing apart. It's hailed as "a



must for any self-respecting comics fan's library". Perhaps it's because I wasn't a teen in 90s USA, or perhaps I because I just wasn't like *these* particular teens, but I found them too pretentious and unpleasant to appreciate what happened to them. Although I enjoyed the occasional panel, the story and artwork didn't work for me. I welcome graphic novels about what it's like to be a teenage girl, but *Ghost World* sadly isn't one of them.

*I also reviewed this book over on Pretty Books.*

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## **Kim says**

I had heard great things about this and was on board until I found out it was a graphic novel. Okay, don't hate me, but something about graphic novels turns me off. Right from the get-go. It's completely shallow. I wish I could tell you why. Maybe it has to do with the fact that when I was 16 my best friend was into them. And when I say 'into them' what I really mean is that she found a boy she liked who liked comics so she had to know absolutely everything there was to know about the genre and it was the most pretentious thing ever.

My God, I think I made a breakthrough.

Anyway--as I was saying, I wasn't really looking forward to this, and even the first 50 pages were ho-hum, but somewhere within the hour it took me to finish this it got under my skin. I guess that whole relationship between Enid and Rebecca hit home.(see above) Thanks alot.

Oh, and I don't need to hear how great Scarlet Johansson was in the movie either.

And it sort of freaks me out that it was written by a guy.

Okay, I'm done now.

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## **Estelle says**

As a big fan of the movie adaptation I've always been curious but slightly hesitant to read the comic book. Especially after hearing some people weren't too fond of it.

Well, I kinda loved it! It's was a bit weird (the non-linear narrative, the use of only two colors, the bleak ending), but also hilarious, cynical and angsty but without taking itself too seriously (at least imo). Can't say I personally relate to either Enid or Rebecca, but I felt like I know those girls, I've seen bits and pieces of them in other people. You might call them mean and unlikeable, but I feel a bit of tenderness for them.

I liked it, but I can see why some people wouldn't. I'd say the movie is a lot more accessible and "cool".

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## jo says

american representations of adolescents and post-adolescents in films and books have always left me cold, if not alienated. why do i have so little in common with these kids? why was my life and the lives of the italian teens i currently know and follow so vastly different? i blame american culture of violence and vice (for lack of a better world), kids' need to find themselves in drunkenness and drugs, when we had... what? what did we have? what do the italian kids i know have?

i think we had, they have each other, large groups of kids roaming the city in various combos, girls, boys, girls and girls, boys and boys. i think we had mobility and cities designed for people not cars. we had walking distance and we had public transportation. also, we had spaces, public spaces, outdoor spaces designed for hanging out -- in neighborhoods (mainly in front of the church), in the city. lots of spaces. plazas, fountains, pedestrian-only streets, small public gardens (italy is lousy with public gardens, unlike its neighbors to the north), benches, stones, steps to buildings and monuments, sidewalks. there are people everywhere, the city is inhabited.

when i see kids represented in american films and books, i see a ton of emptiness. kids hang out in commercial not public spaces, because the concept of a well-tended, well-protected, accessible, attractive public space is pretty much non-existent. in my university, even the box office of the newly renewed football/baseball/whatever stadium is named after a donor. i honestly and sincerely anticipate that soon we'll have to preface a lecture with "this class is brought to you by...".

if you have nowhere to go, and if you can't go there anyway because you have no transportation except your parents, you hang out in malls, diners, ice cream parlors, fast food joints, bowling alleys, or the back of your school. the latter is maybe the best scenario. i cannot imagine a childhood so starkly defined by commerce. i know that kids everywhere breathe commerce, but i cannot imagine a childhood so controlled by commerce that there are literally no spaces that are free of it.

so this book got me down during its first half. i hate empty american cities, big and small, and kids lost in it. i hated the terrible disaffection, rage, and plain nastiness of enid and rebecca. i hate the heavily underscored lack of family life, this eternal american parentlessness -- the trope of the absent parent, independent as it is from the fact of the parent's physical existence.

but then i started feeling tenderness for the two girls, because of their tender love for each other, their tip-toeing around the conventions that allow its various modes of expression, the light narrative touches that convey how straying from the rigid boundaries of these conventions becomes just too much (a closing panel that simply says, "let go of my hand"). i also started feeling tenderness for the way in which the girls talk to each other through boys -- by talking about boys, by passing boys from one to the other, by obsessing over boys, by despising ugly boys. it's such a lonely and doomed love, so unfree to blossom, so constrained, it breaks your heart.

and at the end, of course, it withers and dies, not like a raisin in the sun, but like a dream that was squashed from the start. bleak, man.

i blame this on suffocating locales, sordid city aesthetics, mangled architecture, and a ton of institutionalized loneliness.

i wish our cities, our *american* cities, the very best, but i don't see how anything short of demolition and stark

rebuilding will make them more friendly to kids, less conducive to such a powerful absorption of ugliness that life will be forever marked by it. after finishing the book i slept and i dreamed, as i heartbreakingly often do, of century-layered, beautiful cities, rambling living rooms for roamers, chatters, and lovers alike.

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### **MissAnnThrope says**

Remember those angry, bitchy girls in high school, who sat around judging people and talking smack behind everyone's back? Okay, now imagine being locked in a box for an hour forced to listen to those jealous twits and you've got Ghost World in a nutshell.

I have been wanting to read Ghost World for ages. I stumbled across a copy of it at the library, so finally picked it up. I think if I had originally read this a decade ago, I might not have disliked the characters so much. Maybe I wasn't in the right mood to be reading this at the present time, but I felt impatient reading the whining of two bitter disenchanted teens.

I almost stopped reading a few pages in because of the incessant complaining. However, I'm glad that I continued reading because the characters become less annoying towards the end. The attempts to be witty failed miserably. Apparently, I'm in the minority here since this is a cult classic with rave reviews. I wouldn't advise reading this on a day you're plagued with ill humor. You'll only want to chuck the book across the room.

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### **David Schaafsma says**

6/27/17 Reread for my YA GN/Comics summer class, discussed with clips from the movie, which more and more seems like a light rom-com version of the much deeper and richer (and grittier, nastier) book. One dimension of this book that seems clearer to me in this reading is that one of the things they are struggling with in this summer after high school graduation is sexuality, including some Q (of the GLTQ) moments. Who are they, and who do they want to become? Enid may be going to college; Rebecca just wants things to stay the same between them forever. Many people find these girls too nasty, but Clowes, an alt comix/underground guy, didn't write them for everybody. They are two sort of punkish/art crowd cynics that seem very familiar to me.

6/19/16 Ghost World is Clowes's comics masterpiece, his first book work to to cross over from alternative comics into mainstream success, with a film adaptation. One of the first alt comics ever to do that, actually. The text features two recent girls, Enid Coleslaw and Rebecca Doppelmeyer, recent graduates of high school, both disaffected and cynical. They seem to hate everything, and pretty humorously so. One of my favorite moments is when Rebecca makes the claim that Enid hates all men. Enid says, no, there's one guy, David Clowes, he's like this cartoonist, he's pretty cool. . . :) Enid Coleslaw is a rough version of Clowes, but it is my understanding he modeled Enid on a classmate with whom he went to high school in the northwest suburbs of Chicago.

Enid and Rebecca go to yard sales, they go to coffee shops and restaurants, they try on different costumes as they try to find a place to NOT fit in with the horrors of modern urban society. The dialogue is spot on, sometimes acid, usually rude and crude, though if you scratch just below the surface, there is a kind of vulnerability, even fragility, there. They are friends, anti-social as they seem. They have as interesting a

collection of acquaintances as exist in any teen novel: The quiet Josh, who they try to involve in going into a porn store, budding actress Melorra, Bob Skeetes the astronomer, the morbidly hilarious John Ellis, Johnny Apeshit. . .

They seem a little post-punk, all these urban kids, and if sometimes mean to others and each other, they do seem to care about each other, and they do want love. The art is comics genius, and has been recognized at recent years by the art world, on a par with Chris Ware and Seth. Clowes was featured in a huge Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) exhibit.

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## **Evan says**

I could easily see myself depicted in a panel in this lovely graphic novel, with its snarky young teen heroine Enid reading my review of it and saying something like: "I mean, what kind of loser dork has the time to write a \*review\* of a 20-year-old graphic novel. Probably some middle-age loser living in his mom's basement."

Actually, I have written Goodreads reviews in my mom's basement. So, touche' Enid.

But I am writing this one in my own home, the double-mortgaged one. So, sweet Enid, allow one chink to open in that wall of rebellion you've built of your nagging insecurities and youthful fears and have some slight sympathy for this middle-aged dork and allow him to praise you and the *Ghost World* that you inhabit.

First, *Ghost World*, the 2001 film adaptation of this 1990s graphical, is one of my favorite movies of the last decade. It was inevitable that I would read the original. At first, I wasn't liking the book as much as the film, but as I read, I was slowly captured by its spell, its mood, its wisdom.

There are substantial differences between this and the movie, so I'd recommend both, as adjunct and complementary works. The biggest difference is the prominence of the Bob Skeetes character in the movie (renamed Seymour and played by Steve Buscemi in the film). In the book, he is a minor character, and yet he looms as a kind of spectre over the whole thing. Clowes does not forget him, and by the end of the novel he comes back for a key scene. In the book he's a fortune-teller, which ties into the idea of the uncertain future that lingers hauntingly throughout the book.

As it happens, Enid is smarter than Skeetes, and she knows the future better than he does. And no wonder she is resistant to moving forward into it. She knows it is a banal one, in which friends drift apart. In which dreams, if one has them at all to start with, fade into the boring practicalities of survival and selling-out.

It is also a book about the hopelessness of recapturing the certainties of the innocent past. Of re-listening to old children's records to try to once again feel the wonder of a hopeful world, of re-visiting the tawdry tourist-trap dinosaur village in hopes of futilely reliving barely remembered wonders.

It is also about the casual cruelties of youth, the discovery of the blithe and heedless hurtfulness of casual insults. The realization that self-satisfying and self-satisfied sarcasm extracts its price, not just on others but on the wielder of the cosmic joke.

It is also about the sameness of places and people. And wishing it weren't so. About fake 50's nostalgia diners where the pop cultural mix is so fragmented and people's perceptions so blunted that nobody seems to

realize that all the songs on the jukebox are from the 1960s.

It's about a place in the mind and the heart, where, despite all of this, there is a ghost bus that still, just maybe and just might, stop for us one last time and let us ride away to somewhere magical.

I loved this.

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## **Panagiotis says**

To Ghost World δεν είναι κ'μικς, είναι γκρ'φικ ν'βελ: τα καρ? του δεν μπλ'κονται το ?να μ'σα στο ?λλο, ?χουν σαφ? ρυμοτομ?α. Τα σχ?δια είναι επιμελ?ς απλο?κ?, η υπ?θεση περιστρ?φεται γ'ρω απ? ανθρ?πινους προβληματισμο?ς ?νευ δρ?σεως. Γκρ'φικ ν'βελ τα λ?νε. Εγ? τα λ?ω κ'μικς κι αυτ?.

?χει κ?τι απ? ανεξ?ρτητο κινηματογρ?φο η δι?γηση. Οι χαρακτ?ρες είναι ελαφρ?ς δυσλειτουργικο?, δ?ο κοπ?λες που περιφ?ρονται στην ζω? τους, χλευ?ζουν, θ?βουν κ?θε συμβατικ? και μη ?νθρωπο που συναντ?ν. Τις απασχολο?ν οι ανθρ?πινες και δη ερωτικ?ς σχ?σεις. Υπ?ρχει και μια υποβ?σκουσα σεξουαλικ?τητα μεταξ? τους, αρσενικ? δεν τους κ?νουν και φα?νεται να αποζητ? η μια την κατανο?ση της ?λλης. Αυτ? η υστερικ? στα μ?τια των αντρ?ν μ?ξη κτητικ?τητας και ανταγωνισμο? που χαρακτηρ?ζει των θηλ?ων τις φιλ?ες. Η πρωταγων?στρια αλλ?ζει τα μαλλι? της, φορ?ει μ?σκες, τραβολογ?ει φ?λους σε μαγαζι? με δονητ?ς. Παρακολουθε? κ?τι τυχ?ρπαστους σατανιστ?ς. Γενικ? περν?νε πολλ? παρδαλ? ?τομα απ? τα καρ? αυτο? του βιβλ?ου. ?μως τελικ? είναι μια ?κρως ενδιαφ?ρουσα ματι? στην ενηλικ?ωση και το το?χος το δυσθε?ρητο που φαντ?ζει για πολλο?ς ν?ους η "πραγματικ?" ζω?. Αν σας ακο?γονται αδι?φορα ?λα αυτ?, ?σως και να είναι. Δεν είναι για ?λους το κ'μικς του Clowes. Εμ?να που μ' αρ?σει η εναλλακτικ?, κινηματογραφικ? αφ?γηση που αναπτ?σσει τα τελευτα?α χρ?νια στην ?λλη πλευρ? του Ατλαντικο?, μ? ?ρεσε η ιστορ?α, μ? ?ρεσαν και τα σχ?δια του Clowes γιατ? αφ?νουν την ιστορ?α να κυλ?σει απ? μ?νη της, φαινομενικ? διακπαιρεωτικ?, αλλ? απολ?τως χαριτωμ?να, π?νκιικα με σαφε?ς αναφορ?ς στα εναλλακτικ? κ'μικς των 70s.

Ε?ναι σκληρ?, αλλ? κ?τω απ? την επιφ?νεια τρυφερ? το βιβλ?ο το?το. Αν σας αρ?σει η ιδ?α μια ιστορ?ας μ'σα απο καρ?, αλλ? τα συμβατικ? κ'μικς τα ?χετε κατατ?ξει σε ιστορ?ες με μπ?ρτες και γροθι?ς, ?να τ?τοιο βιβλ?ο θα σας κ?νει να αναθεωρ?σετε για τις δυνατ?τητες της 9ης Τ?χνης.

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## **Jess ❀Harbinger of Blood-Soaked Rainbows❀ says**

**Read a book you can finish in a day.**

### **3.5 stars**

I needed a literary palette cleanser because I'm not totally feeling anything right now. I just watched this movie last week and thought maybe I needed to revisit this book. I need to start out by saying that the Terry Zwigoff film based on this graphic novel is absolute perfection to me. It is one of my top five favorite movies and reminds me of high school when it came out, all the good things about teen angst, self-loathing and counter-culture, finding yourself and saying goodbye. I've read some of Daniel Clowes comics before (I

absolutely ADORE his *Eightball* Comics which my roommate from college and I used to binge-read after getting high from this seriously amazeballs steamroller we made from a recycled poster tube that we affectionately dubbed "The Stinger" and we spent three years graffiti-ing it with pen and ink drawings of wasps and other such stinging atrocities....but that's another story for later) and I really liked them, but this one always felt a little intimidating to me. I was afraid I would like it better than the movie and that somehow my movie that has over the years reached sacred status would pale in comparison. But when I read this book for the first time a few years ago, the opposite ended up being true. I really did not like this at all. The movie was better.

After a re-read, I decided that I was being a tad too harsh the first go-round, and I actually added a star, making my rating a 3.5, up from a 2.5. I adore Clowes's artwork in this book. Adore it. I think it is brilliant. It's black and white with a turquoise color wash, and the turquoise does an amazing job of setting up the atmosphere and tone of this novel. Clowes is also extremely effective at using his artwork to convey history and emotions that are absent from the storyline. Like the fact that his cover page features a drawing of Enid and Rebecca as younger girls staring at a gravestone. Rebecca has this protective vibe about her, and I realized that they were staring at Enid's mother's gravestone. No mention is EVER made in the comic or in the movie about Enid's mother being deceased. She lives with her single father, and mentions are made about his second and third wives, but we never know what has happened to Enid's mother. One single drawing that isn't even included in the book itself has imparted such an important part of the story and to Enid's character. These two girls are much deeper and more dynamic than I gave Clowes credit for on my first read. With that being said, I still prefer the movie.

The movie condensed and added characters and gave a quirkiness to it that was lacking here. This book is ultimately about two best friends who have grown up together and have forged an inseparable and seriously intimate bond with one another. The book starts with their graduation (shown only in a single drawing on the page opposite the gravestone drawing on the cover page)

from high school and picks up as they start their lives afterward. They come to realize that the real world isn't high school, and their relationship becomes tense and strained as each begins her journey to become the person she is meant to be. Old jealousies and insecurities arise and though it becomes obvious that their friendship may not stand the test of time, neither one wants to let go. Their friendship seems to be the only constant thing in both their lives. It is a security blanket, a reassurance that someone in the world will always be there. Enid is overly critical of everything Rebecca does, and Rebecca is extremely jealous of the person Enid is. And those insecurities build and build until they just drift apart.

It's funny, I think the movie has a stronger voice than the book does, and it takes characters and situations and themes and kind of turns them around a bit, so its similar, but says something different. And I like what the movie says more. The movie takes Clowes's 80 page novella and gives it more juice. I actually found the book to be quite sad in a sweet kind of way and didn't laugh out loud or find the humor humorous. The movie, on the other hand, is downright hysterical. It's really hard to compare the two because they are so completely different in tone. The movie has stuff like this that I go crazy for:

But the book has stuff like this that has so much meaning, truth, and emotion in only a single frame:

So I'm really glad I re-read this because once I was able to detach myself from my love for the movie, I could see that they really weren't that similar to begin with. I like what Clowes did with these girls and I think their actions, words, relationships, and attitudes are very realistic. Enid especially is such a great portrayal of a teenage girl who has no idea who she is. She lost her mother young, is a Jewish girl with a

passive father and a string of stepmothers and an Aryan best friend. She is always looking at changing who she is because she utterly hates herself. Anytime anybody shows the slightest interest in her, she shuts down and closes up. Rebecca is so caught-up with being Enid's best friend that she forgets to be Rebecca. The way this short story unfolds is actually quite lovely. I wish this book were three times its length. It does have a lot to say, and I think these girls deserve to be heard.

Interestingly enough, I was just having a short conversation today with a friend on here about art vs. words in graphic novels and comics. He is a word guy and I am an art girl. I love comics and graphic novels because they combine two of my favorite art forms. Words and artwork each have their own story here, and I have to say that my biggest criticism of the book is that the words don't say as much as the art does. I get more from that single drawing in the graveyard than I do from the dialogue in a 15 page spread. But that's ok, I guess. This book has enormous sticking power, and though it isn't my favorite, I am really glad I own it. But seriously. Watch the movie. And if you don't like it,

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### **christa says**

I just stopped hating Daniel Clowes' graphic novel "Ghost World" like 7 minutes ago. Literally. I've had a long history of hating the listless bitches Enid and Rebecca and their ironic diner hopping, misfit hounding and personality contriving. But it just went away. Like a decade-old hate fever that finally broke.

Fact: My boyfriend and I rarely fight. So rarely that I can remember that we did have a fight in 2007 while watching the movie "Ghost World" about how much I hated the movie "Ghost World." It was a lot of me ranting, not unlike Enid, and him confused at my outburst.

Other fact: I was drunk.

When a person decides to pull up a chair up to the whole graphic novels table, and when a person divulges that this new interest probably won't include books with Super Werewolves and Masked Crusaders, people already at the table will recommend "Ghost World." If a person adds a few graphic novels to her Amazon Wish List, Amazon will recommend "Ghost World." It is, apparently, part of the canon. Strangers will recommend "Ghost World." It might be the most readily available of graphic novels.

I got about a quarter of the way into "Ghost World" about two weeks ago, sighing and eye rolling all while getting really stoked about finally reading something I hate. I could really get in there and hate it super hard all over the internet. It's been far too long. I've been cursed by a steady stream of three-star or better picks. Blerg. Boring. I set "Ghost World" aside for whatever reason and when I picked it up again I started at the beginning. And ... nothing. No throbbing forehead veins. My blood didn't simmer. No eye rolling. I thought about Enid, her ever-changing hair and style statements, following people she believes are satanists around the grocery store to see what satanists eat and having a snarky comment and mean-spirited nickname about every person who falls into her field of vision.

Nothing. In fact, I laughed.

The story is mini chapters in the life of best friends Enid and Rebecca. They're droll and bored and boring and they sprawl on beds and talk and bitch about models in magazines and they go to diners and make up stories about the other regulars. Sometimes they wander around and do stuff. But mostly they're in this limbo between high school and college and so close they wonder if it's healthy. They abuse the pushover guy friend.

They dream of walking into a sex shop and looking around. At one point Enid really gets into the cartoonist Daniel Clowes.

Don't get me wrong. They are still unlikable little snots I'm glad I didn't sit next to in homeroom. But there are some truly great scenes. Enid tries to muster some romantic nighttime feelings for a teacher, testing and ditching out on different scenarios in her head when she's in bed -- including one that finds him fully clothed in the shower with her -- before finally falling asleep without consummating the sexy visual. Or, during a conversation about a guy Enid and Rebecca know who is totally into politics, Enid apes a conversation with him:

"Yeah Jason, ever since you stopped eating meat and bathing and started doing grafitti and fucking up ATM machines, the world has become a way better place."

So I stand corrected. "Ghost World" isn't terrible. It certainly isn't anything to fight about.

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### **Fabian says**

This is a GREAT companion piece to the motion picture. Sure, this one started it all but it is interesting to see where the screenwriter's words maintained such a close fidelity to Clowes's vision; keeping the same spirit of the book in the movie is a wonder to behold. While the film seems incredibly depressing at times, the comic manages to make you feel that there is no sadness in the Ghost World world, only wackiness and teenage girl banter, um "Daria meets Pulp Fiction." There was one particular gag about a girl diagnosed with cancer, and the chance meeting between the heroines and the poor girl... such low-brow fare just made me cry with laughter (something rare for any book to do). Both girls are/feel like pariahs, but they embrace it. Here is something that my generation can really relate to, especially once out, facing up to the "real world."

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