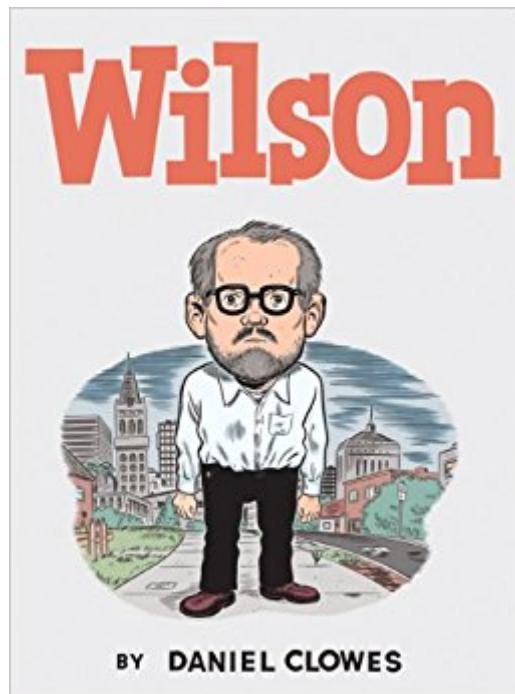


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Wilson



Synopsis

AN ORIGINAL GRAPHIC NOVEL FROM THE OSCAR-NOMINATED SCREENWRITER AND AWARD-WINNING CARTOONIST Meet Wilson, an opinionated middle-aged loner who loves his dog and quite possibly no one else. In an ongoing quest to find human connection, he badgers friend and stranger alike into a series of onesided conversations, punctuating his own lofty discourses with a brutally honest, self-negating sense of humor. After his father dies, Wilson, now irrevocably alone, sets out to find his ex-wife with the hope of rekindling their long-dead relationship, and discovers he has a teenage daughter, born after the marriage ended and given up for adoption. Wilson eventually forces all three to reconnect as a family • a doomed mission that will surely, inevitably backfire. In the first all-new graphic novel from one of the leading cartoonists of our time, Daniel Clowes creates a thoroughly engaging, complex, and fascinating portrait of the modern egoist • outspoken and oblivious to the world around him. Working in a single-page-gag format and drawing in a spectrum of styles, the cartoonist of *GhostWorld*, *Ice Haven*, and *David Boring* gives us his funniest and most deeply affecting novel to date.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Best Books of the Month, April 2010: Wilson is billed as Daniel Clowes's "first original graphic novel," which sounds a little funny, since he's the author of *Ghost World*, one of the instant classics of that young genre, as well as the lesser-known but strangely wonderful *David Boring*, among others. But his other books first appeared serialized in his *Eightball* comics series, while *Wilson* comes to us all at once, in a beautiful oversized package. *Wilson* tells a single, complete story (of

the bitterly lonely man named in the title), but it does so in tiny bites. Each page is a stand-alone vignette, in the familiar newspaper comics rhythm of setup, setup, setup, punch line: like Garfield, say, if Jon were a foul-mouthed incipient felon (and drawn with the tenderly grotesque genius of Clowes). The gags are the sort that stick in your throat rather than go down easy, and together they add up to a life that's just barely open to the possibility of wresting oneself out of the repetitions of hostility and failure. It's an intriguing addition to the most thrilling career in comics. --Tom Nissley

Starred Review. Clowes (*Ghost World*) takes his particular brand of misanthropic misery to new levels of brilliance in this book, a series of one-page gags that show the divorced and lonely main character repeatedly attempting to engage with life, and then falling back into his hell of pessimism. Clowes uses a variety of drawing styles to depict Wilson and his world; sometimes he's highly realistic, other times he's an *Andy Capp* "style cartoon, but he's always the same downbeat guy. In one sketch titled *FL 1282*, Wilson asks the kid seated next to him on a plane about his line of work. When the kid answers that he does I.T. stuff, Wilson comes back at him with a mockingly satirical description of his own supposed work, using only initials. The last panel shows Wilson looking at a *Spirit* magazine and asking, Christ, do you realize how ridiculous you sound? Clearly, the comment is directed as much at himself as to the I.T. kid. This attitude of solipsistic despair is expressed incisively and cleverly, taking Wilson through a search for his ex-wife, Pippi, who has become a prostitute since leaving him, and their daughter, put up for adoption years earlier. Clowes offers another beautifully drawn slice of piercing social commentary. (Apr.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Yet another masterpiece from Daniel Clowes, who manages to somehow continue evolving while staying true to his particular aesthetic. Here, he has created a character that is both sympathetic and repulsive- or maybe not repulsive, but just really, really pathetic. His pain is your punchline, though- a sort of humdrum existential Walter White character portrait for those of us who will never make crystal meth.

A while ago, Dan Clowes did the strip *Mister Wonderful*. It followed the ups and downs of its main character in a sort of tragic/romantic-comedy with more color than Clowes usually brings to his work. With Wilson, Clowes focuses more on the downs of life, the quite and subtle depressions, the lonely excitements and even the fondness for love deep within his title character. The thing Wilson has that *Mister Wonderful* didn't is a far more person and introverted character and style than *Mister*

Wonderful. The styles Clowes uses vary and don't necessarily weave into one another too comfortably. Much of the book is broken down in form, like classic newspaper comics (with more Nancy than Nemo). Wilson's moods and environment change along with each page. Sometimes the changes are minor along with Wilson's temperament and attitude and the page style compliments it. The story follows along the same pacing Mister Wonderful did, mostly because it was serialized in one-page instalments while Wilson is one-page vignettes in days or moments of the same day along Wilson's unexciting life. It's Wilson's own conflict with urban frustrations and boredom that give each page it's variation on mulling over the mundanities' of life. One page might be a gag of modern content fleshed out in a formula that is fixed into the DNA of comic from 3 panel dailies to the likes of Mad, and the next might be a slice of life moment wfilled with sadness draped in one of Clowes typical hues. This book is a peculiar one in the Clowes library not just because it is amorphous, but because it seems like a stepping stone. Very much a summation of what came before, Wilson interacts with examination of not just the self but of the form (stylistic and of comics itself). Seeing style change every page is almost like having a new artist take on the same character through-out it's life the way newspaper strips do. The book itself is a bit of overkill. For only 80 pages, why is it hard cover and with such a price? I would much rather have this in soft cover, printed with a collection of the Mister Wonderful pages --especially since this book is in this oversized format with thick paper stock and not very much on its own-- with a lower price tag. While I can understand that people can be upset this book does echo the past to the point where it feels a bit familiar, it works well on its own but does lack a french phrase.

I had a lot of the complaints made here about Clowes' last work Ice Haven - retreading old themes, the idea well running dry. I enjoyed Wilson a lot more. Four stars because it's not up to his top work, but still a very engrossing story that I'll re-read. Wilson is an anti-hero, a flat out bastard. But he's a multi-dimensional and interesting character. You feel empathy for him and all the characters in this bleak story. Wilson is a mature work, this is not bleakness from the pen of a self-absorbed adolescent. There's a bit of dark humor too. Recommended.

Funny and bleak at the same time.....one page vignettes of the human condition.

'Wilson', the latest book by cartoonist extraordinaire Daniel Clowes is unique in both Clowes' work as a whole and in the evolution of comic books/graphic novels as a serious medium. Unlike his previous books like 'Ghost World', 'Wilson' did not appear first in a serialized form. It was written as

a book and is meant to be read as a book. That very fact is one of the things that causes the reading experience of 'Wilson' to be intriguing. Although Clowes has stated his desire for 'Wilson' to be viewed as a whole, the story is told in the form of page-long 'snippets' that resemble Sunday funnies comic strips such as 'Peanuts', which appears to have been a substantial influence on Clowes. The reader, who in this case was myself, may at the beginning of the book may be tempted to view the first handful of snippets as amusing little experiments (a number of different drawing styles are applied throughout), shortly discovers something : a story emerges, one that is funny, disturbing difficult to forget. By the time that the book is over, one realizes that Clowes has created a very unique character, as contradictory and troubled as any real human being can be. In Clowes' hands, the comic book/graphic novel/whatever the hell you want to call it has become a very unique medium, one distinctly of its own. Clowes has done great work before, but 'Wilson' is a book that makes one look forward to what he does next.

Daniel Clowes continues to reward his faithful readers by exploring new territory, both in narrative and tone. It might be hard to believe that this book comes from the same mind as the author of the bizarre masterpiece "A Velvet Glove Cast in Iron", but it provides just as many memorable characters and witty lines of dialogue as any work in this master's growing library of comics "must-reads". This is a book that should be shared with friends, grandparents, and strangers on the street corner. I know what I'll be stuffing stockings with this Kwanzaa.

This graphic novel by Daniel Clowes is about a misanthrope named "Wilson". It is told in 69 one page comic strips of 6 to 8 panels. The pages are drawn in several different styles, ranging from realistic to cartoonish. Although each page stands on its own, and ends with a punchline, taken together they tell a story. It is a very good tragi-comic story, although Wilson is not someone you would want to spend time with in real life.

fun read from a master, highly recommended

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