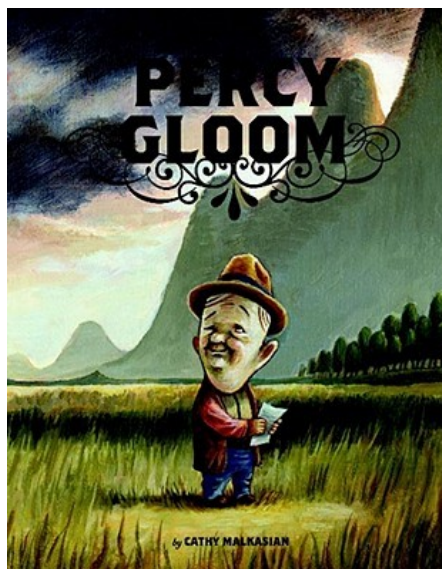




Percy Gloom

Cathy Malkasian

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Percy Gloom Cathy Malkasian

Cathy Malkasian has made the jump from animation to the printed page with a graceful, delicate leap. She deftly uses her pencil to create thick, expressive characters moving through the twilight of a shadowy Orwellian world. Humorous and bewitching at the same time, *Percy Gloom* is a unique gem of a story. The story begins with our hero bravely striking out on his own for the first time, leaving his mother's house to apply for his dream job as a cautionary writer for the Safely-Now Corporation. In the process, he uncovers an unreal world of secret societies, benevolent families, and bureaucratic security. Lazy-eyed *Percy Gloom* fights to overcome the loss of his wife, Lila, to a truth-pointing, lotharian cult leader. Approached by his doctor to help protect some special people and given advice by some talking goats, Percy comes to terms with his place in the gloomy world and finds himself reaching enlightenment (literally). *Percy Gloom* is an absurd but hopeful fable for these strange times we live in.

2008 Eisner Award winner: Russ Manning Most Promising Newcomer Award and 2008 Eisner Award Nominee: Best New Graphic Album.

Percy Gloom Details

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From Reader Review Percy Gloom for online ebook

Sean Duffy says

3 1/2 stars. Beautiful, weird illustrations. A story about the meaning of life and cautionary writing--I think. It's Woodrind weird, only with more words. Best line:
"As the world crumbled I warned against nail clippers."

Eric says

I thought that I was hallucinating. There are few comics that are as sweet, humorous, poetic, and beautiful as Percy Gloom. The quirky art drew my attention but the beautiful story and gems of wisdom that are tossed like pearls kept me hooked on Percy Gloom. A must read for comic enthusiasts looking for a break from super-stories or anyone looking to see where words, panels, and drawings are capable of taking you.

Jonathan Forisha says

Really I'd give it 3 1/2 stars.

The art is wonderful in its simplicity. The story is nuts, involving children trying to crumble a whole city by removing a single magical stone and cults of funnelheads intent on destroying the local fair.

It's a zany ride, and unfortunately I couldn't help but feel that I'd read plenty of other stories with this same basic protagonist. No, the others weren't Glooms or had lazy eyes, but so typically nowadays the more literary of the graphic novel genre star rather pitiful and introspective types who have a difficult time getting on in life. I wish this trend would end, though it does seem to be working since this, among other similar stories, end up being quite a joy.

Ill D says

Percy Gloom is a one of those graphic novels that at first glance looks like it'd be something exciting and fresh, but stellar artwork- no matter how hypnotic- is no replacement for a scant and bizarrely developed plot that touches on various philosophies like existentialism, nihilism, and various phenomena that we all face- but doesn't really coalesce into any powerful message or conclusion. We're supposed to feel sad for Percy- and that's basically it. We see him try to make sense of the oddly fantasy-esque world that he is thrust into- that we can barely make sense of ourselves. He's something of an autistic, a hypochondriac, and a momma's boy- saturated with timidity and a, disappointingly, unendearing simplicity and single-mindedness- under which there is supposed to be buried a heart of gold. While such a character construction might work in another story- how this character is formed, grown, and interacts with his outside world I find myself unable to care because his world is very strange, very different, and thus unnervingly un-relatable.

While the writer probably meant to create this fantasy world as something of a caricature of our world in order to critique its institutions she doesn't like (like corporate America I guess)- it just comes across as trite and stupid because her treatments of them are so simple and uninspiring. Percy too faces volcanic

vituperations from capricious bosses. As his job unfolds he also confronts the typical conniving over-achieving co-worker. Unfortunately its not so much the simplistic and insipid take on this institution but, that fact that its importance to the plot is minimal and it merely exists as a segue to the actual conflict. Nothing to see here folks, move along.

And the conflict itself is pretty stupid. And the only way to cure it is for Percy to go through a highly abbreviated and unexplained- like everything else in this novel- mythical journey- that would take up a significant portion of a book of any other novel in this fantasy genre- but only takes a few pages in this- in which the protagonist acquires a stupid macguffin to tie all the loose ends up. Through which the antagonist is supposedly vanquished- even though we never see what happens to her. And Percy lives his life by coming to a puerile existential conclusion that life is just is and we need to enjoy it just 'cause. How dumb.

I think there is supposed to be some subtle critiques of nihilism - in that the antagonist is fearful of death and has committed- along with her diabolical followers- despicable acts to hold its icy hand at bay. Also, there seems to be a cagey affirmation of eastern philosophy as superior since the antagonist is defeated by the knowledge- that everything always was with no beginning with no end. Fatalism also seems to play a part in this but, isn't really discussed at all.

I hope someday Cathy Malkasian can put her stunning and hypnotic pencil work to a story that actually is emotionally involving and relatable to her dear readers. Until then I'll be yawning away.

Jess Rowan says

Feel like I missed something with this one...

Abel says

Curioso. He leído esta novela gráfica justo después de Como viaja el agua. Ambos trabajos hablan del mismo tema, del sinsentido de la vida y de cómo reaccionan sus personajes ante él, pero me han producido el efecto opuesto.

Si Como viaja el agua se acercaba al tema con un enfoque realista, Percy Gloom lo hace a través de una fábula poliédrica que termina resultando mucho más efectiva.

Interesante.

Donny says

I'm not sure what I was supposed to get from this. Or the artist's vision.

Ellen says

¬_?(?)_¬

vostendrasamigos yotengolibros says

It's a sweet book, the illustration and art in general is very well done and even though I like it, I end up not being crazy about it, I don't even know really why, I think that maybe all the metaphors don't trigger nothing or have something that I can personally relate, I don't know, I think I might give it a second reading in a while so I can maybe reach a better conclusion, but for now, this is why I give this 3 points instead of 4.

Chris says

Percy Gloom lives in an odd Dave Cooper "Crumple" sort of world. There are "just add water" mountains and goats that sing opera. This reads like a Kafka tale, had Kafka also been a cartoonist who trained under Edward Gorey, Richard Sala and Dave Cooper.

Dave Riley says

First thing I thought about when entering the world of Percy Gloom was *Alice in Wonderland*. Hold that thought and lay on some of Terry Gilliam's *Brazil* and you're getting half way there.

An absolute delight. A bizarre world is Percy's inhabited by nightmarish consequences and peopled by grotesque characters. It's Dickens gone noir.

The fantastical narrative weaves itself around an omnipresent back story that ensures that this is no ordinary graphic novel. EXTRAordinary it is. It's down-the-rabbit-hole stuff peppered with some riveting flights of visual fancy. Not one pedestrian page or panel. Everything is integrated like a seamless garment.

It may seem a weird business to negotiate through all the characters that people Gloom's comic noir but *everyone of them* is unforgettable. Lines and washes on the page; thought and talk bubbles...a magic kingdom leaps out at you. Totally credible.

This is the comic you read in order to re-read often.

Peacegal says

Percy Gloom is a small, hapless man who stumbles through a labyrinthine world populated by grotesque, pig-faced people. I honestly wonder if this graphic novel was based upon the author's dreams and nightmares--it has all the elements of such, including confusing landscapes, everyday worries magnified to epic proportions, important-seeming but eventually nonsensical revelations, and visits from the dead and estranged.

This graphic novel, like so many others, from the get-go contains elements of the "demon storyline" I've so often bemoaned on Goodreads. I sometimes wonder if I had joined Goodreads a bit earlier, and paid more attention to what was going on around me, could I have put two and two together and prevented myself from becoming "Peacegal Gloom"? Probably not, but I can dream, can't I? Yet as the world crumbled I argued about the merits of rock bands with strangers on the Internet.

Raina says

Read with Beautiful Darkness by Fabien Vehlmann.

Strange unexpected storytelling, that transcends its at-first difficult-to-swallow-illustration style. I loved the details in the illustrations - the giant snails, the shapes of the trees. Transgressive and dark, despite its seeming naivete.

Michael says

Both *Percy Gloom* and *Temperance* are similar in that they are folksy fantasy parables that deal with big human themes. *Percy Gloom* follows a man coping with questions of life and death, entering a new city where these factors are writ large in the supporting cast around him. It's intelligent and well drawn, and worth a look.

Temperance is better, however.

Nicholas Karpuk says

This book snuck up on me.

I expected a sort of indie-comic transgressiveness, with the usual sort of depraved behavior and twisted scenarios. What I received instead feels more like a more whimsical Kafka.

Surrealism is an impressive trick to pull off well. You have to have a world with bendable rules, but one where the stakes for the protagonist still matter. Modern comics very rarely center on a nice guy. Anti-heroes and edgy jaded cynics normally populate comics, so its refreshing to have a story about a guy who's neurotic but genuinely wants the best for everyone and feels so passionate about the pain in his life that some pages hurt to read.

What snuck up on me was the optimism. Despite the name, there's a constant thread of hope that passes through this story. Roald Dahl often had the one kind adult archetype in his stories, the figure who helped kids realize that not everyone was a horrible human being. Cathy Malkasian puts characters of this type at even intervals, so the hopelessly neurotic and often mean-spirited people Gloom encounters don't overwhelm the reader.

And ultimately, the story leaves off with a set of moment that are both touching and ultimately satisfying. The struggles of life come through in a fascinating way when you have a character who could live forever or kill himself at will. It may not have a explosive conclusion, or a sexy style, but *Percy Gloom* will linger in my memories, digging a bigger impression the more I think about it.

Melki says

Percy Gloom's dream job is at **Safely-Now, a Cautionary Writing Institute**, where he will test products and warn the public of their many dangers.

There's also possible tooth damage if you bite the hairbrush...

Will a series of bizarre coincidences and even more bizarre characters keep the diminutive Percy from fulfilling his fondest wishes?

There's not a lot of rhyme or reason to this silly book, but there are a lot of things to love - the Funnelheads, muffins, Percy's mum, the ritual self-inflicted Deathslap, a telescope that allows you to see your twin (who may or may not be dancing a polka), and **TALKING GOATS!**

There's a wonderful, definitely non-gloomy message at the end, not to mention sheet music and lyrics so you can sing along with the goats.

An' a one, an' a two...

Kris Patrick says

No

Larry C says

A surreal, wonderful delight that encompasses an emotional life lesson. I really liked this book. Malkasian is an amazing author and artist.

Becca says

What a delightful find this book was. I fancy myself a creative type, head often floating in clouds embellishing on every part of the world; yet, there's some people whose minds exist on another plane altogether. Their minds don't embellish the world, they create new ones altogether. I see it often in children, who can lead me by the hand into the corner of an empty room and describe to me in detail where I'm standing in a tower of a castle in the grandest kingdom. It's a rare treat to see adults who've let their mind still swim about in such fancies, instead of drying out and shriveling up in the spirit of getting on in the "real world". Clearly, the mind of Cathy Malkasian is just that. Swimming.

Even still, what gets me most about this story is that underneath the bizarre trappings of this odd little world, that we're thrown into with no choice but to accept, is a keen little satire which she uses to smack us with fantastic little truths. Most we all know deep within our instincts, but are prone to forgetting. Some may shine a new light on issues we've all thought about ("twist it one full turn").

I shan't ruin them all, but I'll throw one up for a small taste.

As our protagonist Percy is being thrown into a pot to be eaten he thinks,
"Well then..
if this is death..
..it is just another dream subsiding.
All is well."

Fantastic!

Kirk says

"[...] it is a shame that we trample so many people while running from our shadows."
