



Blue Pills: A Positive Love Story

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From one of Europe's most celebrated young comics artists, a deeply personal story that will resonate with all who have chosen to love in the face of great challenges. One summer night at a house party, Fred met Cati. Though they barely spoke, he vividly remembered her gracefulness and abandon. They meet again years later, and this time their connection is instantaneous. But when things become serious, a nervous Cati tells him that she and her three-year-old son are both HIV positive. With great beauty and economy, Peeters traces the development of their intimacy and their revelatory relationship with a doctor whose affection and frankness allow them to fully realize their passionate connection.

Blue Pills: A Positive Love Story Details

Date : Published January 15th 2008 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (first published 2001)

ISBN : 9780618820993

Author : Frederik Peeters

Format : Hardcover 192 pages

Genre : Sequential Art, Graphic Novels, Comics, Autobiography, Memoir, Nonfiction, Bande Dessinée

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From Reader Review Blue Pills: A Positive Love Story for online ebook

Eris says

Es una historia muy íntima de cómo se puede vivir con VIH. Es muy recomendable este libro. Yo no sabía que podías tener una vida completa hoy en día con VIH, incluso en trascender en familia si tú deseo es estar con esa persona. La imagen de la portada lo dice todo: estas en esa relación cómodamente interactuando mientras todo lo demás es un mar que mueve todo. No conocía el trabajo de Fredrick Peeters, me ha conmovido.

Miguel Jiménez says

Un libro que me llegó a entretener y conmover como pocos —en un momento me di cuenta que solo daba vuelta y vuelta a las páginas—.

Es una historia de amor, de familia, de la vida y de lo que significa y es el ser humano si hacemos a un lado la maldad y todas esas absurdidades —que te pueden hacer "sentir bien" en un instante pero después desaparece y te das cuenta que estás vacío—. Te va ganando con trama, quizá, no diferente pero sí especial gracias a sus dos protagonistas tan humanos: considerados y agradables. Y uno quisiera existieran más seres como ellos. Solo la bondad de la protagonista mujer(Cati) es increíble —cada aparición suya me impresionaba—, sin dejar fuera la consciencia y humanidad del protagonista(Frederik). La relación de los dos, con sus problemas pero siempre amena y simpática no me pareció chocante, se podría ver como que todo era lindo y "¡Oh, lo hermosa que es la vida!" pero no. Era cómodo verlos interactuar.

Lo que más me gusta —posiblemente— es la sencillez con la que se cuenta la historia. No se presenta como "La Increíble Situación" ni con un tono cursi para conmover, se expone tal cual es —y sin ser crudo y provocar un efecto perturbador, te conmueve por lo que es—. Mencionar las pinceladas fantásticas de los dibujos para recrear mejor la acción: en el momento adecuado y sin exagerar.

Un cómic que reordena tus ideas e incluso —no sé si este medio de expresión este como para cambiar o hacer reflexionar vidas— te enseña a mejorar como ser humano.

PD: Y sí, veo que es autobiográfico el cómic, ¡qué historia la de Frederik Peeters!

Mafalda Afilhado says

Para devorar

Wealththeow says

An autobiographical comic about a young man who learns his girlfriend and her young son are HIV+. The relationships (between Fred and his gf, his friends, and especially the little boy) are sweet and feel true, and

the art is really good. His ink is fluid but nevertheless conveys a great deal of information. That said, the language often feels clunky and overwrought. The artist has a long conversation with a mastadon about his confused feelings about science. He overuses ellipses. There's a lot of talk about the brambles of darkness and such. The sort of thing that's a bit pretentious and more interesting to the artist himself than to strangers like me.

Also, there's this weird conversation wherein a friend is like, "seriously? You'll never have condom-less sex? EVER? How could you stay in such a relationship?" and the artist goes, "well yeah, it's very difficult." Wait, what? Even if she *wasn't* HIV+, there should've been condoms! Aren't condoms used in most adult sex, regardless of sereostatus?

Mafi says

Uma graphic novel a preto e branco que fala o cotidiano de um casal onde ela tem HIV. Gostei muito da arte, da escrita é que esperava um pouco mais mas mesmo assim aconselho.

Bel Rodrigues says

Comprei esse livro na promoção da amazon, já tinha ouvido falar sobre ele e mesmo assim nunca li a sinopse. Eu sinto que estragaria saber mais do que a capa me mostrava, e estava certa, porque me surpreendi TANTO com a narrativa que precisei vir correndo aqui relatar sobre a leitura.

É tão difícil ler uma história que aborda uma doença sem romantizá-la, e eu diria que essa graphic novel foi o oposto disso: o autor não somente poupou o drama, como foi extremamente sincero, cru e real ao relatar o cotidiano de alguém soropositivo. Sem espaço para sentimentalismo exacerbado e com uma escrita fluída a ponto de me fazer começar e terminar a leitura em uma manhã tediosa. É preciso muita coragem para escrever sobre uma rotina exaustiva, dolorosa e incompreendida pela maioria que não sabe como ela funciona, fora a aula de informação que temos desde o exato momento que abrimos o livro.

Se alguém me perguntasse "Bel, sobre o que é o livro?", eu responderia que Pílulas Azuis é um livro sobre questionamentos. Da vida, do ser humano, das nossas limitações e mais um bocado de coisa que só quem leu vai sentir também.

Altamente recomendado. ?

Mery_B says

3'5

De todas las veces que he podido amar, jamás había sentido una admiración verdadera. Sobre todo, no hablo de fascinación ni de veneración, sino de esa admiración que inspira el respeto... como cuando alguien realiza algo que uno mismo sería incapaz de hacer y que admitimos asintiendo con la cabeza... de esa admiración que produce la alegría y las ganas de ofrecer tu ayuda...

Eric Novello says

Acho que um texto não mexe tanto comigo desde que li, 20 anos atrás, o conto "O Corpo", do livro 4 Estações, do Stephen King, que originou o filme "Conta Comigo".

"Pílulas Azuis" é uma história de amor que tem como protagonista o próprio quadrinista Frederik Peeters. Ele conta como depois de muitos encontros e desencontros começou a namorar Cati, uma mulher portadora do vírus HIV. E como sua convivência com ela e com o filho pequeno, também portador, mudou a vida dos dois. É um relato incrivelmente humano, sincero, que não faz a linha "todo mundo é bem resolvido com isso", não cai no preconceito, não cai no coitadismo, ou seja, foge de todos os clichês possíveis sobre o assunto.

Além do modo inteligente de tratar o assunto, o texto em si também é muito muito bom, e o traço do cara é pra lá de eficiente em ressaltar a agonia deles dois. Você se sente um amigo deles, vivendo tudo aquilo junto e tendo que encarar seus próprios preconceitos sobre o assunto.

Pra fechar, as cenas "pós-créditos" são de deixar os olhos cheios d'água. Recomendo fortemente a leitura. De verdade.

Adriana Scarpin says

Devo confessar que nunca me interessei por essa HQ, mas numa das minhas vastas compras de livros na amazon a empresa colocou uma edição dela por engano na minha caixa, assim pude lê-la e certamente não me arrependi, é uma bela e instrutiva HQ.

Alessandra JJ says

Que história linda! Tirou várias dúvidas que eu tinha sobre o HIV e me ensinou centenas de coisas novas. Fiquei com um pouquinho de vontade de chorar no final, foi tudo muito bonito. Poética, esclarecedora e sincera :) Leitura recomendada!

Ullie Kathlyn says

Uma graphic muito bonita e informativa! O traço não foi um dos meus favoritos mas acostumei depois de um tempo. Ela flui muito bem e apresentou bastante informação sobre o HIV.

Recomendo à todos para poderem se manter informados de maneira bem poética e didática sobre a doença. ;)

Elizabeth says

I have pretty mixed feelings about this book. I know that some of it stems from having higher expectations than what I actually got. It wasn't strictly bad, but I don't know that I enjoyed it that much.

First off, I didn't like the art and found it very off-putting from page one. It really just didn't do a lot for me visually, which can make it pretty hard to enjoy a graphic novel. Then, there's the issue of emotion. Given that this book is a real life love story of a couple where one party has been diagnosed HIV positive, I was expecting this book to make me feel something. It was nearly two hundred pages and I think maybe five of those pages gave me those feelings. I wanted this book to make me feel something and it didn't, and that just may be an issue of my own expectations. Of course, it may also have been a result of not really liking the author. Not the writing, but as an actual person within the context of his story. He came off very pretentious, like the kind of person I would be annoyed to spend time with in real life. My final issue rests with either the translation or the writing. It's hard to tell which when the work was not originally in English. The actual language used wasn't enjoyable to read and the punctuation... was annoying... after a few pages!!!!

Now for what I actually enjoyed. It was nice to see that despite the subject matter that the author was able to avoid doom and gloom, was able to make it a truly "positive" love story. Actually, this book is a subject overall that I wish was dealt with more, both in fiction and non-fiction. I would love to see more autobiographies and novels both that deal with relationships in the context of HIV. I'm glad that the author was able to present his own story of something so personal, especially when it never once felt to me like he was being disrespectful to Cati's own story. He never gave us a "why" and I am glad for it.

Overall, while I didn't really love this book, it wasn't strictly a bad book. It just wasn't for me. I probably wouldn't recommend this to someone, but I also would not dissuade someone from reading it.

Abbey says

Fantastic autobiographical comic about author Frederik Peeters and his relationship with his HIV positive girlfriend and her son. Very moving, intense, and an over-all wonderful comic about the lengths one will endure for love. The graphics were neat and Craig Thompson-esque. I especially loved the mammoth near the end.

"when i look backward, i have the impression of happiness, and of a diffuse and permanent pleasure. but i know that it's because of movement, of the close connection between heavy and light moments.... i know that if this relationship has compared to previous ones, it's that it lives, that it carries us, that it imposes on us its unpredictable rhythm, without running out of steam" (pg 130)

"don't ask for things to happen the way you want, be happy with wanting them as they happen."

Seth T. says

His eyes are huge. Tremendous balls of a beautiful fury of life. Vibrant with hope and wonder, completely without guile. They are set in his face like saucers from space. Only identifiable at all because they hover so serenely with no intentions toward darting or flight. He looks into you. And about you. And through you. He is amazing. And you have romanticized every bit of him. Even though his eyes, while lovely, are really just normal lovely child-eyes. You have turned him into a unicorn, a rarity, a celestial gift. Because he's dying. Or if not dying then at least close to it. Or if not close, then at least he is in some sort of danger. He lives under threat. And I mean, as do we all, right? But maybe he's more at risk than you or anyone else you know. Probably. Maybe. And your heart breaks.

It was 1983 when I first heard about AIDS. I was in fourth grade. It would be another couple years before I realized it was an actual thing and not just a playground game the children played to ostracize their fellows according to the arbitrary rules of the schoolyard—a kind of cooties for the Reagan era. It had something to do with being gay or being a homo, whatever that was. But by the sixth grade I knew everything that anyone knew about AIDS and HIV. I knew it several times over and so did my classmates. We had the privilege of a handful of mandatory school assemblies devoted to the subject. I only actually remember two assemblies through junior high: the drug one and the AIDS one. And we had those two assemblies at least five times each. Probably more actually. I was a sixth-grader who had never seen real drugs in real life and had no idea how one could obtain them, but I knew all about pot and ludes and angel dust and coke and heroin and acid and how, basically, if I took any one of them, I'd probably be swallowing a mug of Drain-O within three months. I also knew about condoms and monkeys and sailors and homosexuals and dentists and needles and toilet seats and oral sex even though it would be a millennia until I would see a real girl in real life for real naked.

It was a weird and awkward time. AIDS and drugs were all anyone ever talked about for a while. The Russians too, I guess. And then eventually, the LA gangs and their inevitable spread south. But for a while, it was AIDS and drugs. Then I was in high school and nobody talked about drugs anymore. Mostly because they were all procuring and consuming drugs, probably. (I still had no idea how one could obtain drugs.[1]) And then I was in high school and Magic Johnson happened and suddenly no one cared about AIDS anymore either. I'm sure it was still a thing. It had to be. I just hadn't heard about it in forever. No matter, I knew everything about it. After all, I was in junior high once.

The fact is, I don't believe I've ever known anyone with HIV. I've known people who've died, sure. Old age, cancers, hiking accidents, suicides, ODs, even spontaneous exsanguination. Nobody AIDS though. And Magic Johnson is still alive, so maybe it's not hard to stay alive with HIV. But he's rich. And who knows. Maybe that matters. And of course it's possible that they just haven't told me they've got it. Not for fear of judgment likely, but maybe more just for whatever the reason is that people don't talk about the very serious things that exert a kind of rule over their lives. Awhile back, I was afraid I was going to lose a nut or two. I didn't really talk about it. If you're reading this, it's likely the first time you've heard of it. Even if we're best friends. And man, as I write this it's becoming increasingly clear that I really don't know anything about HIV.

And of course this is all a put-on. I was well aware exactly how much or little I know about HIV before sitting down to write. But there's still a scent of honesty here because it's the book we're talking about that alerted me to my deficiency on the subject. *Blue Pills*, even apart from and above being a fantastic comic, dropped hammers into the ceiling of the greenhouse in which I kept and cultivated the entire treasure of my AIDS and HIV knowledge.

I didn't know that *Blue Pills* was autobiographical when I began it. And now I've ruined you for having the same experience as me. I didn't realize it until maybe two-thirds through. Then it clicked and the whole thing became amazing. That Frederik Peeters was writing this story *and* writing this story about himself and those he held dear staggered me.

Backing up slightly.

Fred meets Cati a few times over the years that comprise their young twenties. He's a sometimes shy, sometimes exuberant, sometimes moody guy trying to figure out life. She's young and free and, well, Fred really knows so little about her that he can't really describe her with any accuracy but to say: "One: What

kind of girl is this who allows herself to drink champagne in a swimming pool with a wet t-shirt, while managing to remain classy and in good taste? Two: Good God... what magnificent breasts!" After crossing paths several times, he runs into her at a party and they strike up a comfortable rhythm and remain together for the rest of the book. Despite Cati dropping the other shoe soon after the party.

It's 1999. Cati is divorced with a child. And that's not the shoe. The clunk or thud or whatever sound that echoes through the rest of Fred's life (and a thud that Cati certainly heard years earlier) is that both Cati and her son are HIV-positive. And Fred—who knows about what I learned from a bunch of junior high assemblies in 1986—is so entranced, comfortable, and at home with Cati that he says with a kind of passive-aggressive eff-yoo at fate: "So what?" Sure he's terrified and confused and has no idea the import of what he's agreeing to,[2] but he knows he wants into this life that is Cati's. He wants a piece and a part. And so they work at it and they make things work.

And all of that, the fact of the set up and the fact that they love each other dearly and the fact that there's a sick kid in the picture and the fact that fifteen years later they're all still alive and that Frederik and Cati have an HIV-free child[3] isn't really the point of the book. The plot elements merely build the foundation for the point of the book: the evolution of Fred's thoughts on the whole situation.

What does it mean that every time you stick your penis into the person you love more than anything—an act you mean for pleasure and to give pleasure—you might be pulling the trigger on your own demise? What does it mean for the woman you're with that every time you have sex, she might have accidentally killed you? What about this sweet little boy? How will he get through those awkward teen years? It's hard enough to talk to girls you're into when the culmination of your youthful horniness won't kill them. And what if that kid doesn't even survive to be a teenager? Nothing, after all, is certain. And the anger. At science, at fate, at friends, at society. At death. What do you do about the anger?

This is what *Blue Pills* is about. The stuff that often matters so much more than the summary of events that make up our lives (and deaths). And Peeters does a good job keeping this from feeling pedantic—even when by the end he's strayed almost entirely into rumination. He keeps the book feeling real, feeling close, feeling intimate. And that's why when we look into the kid's bright wide eyes, we can't help but romanticize. Because there's magic there. A magic that Peeters, through art and through script, unveils. And Peeters could have done that thing that everybody does when telling a story about something tragic like HIV: he could have made it tragic. He could have pulled at hearts and strings. He could have cultivated pity and mournfulness in the reader, but that's the last thing he wants. *Blue Pills* is not a sad story. And there's magic in that too.

[Review courtesy of Good Ok Bad.]

Footnotes

1) I was so cool.

2) Not really he doesn't because, like, who could?

3) These last two things aren't revealed within the book (as it was published in 2001) but through simple

Googling. Still, this is one of those things I didn't know about HIV that is unveiled through the course of the story: HIV *can* be manageable enough that a man *can* safely reproduce with a woman who is positive. Safely for both himself and for their child. That's like a lightning bolt revelation to me—and one that I might have been aware of had I actually known anyone with HIV.]

Dolceluna says

Delicato, romantico, intimista.

Se potessi paragonarlo a un colore sceglierei sicuramente un blu sfumato, una tinta tenue ma comunicatrice di positività, coraggio e ottimismo. Già, perchè in questo meraviglioso graphic novel, attraverso la storia d'amore tra se stesso e la sieropositiva Cati, Frederik Peeters affronta un tema scabroso, quello dell'AIDS, ma lo fa con una freschezza e una positività capaci di straniare e per questo stupire piacevolmente anche il lettore più allergico a una simile problematica: non si indaga il modo con cui Cati è entrata in contatto con la malattia, non c'è obiettivo di morale o giudizio nei confronti di chi ne soffre, non è prevista alcuna lezione sulle regole per non cascarci. Tutto si concentra sul "poi", sui dubbi, le riflessioni, le speranze di chi convive quotidianamente con questa malattia e di chi ama chi ci convive e impara ad accettarla riparandosi con disinvoltura e distacco dai pregiudizi e dalle paure della società. A dimostrazione che amare, ma amare veramente, significa accettare, condividere e superare quello che la vita ci presenta, ed è grazie all'amore, solo all'amore, che tutto, anche una montagna invalicabile, potrà apparirci come un sassolino. Complimenti a Peeters per essere stato in grado di raccontare graficamente una storia difficile senza sconfinare nella moralità o nel melodramma, come sarebbe stato facile. E l'ultima vignetta in particolare racchiude in sé il senso dell'intera storia...impossibile non sentirsi aprire un vortice di emozioni dentro. Bellissimo!
