



Unlikely

Jeffrey Brown

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The follow-up to Jeffrey Brown's self-published debut hit, *Clumsy*. The bittersweet story of how Jeffrey Brown lost his virginity. A full-length graphic novel drawn in a simple and elegantly awkward style that heightens the emotional impact of the work.

Unlikely Details

Date : Published August 18th 2003 by Top Shelf Productions

ISBN : 9781891830419

Author : Jeffrey Brown

Format : Paperback 227 pages

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

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From Reader Review Unlikely for online ebook

Sooraya Evans says

Uneventful. Nothing interesting happens.
Top it all off with lousy art, and you get this mess.
Boring :(

Amanda says

Oh, Jeff! Don't kiss that girl, Jeff, she's BAD NEWS! Don't you see it? You better not fall in love with her, she's going to mess your shit up. Jeff. Uh, Jeff?

Your visual style is so simple and careful, everything is rendered sweetly, innocently... EXCEPT that girl's boobs under her shirt, which you draw in lush, juicy detail in every frame she appears in. For me, that says it all about this.

All I'm saying, Jeff: it's a good thing you got a book out of that whole mess. Seriously.

Jason Pettus says

The Chicago Public Library recently established a partnership with online content sharing service Hoopla, which among other things means I suddenly have access to several thousand old comics I've never read before, including most of the back catalog of Dark Horse, Top Shelf and Boom! Studios. And this includes the first four or five books by indie darling Jeffrey Brown, whose scribble-like confessional stories are beloved by some and intensely hated by others; I'm reading them in chronological order right now, my first Brown experiences besides the popular "Darth Vader as goofy dad" books he's recently been putting out with the full permission of Disney, with this one being the second of his so-called "Ex-Girlfriend Trilogy," in this case recounting the story of him losing his virginity.

As I suspected would be the case, *Unlikely* is just a little better than his first book, the almost unreadable *Clumsy*, an upward trajectory that I'm guessing will be the case with each subsequent book (his recent Star Wars books are in fact quite professional-looking, and you would barely guess they come from the same person who did these little-kid scribbles of his first titles); but that said, the rambling, plotless nature of the book's storyline will again drive some people crazy (like me, for example), a case of Brown wanting to use character development as a substitute for a decent story but then failing to actually present us with interesting or fleshed-out characters, leaving us with not much more than the fumbling, empty conversations of two vapid college-aged entitled slackers.

And that's the other major problem here, that unlike *Clumsy*, the characters in *Unlikely* come off not just as bland but actively unlikable; while of course cutting them some slack for being young people and therefore inherently annoying, it's still hard to deny that college-aged Brown comes off here as a dour, prissy teetotaler with weird Freudian issues about sex and controlled substances, and that his girlfriend is an addict-in-denial who is pushed back into heavy drug use by the smothering, obsessive nature of Brown's emo mama's-boy routine. Knowing that this is an autobiographical tale, such character traits are easily forgivable in real life -- I'm sure that the now middle-aged Brown has grown into a more stable maturity by now, and we shouldn't

really judge him based on the foibles of his youth -- but as a narrative story in a book that one is voluntarily choosing to purchase and read, the "characters" featured in *Unlikely* often leave a lot to be desired, and it's worth knowing this before deciding whether or not to read it. That said, I'll still be tackling the remainder of Brown's books being carried by Hoopla, one a month until I'm done, so keep an eye out here throughout 2017 for more.

Kirsten says

Another autobiographical story of a failed relationship, *Unlikely* is chronologically before *Clumsy*, and tells the story of Jeff's first lover. It's just as good, if not better, than *Clumsy*, although sometimes very painful to read. Watching this relationship fall apart is harder than seeing the relationship in *Clumsy* come to an end, because of all of Allisyn's baggage and Jeff's complete inability to deal with it. These books aren't for everyone; I think a lot of people might find them self-indulgent. But I love Brown's ability to write honestly about human relationships and the way that sometimes, everyone seems to come out looking like the bad guy.

Malbadeen says

The point of this review is really to point you to "Be a Man", a little tiny 32 page comic written in reaction to Brown's being perceived as too sensitive or wimpy in his book *Clumsy*.

As stated in the copyright "This is a Parody and mostly not true and if you can't take a joke, fuck you."

Fortunately I can take a joke and I loved it! I'll share one comic to give you the feel but after that you'll have to seek it out and buy it because it's well worth the measly 3.00 and should, of course, be viewed with the drawings.

FAT

girl: (sitting in underwear on a bed) I'm fat

boy: Well, then why don't you get off your ass and lose some weight

boy: (standing up with scrawny arms "flexed" and pot belly exposed) or just be comfortable with your body like I am

girl sits on bed looking forlorn

boy: (pointing at t.v.) That chick is HOT

"Unlikely" is completely different. Sweet, honest, sometimes uncomfortable, always realistic story of Brown losing his virginity and such.

Iris says

After I finished this book, I had to set it aside and take a series of deep breaths. Then I either thought, or said aloud, "I am not ready to date again."

His art style is a little Matt Groening-esque. And some people have some problems with a series of frames of sighs and sneezes, but I kinda dig it. I have read most of his books so far (I think) and this is his best.

A says

I didn't like this novel. Don't get me wrong I'm a sucker for stories of failed love and painfully awkward life moments...and this memoir is a great one for that. However, when reading graphic novels, I want the artwork to grab me too...or at least not push me away. I found the speech bubbles to be placed in such a manner that the order of conversation was difficult for me to follow. It's interesting to peer into Brown's life but... Meh. I could have done without.

Matti Karjalainen says

Jeffrey Brownin "Unlikely" (Top Shelf, 2003) on omaelämäkerrallinen sarjakuva tekijän ensimmäisestä ihmissuhteesta, alusta hamaaseen loppuun asti. Luonnonmaisuus leimaa sarjakuvan ulkoasua, mutta sen ei pidä antaa karkoittaa luotaan: tekijä onnistuu nimittäin kuvaamaan erinomaisesti ihmiselon tunteiden vuoristorataa. Lieneekö kysymys oman elämäkokemuksen karttumisesta vai mistä, mutta pidin sarjakuvasta enemmän kuin ensimmäisellä lukukerralla.

The Red Lipped Reviewer says

Blankets by Craig Thompson did it better. My biggest frustration is that his handwriting is not very easy to read, which makes this far less enjoyable.

Sole says

???1/2

Fugo Feedback says

Dibujo espantoso, personajes que oscilan entre ser simpaticones y queribles a insoportables, odiosos, estúpidos y bastante inmaduros. Quizás eso le da cierto triste realismo a la historia, pero también me la volvió por partes bastante tediosa. Mejor que Jeffrey Brown siga dibujando gatitos, porque sus personas son horribles.

Gretchen says

I've read this one before now, I think, but I don't remember when. It's one of those books where I both deeply sympathize with all the characters and am also cringingly repulsed by them, which to me is a good thing.

Matt Graupman says

"Unlikely" is the second volume in Jeffrey Brown's so-called Girlfriend Trilogy and, as such, it's a refinement (although maybe not an improvement) of his debut book, "Clumsy." No matter what, though, Brown's comics have a lock on raw self-examination and melancholy.

Reading "Unlikely," I'm reminded of the contention that a band has its whole life to craft its amazing debut album and a far shorter time to create its follow-up. I'm not saying "Unlikely" isn't good, in fact it's often an artistic and narrative improvement on "Clumsy," but it lacks a little of the first book's sloppy genius. Part of the problem may be that the Alysia character is so frustratingly wrong for Jeffrey that I kept wanting to shake him and wake him up. That isn't a fair critique, though, so I'll just say that the book does a very nice job of showing how, sometimes, loving someone isn't enough, if they're the wrong person.

Now a married man and father, Brown's later work is much more polished. I suppose it's fitting that the confusion and heartache of his youth is rendered so perfectly in his sketchy, chaotic panels. I think everyone has gone through his pain but few people are able to so perfectly translate that experience into art.

Michelle says

I liked this a lot because it very clearly illustrated how people lie to themselves (and therefore the other person) at the start of relationships; they want to be a better person, so they tell the person that they're better than they are. They say, "I don't do drugs anymore," or "I have no interest in that anymore," or "when I'm with you I feel like I'm someone else, someone I've wanted to be for a long time." That's awesome! I'm glad that person brings those qualities out of you and that you're improving your life because of it. But there's a difference between recognizing that someone brings those qualities out of you, and BEING THAT PERSON. Unlikely pretty accurately showed how a relationship starts with statements like those and ends because a person hasn't changed; she just returns to who she really is, without all the flights of fancy of who she could be some day if she dated this guy. Change has to come from within, and be an individual process.

Alyx says

A friend let me borrow this one. I'm struggling about whether to give it another star. It's fine. I appreciate the candor with which the author recounts the loss of his virginity to a young woman who suggests the dark neurotic reality of the archetypical manic pixie dream girl and how they didn't work out as a couple. However, the story kind of felt claustrophobic to me because that's basically all that happens in the book. I think I may have also imagined a woeful Fox Searchlight/Focus Features-type adaptation that I would ultimately have to watch and get angry about, which is not the book's fault. I could also anticipate casual graphic novel readers hating Brown's deliberately slap-dash illustrations, but I think they work in context. The final two frames are kinda devastating, though. Imagine a 2.5 rating.
