

Blankets

Craig Thompson

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a graphic novel by
CRAIG THOMPSON

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Craig Thompson : Blankets before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Blankets:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Why I am not BaptistBy MathetesI think most of us already have or will have experienced this kind of relationship in our lives I would imagine, and on that note the story hit home with me as I recalled my own Raina.The author's understanding of "Christianity" is pretty common, and also inaccurate, but that is his Baptist pastor's fault, and their "straining at a gnat, and swallowing a camel teachings. Such as; attending art school is wrong because you draw nudes, and that leads to porn addiction? By that logic, so does being a Doctor who actually touches the bodies, right?I did like how Craig concluded the relationship with Raina, smart man. Overall the story was familiar, well executed, and the artwork is great.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Surely you already have this?!By RhetorA lyrical autobiographical novel, Blankets is part spiritual autobiography, part

trauma narrative, and part *Kunstlerroman*. I am less taken than most by its love story, though it is poignant and beautifully rendered. More important to me is Thompson's sophisticated engagement with issues of gender, sex, faith, and art, all of which are well complemented by his visual choices. Thompson has learned well from Will Eisner how to capture a sense of how time passes and, sometimes, almost stands still. Destined to be a classic, if it is not already, this book is a must-read for any serious student of graphic novels.⁵⁴ of 56 people found the following review helpful.

When Church Camp Spells Relief, You Know You're in Trouble By Spencer in Seattle

Craig Thompson's *Blankets* is a big, hefty, slab of a graphic novel -- the kind of book that requires you to develop strategies for holding it up when you're reading in bed or draping yourself over the edge of the couch. I found that the book was easiest to read in bed with my knees in the air. That way, its massiveness could be propped up on my knees and the pages fairly easily turned. *Blankets* is an elegantly inked autobiographical coming of age story about a boy, Craig, who is dealing with mid-west mullet-sporting hicks, extremely overzealous Christians for parents, an only minimally explained instance of childhood molestation (by an apparent stranger with bad skin), much more direct and violent abuse from the before-mentioned extremely overzealous Christian father, and relief from all of this only in the form of church camp. When church camp spells your relief from it all, you know you're in trouble. The character Craig's childhood is rendered sweetly charming by the author Craig's portrayal of two brothers sleeping in the same bed together in a poorly insulated attic room and managing to weather the turmoil of the childhood they didn't choose for themselves or each other. They draw, but most of all, they summon creativity: that force kids can bring to life in even the worst of situations. At church camp one year, much later in his adolescence, Craig meets Raina, the alluringly drawn bad-for-a-Christian girl who Craig falls for and then the book falls for -- about half of the text, right up until a very-nearly tacked on section at the end, is spent describing Craig's slow-boil relationship with Raina. By focusing on a two-week visit to Raina's house in Michigan (Craig lives on a farm in Wisconsin), the book manages to describe and show two teenagers all crazily obsessed with each other, their families, and the bible. This mixture of obsessions keeps Craig and Raina drawn to each other and kept distant because of a complex array of barricades. [Spoiler Warning!] When the two-week visit to Raina's house is over (look to this section of the book for some fairly scintillating teen-age heterosexual action), the book accelerates toward its closure. Craig and Raina fall apart -- but it's not that tragic; I mean really, who can sustain a long-distance relationship while in high school? Craig moves out of his parents' house at age 20, and in a revelation the entire perspective of the novel tells you is coming but is hard to imagine the particulars of, Craig falls away from the force that has captivated him his entire life: organized Christianity. In the final pages, too, we see Craig and his younger brother reconciling a bit, as the years of deprivation (emotional, mainly, but also environmental and cultural) had kept them from loving each other in the ways close brothers seem to ought to. The book ends with Craig treading softly through the rural landscape; we know him, in those final pages, to be living in a city far from it all -- far enough to gain the needed author's perspective on the hazards of small town life and provincial thinking this book explores in such detail.

"Quaint, meditative and sometimes dreamy, *Blankets* will take you straight back to your first kiss." --The Guardian

Blankets is the story of a young man coming of age and finding the confidence to express his creative voice. Craig Thompson's poignant graphic memoir plays out against the backdrop of a Midwestern winterscape: finely-hewn linework draws together a portrait of small town life, a rigorously fundamentalist Christian childhood, and a lonely, emotionally mixed-up adolescence. Under an engulfing blanket of snow, Craig and Raina fall in love at winter church camp, revealing to one another their struggles with faith and their dreams of escape. Over time though, their personal demons resurface and their relationship falls apart. It's a universal story, and Thompson's vibrant brushstrokes and unique page designs make the familiar heartbreaking all over again. This groundbreaking graphic novel, winner of two Eisner and three Harvey Awards, is an eloquent portrait of adolescent yearning; first love (and first heartache); faith in crisis; and the process of moving beyond all of that. Beautifully rendered in pen and ink, Thompson has created a love story that lasts.

From Publishers Weekly

Revisiting the themes of deep friendship and separation Thompson surveyed in *Goodbye Chunky Rice*, his acclaimed and touching debut, this sensitive memoir recreates the confusion, emotional pain and isolation of the author's rigidly fundamentalist Christian upbringing, along with the trepidation of growing into maturity. Skinny, naive and spiritually vulnerable, Thompson and his younger brother manage to survive their parents' overbearing discipline (the brothers are sometimes forced to sleep in "the cubby-hole," a forbidding and claustrophobic storage chamber) through flights of childhood fancy and a mutual love of drawing. But escapist reveries can't protect them from the cruel schoolmates who make their lives miserable. Thompson's grimly pious parents and religious community dismiss his budding talent for drawing; they view his creative efforts as sinful and relentlessly hector the boys about scripture. By high school, Thompson's a lost, socially battered and confused soul--until he meets Raina and her clique of amiable misfits at a religious camp. Beautiful, open, flexibly spiritual and even popular (something incomprehensible to young Thompson), Raina introduces him to her own less-than-perfect family; to a new teen community and to a broader sense of himself and his future. The two eventually fall in love and the

experience ushers Thompson into the beginnings of an adult, independent life. Thompson manages to explore adolescent social yearnings, the power of young love and the complexities of sexual attraction with a rare combination of sincerity, pictorial lyricism and taste. His exceptional bw drawings balance representational precision with a bold and wonderfully expressive line for pages of ingenious, inventively composed and poignant imagery. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. From School Library Journal Adult/High School-Thompson's Good-bye, Chunkie Rice (Top Shelf, 1999) offered readers well-realized but fantastic characters in a tale that nicely combined sentiment with adventure. This second, much longer work shares the acuity for character development and dynamic sensitivity that makes the author so compulsively readable. In Blankets, however, realism reigns supreme in both the story arc and in the humanity of its characters. Thompson himself is the protagonist, and this is his tale of growing up, falling in love (and realizing the physical and moral complications that can imply), discovering the texture and limits of his faith, and arriving at a point from which he can look back at those experiences. The snowy Midwest, peopled by overweight parents, hairy youths, and lovingly depicted younger siblings-including a respectfully and realistically treated minor character with Down syndrome-is energetically realized in Thompson's expressive lines and inking. Much of the story occurs when Craig and his brother Phil are young boys and includes images of such boyish pranks as peeing on one another. Older high school students who have reached an age when nostalgia is possible will warm to Thompson's own wistfulness. This is a big graphic novel, in concept and successful execution.-Francisca Goldsmith, Berkeley Public Library, CA Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist*Starred * Thompson's graphic novel debut, Goodbye Chunky Rice (1999), was a delicate parable of loss that garnered deserved acclaim. The eagerly awaited, autobiographical follow-up to it is more ambitious, more accomplished, and more accessible. Thompson recalls growing up in a religious family in rural Wisconsin, particularly his affectionate tussles with his younger brother, with whom he shared a bed and the titular blankets. A few years later, he experiences the painful intensity of first love with Raina, a girl from Michigan he meets at a regional church camp. When the pair are separated, his loss of faith in his love for Raina presages his later loss of religious faith. The blanket motif reappears throughout the work, forthrightly as the handmade quilt Raina gives him, and more subtly as the blank sheets of paper he confronts as a budding artist. Eschewing the usual alt-comics cynicism, Thompson's evocation of high-school romance manages to be both romanticized and clear-eyed. His visual mastery shows in fluid line work, assured compositions, and powerful use of solid black areas and negative space. Weighing in at nearly 600 pages, this is a genuine graphic novel, with a universal appeal that suits it for any collection. Gordon Flagg Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved