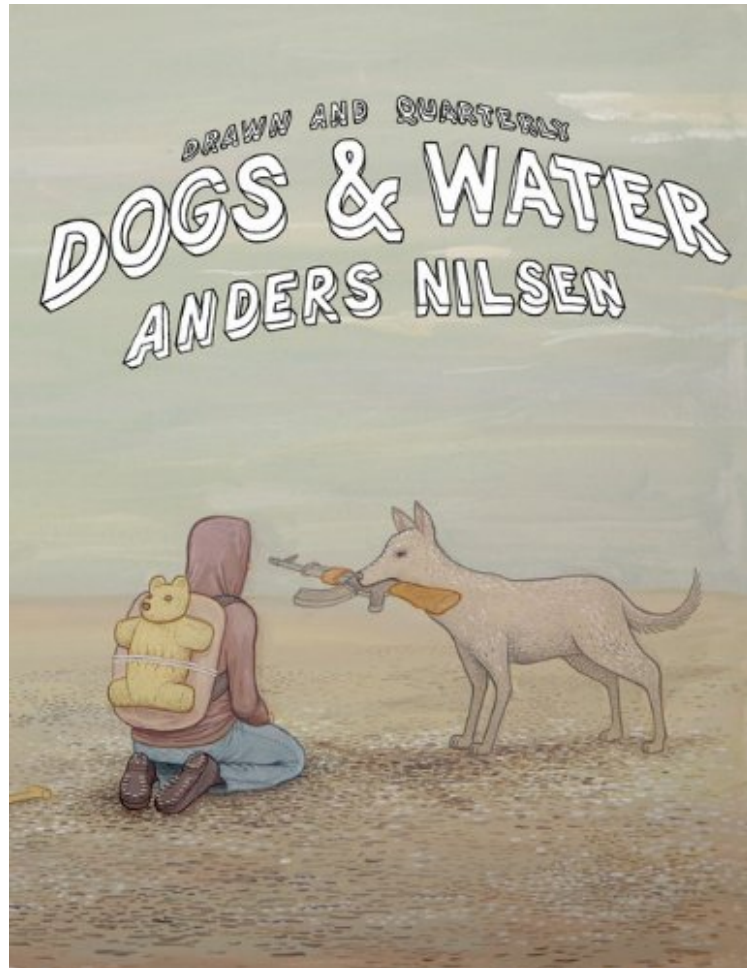


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Dogs and Water

Anders Nilsen

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#1599244 in Books Drawn and Quarterly 2007-08-07 2013-11-19Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 .40 x .67 x 7.80l, .56 #File Name: 189729908796 pages | File size: 22.Mb

Anders Nilsen : Dogs and Water before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dogs and Water:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great read!By rockface2.0A truly exceptional read, with many layers and open to interpretation. Would suggest to anyone looking for a good read where the meaning isn't handed to them on a silver platter.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. I have no idea what it is, but I like it.By Robert BeveridgeAnders Nilsen, Dogs and Water (Drawn and Quarterly, 2007)Dogs and Water is quite unlike any other graphic novel I've ever run across; if you turn your head and squint right, it's got a bit of Renee French running through it, but without a shred of the absurdity French brings to her wonderful little books. Or Shaun Tan without the fantasy elements, or the hope. Nilsen (Monologues for the Coming Plague) has crafted something here that's deeply depressing, lonely, and yet compelling enough that once you've cracked the cover, you'll end up reading it in one sitting, wondering just what the hell is going on, but not really caring all that much whether anything actually is.The

plot involves a guy with a stuffed bear tied to his knapsack wandering through what seems to be the Alaskan tundra. (You'll understand why I assume this is Alaska about halfway through the book.) The bear is his only companion, and he holds conversations with it. Does this make him lonely, or mentally unstable? We have no idea. He's definitely paranoid, despite the animals he runs across being generally friendly. Soon enough he runs out of food, and his wandering becomes increasingly desperate as he searches for more. Yeah, that's pretty much it, though there is a climax to it (I don't really want to spoil what happens in the final third of the book, but Nilsen does a fantastic job of setting it all up). It's a very cold, one-man *Waiting for Godot*, perhaps. Yes, I'm still trying to find something to compare it to, and the fact that nothing really fits is a mark in the book's favor. You will have no idea what it is Anders Nilsen is on about here, but most likely it won't matter one bit. This is a glorious nightmare, a vicarious depression, and it deserves your attention. *** 4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Non-Traditional Visual Narrative

By A. Ross I came across an excerpt of this book in the *The Best American Comics 2007* collection, and it really stood out, both in terms of style and content. The style is perhaps best described as minimalist -- for the most part a very spare fine-point black line on stark white background, with no panels. And the reader is dropped into this empty background, where we find a young man trudging along an almost featureless landscape with a teddy bear strapped to his backpack. Over the course of the book his encounters grow stranger and stranger: a herd of reindeer, a mysterious bus, a pack of dogs, an abandoned war-torn village, and finally a crashed helicopter and dying man next to giant pipeline that plows across the page. Interspersed with these seemingly random encounters are strange dream sequences which are differentiated by the use of a light cyan ink. Interestingly, both the real and dream encounters almost always involve an element of threat, perhaps offering a rather pessimistic comment on human nature. So, there's no real "story" per se -- the book acts more as a commentary on traditional narrative form. There is no beginning, middle, or end, the character's journey is ongoing and possibly neverending. Throughout, the man talks to the bear, and in one passage, articulates what appears to be the central theme of the book: "I know this whole venture is not about having a goal," he tells the bear at one point. "But doesn't the whole idea of a journey become kind of meaningless if there's not a sense of some destination?" If your answer to that is "yes," then this probably isn't the book for you. However, if you're open to a more impressionistic style of storytelling, this is an interesting piece of work.

Dogs and Water chronicles a piece of a lonely journey, without origin or destination. A young man wandering a nameless path has only a stuffed bear as a companion, which inertly endures his desperation, anger, and musings along the way. The landscape is cold and bleak with few landmarks, and offers only precarious encounters with animals and armed men. These interactions are rife with instinct, the drive for survival, and human ethics concerning the killed and injured. He finds acceptance with a pack of dogs, though their nature is wild and their potential threat is as unsettling as the sudden presence of a massive pipeline on the horizon. In a dreamlike state, the endless land becomes a vast body of water where his boat is destroyed and his body floats in a subconscious space. On land, the road disappears and only blind circumstance remains. All is uncertain and all can be lost, but he continues on regardless.

From *Publishers Weekly* Starred . A young man wanders a war-torn tundra accompanied only by a stuffed bear. As he wanders, he encounters various animals and humans who all prove inferior to the lifeless bear as a real companion imaginary friends are the best ones in a world where everyone competes for meager resources. Nilsen has crafted a haunting fable of humanity and loneliness, confronting tropes about journeys and destinations. "I know this whole venture is not about having a goal," he tells the bear at one point. "But doesn't the whole idea of a journey become kind of meaningless if there's not a sense of some destination?" Each encounter is more troubling than the last: a bus shows up but a passenger shoots at the narrator. A pack of reindeer try to steal the bear. In return, the narrator blinds one of the majestic stags with a rock. A human who shows up in the bleak terrain tries to steal the narrator's pack. The narrator is finally accepted by a pack of wild dogs that lives off the remains of both the humans and animals already encountered. Nilsen's open, simple yet graceful art captures the eerie, empty sense of loss that permeates this unsettling, memorable story. (May) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Nilsen creates an epic landscape of desolation and doubt. NewCity Chicago Nilsen's sparse, thinly rendered line work adds to the level of existential discomfort that the artist seems to excel at . . . *Dogs and Water* stays with you a lot longer than most recent comics, easily marking it as one of the best of the year. The *Patriot-News* Nilsen's art is filled with amazing white space showing a true sense of human loneliness. Above all else, the work echoes our need to be heard, even if it is only by ourselves. Punk Planet About the Author ANDERS NILSEN was born in New Hampshire and lives in Chicago. He is the cartoonist behind the award-winning comic book series *Big Questions*.