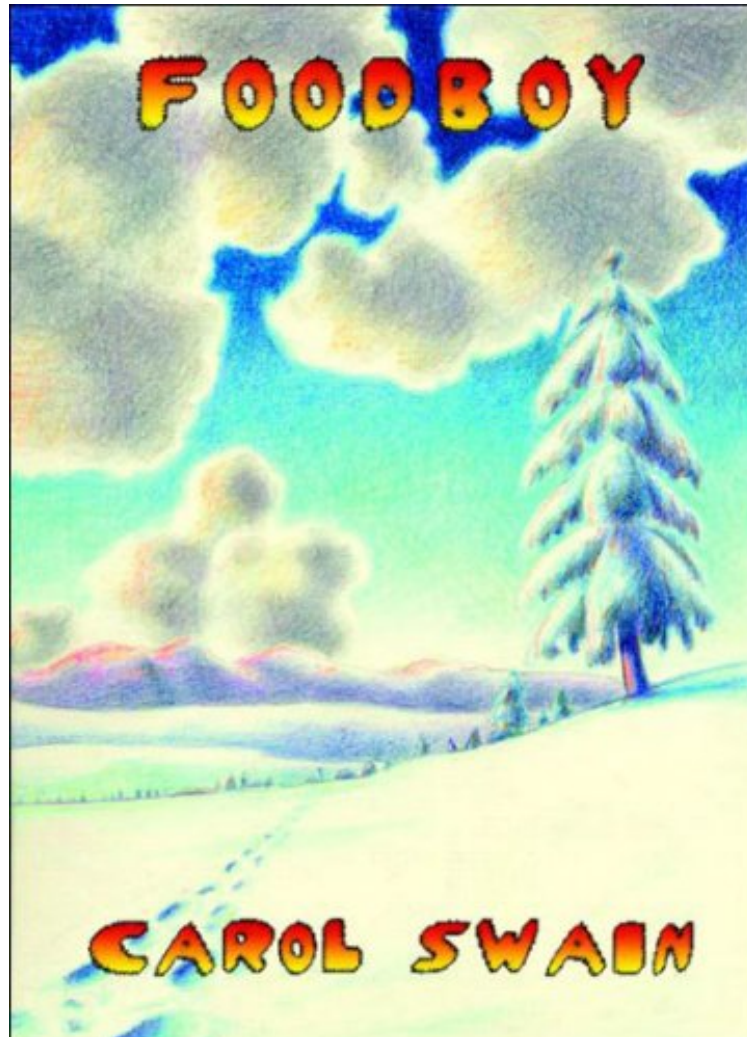


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Foodboy

Carol Swain

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Carol Swain : Foodboy before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Foodboy:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Hope Loss in a Literary LandscapeBy A CustomerCarol Swain is one of the few comic artists/writers who has elevated the genre into the realms of literature,and she continues the process in her new graphic novel Foodboy. Set in Wales, it tells the story of a friendship between two lads, Gareth and Ross, whose bounds are tested when Ross beins to withdraw from the "real" world to the point that he almost becomes feral. In a desperate attempt to understand what has happened to his friend, Gareth reviews in his mind the circumstances that led to this strange situation, so that he - and we - constantly shift back and forth in time. I will not give any more away, except to say that there was hope as well as loss. Beautifully drawn in black and white, this is a

very disturbing story that leaves the reader with a sense of unease, and demands further readings. Judging from the terrific endorsement from Alan Moore on the back cover (hidden under a cloud - look for it) - I'm not alone in thinking that Swain is one of the best writers in so-called adult comics today. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Imaginatively written and memorably illustrated By Midwest Book Review Imaginatively written and memorably illustrated in black-and-white by Carol Swain, Foodboy is an impressive graphic novel. Set amid overcast Wales with rocky land, Gary the Foodboy shares a sometimes agonizing friendship with Ross, a feral outsider choosing to live upon the margins of society. Dark, gritty, and warily peeling away illusions of humanity, Foodboy is at once chilling and contemplative. Mature themes are present in this engrossing tale of survival and psychological struggle.

A graphic novel about loss, hope and faith; bonds that are tested when the paths of two boyhood friends diverge. The term 'graphic novel' is now used as shorthand to describe any fat comic book, whether it's a collection of short stories, journalism, autobiography, or history, but Carol Swain's work is among that minority of work published under the rubric 'graphic novel' that in fact closely approximates the visual equivalent of mainstream fiction. Swain has been publishing comics since the mid-'80s, but this is not only her second book, but her first since 1995 and the first to receive proper distribution to the book trade. Foodboy is about loss and hope, friendship, and faith, bonds that are tested when the paths of two boyhood friends diverge. Garth the Foodboy of the title and Ross live in the small Welsh village of Llanparc, where they have grown up together, been baptized together, skipped Sunday School together. The attempt of a visiting troupe of Evangelists to convert the locals seems to trigger in Ross a physical and spiritual retreat 'into wilderness.' Gareth remains loyal to his friend, leaving food out for him, even when it becomes apparent that Ross is becoming increasingly feral. At that point we leave the story, never quite certain of just how wild he has become. (Her previous graphic novel, Invasion of the Mind Sappers, was set in a similar locale, and featured the Ross character in a small role.) Foodboy is drawn in Swain's trademark style of exquisite panel compositions in which the characters and landscapes embody the twin thematic poles of her work: anomie and empathy, pathos and passivity. 80 pages of black-and-white comics

From Booklist Done only in black and white, Foodboy is a work of gritty realism that grows increasingly eerie as its secondary protagonist becomes more alienated and feral. Gar, a young man in chronically depressed Wales, collects food for his friend, Ross, who has dropped out so thoroughly that he is beyond unemployment and, eventually, homelessness. A powerful early manifestation of Ross' alienation comes when he asks a street preacher for equal time to say what he believes; the evangelist acquiescing, Ross then says nothing. At the end of the book, Gar waits on a beach with the steak he has brought; night falls, and Ross still hasn't broken cover. Higher-than-wide panels (relieved by double- and one-and-a-half-width ones) and tight and medium close-ups predominate, and there is plenty of variation in the angle of vision. But the blocky, blunt-featured figures of Gar, Ross, and a handful of others, who, until the end, always attend Ross, constitute Swain's most powerful tool for communicating the desperation of this parable of poverty and disintegration. Ray Olson Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved About the Author Carol Swain is the acclaimed British cartoonist and author of the graphic novels Invasion of the Mind Sappers and Foodboy.