



Too Cool to Be Forgotten

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From the critically-acclaimed cartoonist behind Box Office Poison and Tricked comes the delightful 2 Cool 2 B 4Gotten, a story of second chances.

Andy Wicks is a forty-something father of two who's making one final attempt to quit smoking: hypnosis. He's skeptical it will work, but is stunned to find that when he emerges from his trance, he's fifteen years old - and it's 1985! Is he doomed to relive the worst four years of his life or will this second go-round finally give him the answers he's been missing all his life? If nothing else he'll finally get to ask out Marie Simone from history class...

Too Cool to Be Forgotten Details

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Author : Alex Robinson

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Comics

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From Reader Review Too Cool to Be Forgotten for online ebook

Emilia P says

Yep.

I liked this, sorry some of my goodreads friends.

It reminded me of the David Bowie song "My Death Waits". Youth, sex, death, family, such and such.

With Alex Robinson's light/greasy touch.

It was nice to read him in a bite-sized more kid-friendly portion like this, also.

Derek Royal says

I mean to read this when it came out, but I just never got around to it. Finally did so in preparation for my interview with Alex Robinson, <http://comicsalternative.com/comics-a...> A significantly shorter work from Robinson -- especially when you compare it to Box Office Poison and Tricked -- but it demonstrates that the artist can master the shorter story form, as well.

Kristen Northrup says

I've already read BOP, so I know how realistically unsympathetic Robinson's characters can be. This one did seem less cynical. Andy's behavior wasn't anything original, but it's exactly what I would expect to do too, so that was fine. And I was in high school that same year, which added a lot to the fun. The part that bothered me pretty much from the beginning was how it took him so long to visit his father. It was made clear so early that he was near-death that it was distracting how much Andy ignored his presence in the house. I understand the anger, but you didn't even see that, or any actual effort to disregard his presence. The final scene was another where it's exactly what you'd expect, but it's because that's what people do. I even got sniffly.

Sam Quixote says

SPOILERS

I'm a bit undecided with Alex Robinson. "Box Office Poison" was really too long and rubbish while "Tricked" had at least more of a story and was about 200 pages shorter. Anyway, I read that his latest "Too Cool To Be Forgotten" was the best graphic novel of the year (2008) and saw it in the library so picked it up. It's a small book, much more so than the gargantuan paperbacks with 400-600 pages in them. It's more like 100 pages in a small hardback book with a cigarette packet cover. It's attractive and well designed.

Reading it, I have to say I enjoyed it a lot more. I'm not sure if it's because Robinson has scaled back his canvas and so the story is tighter and the characterisation more vivid but his work was much more enjoyable to read this time around. A middle aged man trying to give up cigarettes is convinced by his wife to see a hypnotherapist to give up. While hypnotised he returns to his adolescence and experiences his high school years with all the knowledge and insight from his 40 something year old self. It's an interesting experience to

say the least. He no longer has confidence issues in his appearance and pays no attention to cliques and so stands out as something of an anomaly. He asks out the girl he fancied, he stands up to bullying teachers, he reassures friends he knows will find happiness in later years. It's really a positive transformative experience. There is a shadow here though. At first he imagines it's the spectre of tobacco and realises that he is at the time when he tried his first cigarette but finds out the reason behind his need for escape at this time of his life.

His father is terminally ill and dying in the house. The man never got to say goodbye to his dad and this time around gets to tell him all the things he wanted to say and spend the last few hours of his dad's life with him which in reality he hadn't done as he was hanging around outside smoking cigarettes. He realises he's been killing himself slowly because of his guilt and anger at himself for not being there when his father passed away.

There's so much that could go wrong with a story this sentimental. The writer could go overboard on the maudlin and ruin it completely but luckily Robinson's made the right choices and brought it back when he needed to and give the panels space at the right times, giving them words at the right times. The effect is devastating and what started out as an innocuous John Hughes like story becomes a touching and human tale of relationships. I'm so glad I came back to Robinson after years of avoidance after Box Office Poison which to me was bloated and unreadable, to find he's matured into a skilled and masterful comics writer/artist. Definitely one to read, I highly recommend this to the comics enthusiast and to those who are just in search of a good read.

Krystal says

Getting graphic novel recommendations from John—yes John Daniello—is essentially your feelings getting a swift kick to their balls.

No warning.

Just, right in the balls.

Thanks, John.

Josh Angel says

I was not expecting this petite black and white hardcover to pack such an emotional punch! The book jumps right to the story with little preamble; a man in his 40's trying to quit smoking goes to a hypnotist, and is somehow sent back to his high school years. Seen through the lens of his older (and wiser) self, his teenage years are both humorous and heart breaking. The last fifth of the book will catch you by surprise, and I was definitely choked up by the end. It does end slightly abruptly, but it was a very satisfying and emotional story that will hunt you for a day or two afterward - in a good way. Highly recommend, although I suspect someone in their 40's would get more out of this than a younger reader.

Melanie Page says

You ever notice that 2 stars look really pitiful? According to Goodreads, 2 stars means "it was okay," and that's exactly how I feel about this book. I've never read any of the author's other works, but based on what everyone is saying, I should read those. *Too Cool to be Forgotten* is a misleading title. Middle-aged Andy Whit heads to a holistic health center to quit smoking. He is hypnotized only to awaken in his old high school. He is again 15--which means that no one forgot him. How could they, when he's been transported back. They never knew he was any different than he was the day before in biology or math class.

While the emphasis is on Andy avoiding his first cigarette, of which he partook at a party when he was 15, the story shifts to Andy's father. We learn that there are problems at home based on what Andy's teachers and principal say, but it seems like Andy has no clue about these problems. It's actually these problems that Andy must face, which makes the story a bit hokey. When he wake up in the holistic doctor's office, she has this all-knowing smile, as if she could see into Andy's heart and know the hurt he felt and feels over his father's illness/death. All I could think was, "Bitch, you ain't psychic!"

There is a typo in the book. It drove me insane, especially since this is a graphic novel. There aren't that many words to proofread. Then I learn this at the end of the book: "Page 84 includes an error in which the protagonist, Mr. Wicks, thinks the word 'Dad' instead of 'Did.'" This will not be corrected in future editions, as it was intentional on the part of Mr. Robinson. The publishers and proofreaders wish to note their opposition to including such grammatically awkward and painfully heavy handed foreshadowing, but have let the issue rest out of respect for the author..."

Two thoughts:

- 1). "dad" instead of "did" is "clever" in the way that novice writers think including themselves in the story is clever because they didn't take the time to learn about metafiction.
- 2) Good for the author. It's not often that authors get the final say, and, let's face it: it's not like they're making tons of money anyway, so integrity is important.

Christine says

God, it's a terrible irony of life that the deepest truths can't be expressed without lapsing into cliché.

Christopher says

A pleasant way to spend a couple hours. The art is more refined, less hurried, than *Box Office Poison*. There are fewer typos (man, this guy needs to practice his spelling). The story is a bit silly, especially compared to his other realist comics. It's about some guy who goes to a hypnotist to help him stop smoking, which send him back in time to his sophomore year of high school. So, you know... if you're aware of what you're getting into and don't take it too seriously, it can be fun.

Ryan Werner says

A middle-aged man goes back in time (mentally, due to hypnosis--none of that comic trope time travel horseshit) to high school so he absolve himself of smoking. The presentation made it seem like a sort of 80's high school movie, but there's a feeling of stress and tragedy underneath the whole thing that gives it a bit of depth.

Robinson risks sentimentality very nicely here, swinging back around to the real issue at hand at a crucial point. Some of the longer bits of dialogue get to be a bit superficially heavy in the "what does it all mean, maaaaan" department. Nothing offensively bad--except an eye-rollingly-purposeful slip of "dad" instead of "did" 2/3 of the way through the book--just a little trite in spots.

The art reminds me of a Mad Magazine sort of thing. I like the panels, too, especially when bigger splashes bleed from one to the other. It really helps direct attention to the necessary places and makes my lazy ass not miss the subtleties.

This was enjoyable! Apparently Robinsons other books are like five times as long. Holy shit. I can't imagine that! There are already some rambles in this tight little story. Either way, I'd be interested in checking out more of his stuff.

Gary Butler says

13th book read in 2016.

Number 364 out of 506 on my all time book list.

Review Pending:

Courtney says

This one surprised me.

The father's illness wasn't completely from nowhere, but was handled well without directly being spelled out until the right time in the narrative.

The emotional level surprised, and I related enough to feel along at the end.

Jeffrey says

A true graphic novella, and probably Alex's best book yet. Well paced mix of high school angst and examination of coming to peace with the past

Brett says

Wow. Shut up, I got a speck of dirt in my eye.

Matt Graupman says

For the life of me, I can't remember if I've read Alex Robinson's graphic novella, "Too Cool To Be Forgotten," before. As I made my way through the book, I kept experiencing these little flashes of déjà vu but I can't say whether that's because I had read these pages once before or if Robinson had just really nailed the feeling of being a fifteen-year-old in high school. Regardless, "Too Cool To Be Forgotten" is a smaller story than Robinson's epic comics like "Box Office Poison" and "Tricked," but it still packs one big emotional wallop.

Andy Wicks is desperate to quit smoking so, in a last ditch effort, he decides to undergo hypnosis to rid himself of his habit; however, things go horribly awry when he wakes up from the session in the body - and the life - of himself as an awkward teenager. With the benefit of hindsight, Andy is given the opportunity to make some of his formative choices all over again, right his wrongs, and say the things that he didn't have the guts to say the first time around. It's a fairly generic premise but Robinson is able to take it a step further. "Too Cool To Be Forgotten" is like those Russian nesting dolls: you think you know what it's all about but then, to your surprise, it's got a whole other layer just underneath. Anyone who think this comic is just about a guy who (sort of) goes back in time to stop smoking hasn't read enough of Alex Robinson's comics; he's an absolute master of gut-punch plot twists (as well as character design, natural-sounding dialogue, pacing, etc.). "Too Cool To Be Forgotten" will leave you reeling.

I didn't like high school. I wasn't cool and I would never want to go back and relive those years. "Too Cool To Be Forgotten," however? I'd go back to that. Or maybe I already have.
