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Astronaut Academy: Zero Gravity Details

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Author : Dave Roman

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From Reader Review Astronaut Academy: Zero Gravity for online ebook

Betsy says

One Sentence Review: It may take you 50% of the book to get into this one, but once you've successfully processed what Roman's doing with the language the book is tons of fun and silly to the point of mental instability.

Jerzy Drozd says

I picked up his book while Dave was in town for Kids Read Comics, and I've been reading it over and over since. It's one of those rare comics aimed at young people written and drawn by a guy who actually remembers what it's like to be a kid. The comic is filled with an exuberant sincerity, the characters are super fun, and the jokes have that rascally sweetness that you rarely find outside of a Muppets special back when Jim Henson was alive.

The story is about a group of students attending a school in outer space, and the main narrative bounces around to be explored from the viewpoints of the various students and teachers. Each chapter is a mini-story about one of the students, sometimes in the context of the larger story, sometimes as a tangent. As we get to know these characters we're constantly reminded of the dread looming over former space hero and newest student Hakata Soy as his past slowly catches up to him.

Dave is a former editor of Nickelodeon Magazine, so it shouldn't surprise me that his book reminds me of the kinds of comics I used to love reading in '80s kids' publications like Hot Dog! magazine. It's a buoyant story, full of references to cartoon and toy franchises that 20- and 30-somethings will recognize. There are adventure teams whose space vehicles combine into a super warrior robot, a "Guidance Chancellor" with a chrome plate over his face, dinosaur driving, and bunnies, bunnies, bunnies. What's most exciting to me about this book is the complete absence of an adult mindset; there is not the slightest hint of irony, neither do you find the breathless affectation of a storyteller who speaks down to children. It bears repeating: Dave truly remembers what it was like to be a kid, and it shows in his work.

Nancy Kotkin says

Story: 2 stars

Art: 3 stars

The problem with turning online comics into a graphic novel is that there is no story arc. This book is a series of disjointed scenes that aren't organized around a central conflict and don't actually tell a story. A series of characters is introduced and we learn bits about each one, but it never comes together or becomes anything more than that. A satisfying story is equal to more than the sum of its parts. This does not have all the components needed for a story.

Reading this, and several other internet comics compilations lately, I have to wonder if this isn't contributing to our growing population of reluctant readers. If they are voraciously devouring short comic snippets, and nothing else of substance, perhaps young readers don't know how to approach, or sustain their interest long

enough, to hook into traditional story structure.

Edward Sullivan says

Entertaining silliness in outer space.

Patrice Sartor says

A group of students are in space at the Astronaut Academy, learning about science, math, how to properly float in space and (for at least one student) how to throw a fireball that could save your life. Each short chapter focuses on one character's perspective, and through the course of the book we become familiar with many residents at Astronaut Academy. The main one is Hakata Soy, who truly does sport a fantastic hair-do, which leads some of the girls to swoon. Some flashbacks from Hakata's previous adventures are shown, so we learn who he was as well as getting to see his emo side at school.

This title is compiled from a web comic called Astronaut Elementary, and I am pleased to see it released in a graphic novel format. It felt Japanese-inspired to me, and this helped its appeal. As an example, two girls are talking in the foreground about a third girl, who happens to be close enough behind them to hear them. She looks properly dismayed, and signage over her head reads "*overhear*". Plus, most of the characters have Japanese names.

I highly enjoyed the artwork and the silly, inter-connecting story lines. There are crushes, there is middle-school drama, there is saving-the-planet style adventure. And humor, plenty of humor. I noticed a number of references (lyrics, cultural events from the past, etc.) that made me laugh, but I wondered if the intended audience would "get it". Then again, I don't care, since it made ME laugh, and tweens will enjoy this book on their own terms. It's like when a Pixar movie throws in a line that cracks all the parents up that the kids don't really grasp, yet they still find it all funny. My younger son (10) really liked it, and said he wanted to learn more about Hakata's life before he came to the academy. I don't know if there are any prequels, but I am certainly going to check. Recommended!

fanazuma says

Disappointing.

At first I thought I would give this to Kumohitam's brother, but I won't even do that.

I know this is a book for kids and/or young adult, but putting aside the childish tone of the book, the jokes aren't even funny.

Examples:

"Just because Maribelle crossed the finish line first, does not make her a true winner. You see, class, Maribelle forgot the most important part of dinosaur driving! Wearing your CUTE LITTLE HAT!" Um. Okay. (and no, this hat isn't a helmet so if you're trying to say that "hey it teaches the kids about safety!", just

save your breath.)

"I couldn't help but OVERHEAR because I was EAVESDROPPING.." Okay. Am I supposed to laugh here?

"You wouldn't love a hobo, right? Please say no or I will have to GASP for air while I stop being your friend!" I know this is a joke. BUT WHAT KIND OF JOKE IS THIS??!

This is one of the books where I just don't think will end up on my shelves so I will do what I like to do for these type of books - leave it in the LRT station. HA. (I have done this, just in case you're wondering.)

Renata says

What a funny, weird little story! I don't really know what I thought this was about, but I wasn't expecting it to be so gleefully goofy. Great for tweens-adults, includes a diverse & adorable cast of little space students who take classes in stuff like "Anti-Gravity Gymnastics" and "Driving Dinosaurs." More than anything this reminded me of Scott Pilgrim Jr, but in space.

Also I would just like to mention that there is a panel where a robot speaks entirely in Tori Amos references: "Caught a light sneeze, but at least they didn't ruin my precious things. But it looks like I'll be putting the damage on." I feel like this book's intended audience probably does not appreciate that joke, but I would like to take a moment here to acknowledge it.

Candice M (tinylibrarian) says

Six words: Children's Notable Graphic Novels Selection List. That is all.

Erin Fowler says

Really bored when reading! I'm a fourth grade educator and my students love graphic novels. I have never been bored by a graphic novel until I read this one. There really isn't any plot and the novel just didn't grab my attention.

Toby says

it was funny & most of all i liked the fire ball tournament & it looks rely interesting & i wish i could play fire ball!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

(:

Scruffy says

Hakata Soy is a young former space hero just starting out at the space based Astronaut Academy. Starting with this simple premise we are introduced to a large cast of characters and many inter-weaving plot lines. The book is made up of lots of short stories told from alternating perspectives all of which are connected to tell a larger story. Because of the structure of the book I found it best to be read in short bursts rather than straight through.

Astronaut Academy is very funny. I often find comedy in comics to be more humorous than genuinely funny but I found myself frequently laughing out loud while reading this. It's an all-ages book so the humour is very silly which I suppose is part of the fun. It pokes fun at all kinds of science fiction including time travel, superheroes and anime. Packed full of jokes there's plenty here for both adults and children to enjoy. It really reminded me how much fun all-ages comics can be.

For more of my reviews please visit <http://www.scruffyfiction.co.uk>

704Cal says

Adventurous. If you like cute comics, and space adventures, this is a good comic for you.

tony dillard jr says

This 2011 book by Dave Roman is the first of a series that explores the adventures of the diverse student body at Astronaut Academy. The main character is Hakata Soy, a former leader of a super-team, whose just transferred to the academy. Yet this book is really a who's who of the attendees of the space station school. Most of the students and teachers are perplexed by the new student. Some want to be friends with Hakata, others are destined to be enemies. But everyone wants to know why he's not as cool as he used to be. (Hakata is actually on the run from enemies he ran afoul of and is trying to lay low.)

Astronaut Academy reminds me of a series of books from the 80s called Sideways Stories from Wayside School. Each chapter focuses on one character and their perspectives and interactions with others. Each segment can be read alone as it's own story or together as a thrilling novel about bravery and friendship. This book started off really strange. The flow just felt all wrong for some reason. Some of this is because the first 2-3 segments are framed like TV-commercials for the academy. But it's not until we meet the character of Hiro does things really seem to gel.

Hiro loves to space walk. He is so fond of it, he always wears his space suit. Often he sneaks out of class to play hooky by floating in space. Honestly, his static look at life makes him the star of this book.

Once characters like Hiro kept popping back up into the story, I felt like we had a winner on our hands. The art is a little crude but the overall story is enjoyable once a solid continuity was created. If your child enjoys books on life at a strange schools like Wayside or the Jedi Academy series, Astronaut Academy would be another fun place for youngsters to tour.

Only 1 other book (AA: Re-Entry) has been published in this series by the versatile Roman. It make take about 30 pages to really hit it's stride, but this series is worth sticking around with. This book by First: Second is lots of fun to read. It would make an ideal summer reader!

Eti says

Dave Roman knows something about layers. Like a delicious parfait, Astronaut Academy is a hilarious romp through outer space guaranteed to delight both adult and child readers. The characters are parts adorable, quirky, and deep. Told through short vignettes that delve into the lives of each character, Astronaut Academy allows readers to see the entire picture of the academy and see how it all fits together. Honestly, it defies description but trust me when I say that it should be devoured like a special treat that leaves you remembering the awesome-sauce experience you had. (And for me, it was when Dave Roman referenced not one but three Tori Amos songs in a panel ("Caught a light sneeze, but at least they didn't ruin my precious things... but it looks like I'll be putting the damage on.") And because he is Dave Roman, he can bring in pop culture, quips about authority figures, and the infinite majesty of the cosmos all in one panel.

Claire says

Synopsis

Hakata Soy's past life as the leader of a futuristic super team won't stay in the past!

The former space hero is doing his best to keep his head down at Astronaut Academy. Things aren't going so great, though. The most popular girl in school has it in for him. His best friend won't return his calls. And his new roommate is a complete jock who only cares about Fireball.

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My Review

Okay, before I start, read that synopsis again. Futuristic super team. Anti-Gravity Gymnastics. Robot doppelganger. TACTICAL RANDOMNESS. Is it any surprise that I wanted to read this super bad? The cover just made me want to squee in adorableness. So already, my review is going to be positive, yes?

Like I said before: this book is adorable. The art style is very simplistic and clean, and it only adds to the plot.

Well, not really. There isn't really much of a plot. It's more of a slice-of-life type of book, and although there is an overarching plot involving the doppelganger, it doesn't really feel like one.

There are lots of POVs in this comic, and every time it switches over, a new page and a small title on the top announces the change. The title is a running gag, as it introduces the character narrating and a phrase that explains the correlations to Astronaut Academy. For example, the opening page can be found here. Although I hate reading multiple POV in "normal" books, this novel somehow manages to make it work, and that makes it fine with me.

You can tell that the author had fun making this, because he throws in plenty of humorous lines that you normally wouldn't find in literature. Very sarcastic stuff.

All that chirping is so OFFENSIVE! Especially since it is a racial stereotype to ASSUME that birds all chirp the same way. ~pg. 45

But even with all that snarky humor, you'll occasionally find some very poignant stuff. A character named Doug Hiro usually provides very quiet and insightful observances. He's a student who loves space so much that he wears his spacesuit all the time, and prefers to stay outside in the eternity of space. He really brings another side to this otherwise bright and cheerful book, and it really illuminates the vast array of differences among the characters.

I should have known better. Underneath the pretty exterior everyone is exactly the same. Empty shells with NO APPRECIATION for the majesty of the infinite cosmos. They're all too busy to step back from themselves and take it all in. To be engulfed in true beauty. I don't need companionship to feel fulfillment or comfort. I have the WARMTH of a billion stars...wrapped like a blanket around me. ~pgs. 136-137

And the accompanying artwork just makes me want to bawl my eyes out over Doug. T-T

Rating

How can I say this...This book won me over by the synopsis and cover alone, and went above and beyond any pitiful expectations I might've had. It can't really be categorized as anything but everything; it contains a little bit of everything. And through the multiple characters, you get to see a patchwork of so many different ideals and wishes and hopes and dreams. This is truly a wonderful book that you should read, and it definitely deserves...

5 out of 5 stars

Happy reading!

You can also find this review at my book blog, www.timetobook.blogspot.com
