



The Toy Collector

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A tragicomic novel about nostalgia, addiction, and 1970s action figures.

The Toy Collector is a wickedly funny portrait of a young man who sells stolen pharmaceuticals to finance his growing addiction to memorabilia. An orderly at a Times Square hospital, he buys his toys at exorbitant prices, searching the familiar tacky plastic in a perverse effort to avoid adulthood. As the story switches from the make-believe world he creates with his childhood friends-populated by Scrunch-Em, Grow-Em Dinosaurs and toy robots-to the grown-up pleasures of sex, drugs and alcohol, James falls in and out of love, and stumbles through New York City in search of dubious redemption.

The Toy Collector Details

Date : Published July 6th 2001 by Bloomsbury USA (first published 2000)

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Author : James Gunn

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From Reader Review The Toy Collector for online ebook

Melody says

Feelings are mix about this book. 2.5/3

Joel Lee says

Dark, sad, hilarious all at the same time. I laughed out loud about 20 times. I also felt like crying several times. By the end, I just felt sorry for the main character and saw no hope in sight. It's amazing that author James Gunn ended up coming out of the cycle of addiction depicted in the book (it's autobiographical) and went on to write and direct major motion pictures (including the recent Guardians of the Galaxy). The book ends with hopelessness but knowing the story of the author, it turns out there was hope after all. Not a book for everyone but a great book if you love the idea of being addicted to the drug known as nostalgia.

Kaylan says

I just want to say that James Gunn is amazing. I think he is a genius, he is incredibly creative, and he is hilarious. I admire him deeply and I love his work...in the film industry. I'm sorry, but I cannot take this man seriously as a novelist. It wasn't all shit, but it was mostly shit. Reading the sex scenes made me feel like I had pubic hair in my mouth. Based on the number of sex scenes, I basically felt that I spent the whole time reading this with an entire mouth full of wet pubes. That sounds awful, but it's also awful reading passages like this:

"My sperm shot through Evelyn's whole body, came out of her mouth, went all the way around the earth, and landed again in the base of my spine."

I totally get that James was trying to be poetic or some shit, but no. Just no. Stop it. Stop it right now.

Plus, the main character (mysteriously named "James Gunn") is a huge dick and the type of person I hate the most. It's very hard reading a book that's narrated by such a character. If the real James Gunn is anything like literary James Gunn, I would rather not hear about it, ever.

Matt Cunningham says

Fantastic book. I wish James Gunn would have written more JUST LIKE THIS before leaving this tradition so radically for stuff like screenplays and a few scifi short stories. This is everything that Palahniuk tries to be, except effortless, unforced, believable. The protagonist here goes down so many toilets in so many off-putting ways in his life that you cheer for him AND his failures until they're the same thing. It's at times hilarious, at times mortifying, but it's all real. I believe there are people like this protagonist version of Jimmy Gunn out there, where I have a hard time believing in the Tyler Durdens, etc. A really strange and beautiful and poignant and disgusting book. I have revisited it a few times, this is my third read-through that

I just finished up.

karen says

caveat: if you are approaching this "book review" because you are interested in reading this book, and are looking for an informed opinion, you should probably go read someone else's review. this is a review-challenge for a book i read at least fifteen years ago and remember very vaguely, and the parameters of the challenge, while fun, are not particularly useful to content-seekers. are you still reading this?

the challenge, from mariel to me:

Mariel My challenge!

I choose James Gunn's The Toy Collector.

Unless someone wants to chime in an additional ten things you'll have to do all of these to compete with Greg. Each is worth ten points.

Do a photo essay of action figures (any kind of toy) starring as the main characters of this book in a poignant moment.

Translate a paragraph into google translator and then back again into English using google translator.

Pick a fight with one of the brothers. Extra ten points if there are pictures.

Write about the book as if it were an episode of Law and Order or The Wire.

Make a cry for help.

Ask at least five rhetorical questions.

Do a top ten list of reasons why James Gunn wishes he was Joss Whedon.

Give advice on how they could've made a better drug selling business model.

Have a Waynes World moment over toys.

Be girlier than any thread of a Greg review. Extra ten points if there are pictures.

caveat deux: if you think this novel is about a gentleman who collects sex toys, you are incorrect. it was a total bummer to me to learn that it was just about some comic-book-nerd who hoarded superhero action figures instead of bangmaster 6000's and blow-up mollys.

live and learn... and consider yourself warned.

1) alfonso, you are a turd. this is not *necessarily* part of the anti-shout-out, it is just a fact i am stating unsolicited-like. (that being said, it does not mean it should not be counted)

plot synopsis run through google master linguist:

This is a book about a man who loves Collecting Toys so much that he Risks it all to be able to afford to continue adding to his collection. He Steals pharmaceutical drugs from the hospital in which he is to sell only to finance its Addiction to Toys. A victim of the continued infantilizatyon of adult men in our culture, he continues to play as a child in both its social and private life as he Fantasizes on Toys at every opportunity instead of facing his problems as an adult.

why does the yiddish translator capitalize those words??

2)greg - those shoes make your butt look big

care for a taste?

so the veterinarian fixed the bird.

he rubbed some ointment on the wound and, on my suggestion, added a couple of stitches there as well. he dressed the broken wing in a sling of cloth. he braced the leg with two tongue depressors and wrapped it in tape.[image error]

when the job was finished, the vet handed us a bottle of medicine and said to place it on the wound twice a day to check any infection. he passed us some extra slings.

evelyn charged the seventy-five bucks to her mastercard. the vet nodded good-bye as we left.

the weather wasn't quite as hot as it had been. we got into evelyn's volvo and moved up broadway toward my apartment in harlem. the pigeon wheezed twice, loudly, and died.

and...scene.

and alfonso's sock puppet montage:

look at all the drugs i have stolen!! would you like to buy these drugs, kindly red panda??

now i have all this cash money!! what shall i buy??

[image error]

toys, naturally!! i do so love toys!! they call me *the toy collector*, did you know that???

[image error]

it is easy to make a photo montage of toy tableaux because i have so many toys myself. why do i have so many toys?? where do they all come from??seriously - why do i have so many toys?? greg was here the other day to hook up my dvd player (woot!) and he looked around and said "you have so many cute things here." his tone was envious, but the fact remains that i have so.many.toys.here. they are everywhere: on top of my stacks of books, on my bed, on my computer desk - i have a problem - everything in my house that is useful must also be cute. why do i have this compulsion to surround myself with toys?? i am not at the point where i am selling drugs to finance my toy habit, because my toys are cheap, but it is still an unseemly habit.

SOMEONE SAVE ME FROM MYSELF!!!

my new year's resolution is to stop buying toys and other childish things.

[image error]

and tar - i am going to kick your ass!! i don't even remember your role in this book, except that you are a

brother and i feel like that makes you worthy of an ass-kicking so if you get one step closer with that rom spaceknight action figure i am going to burl you. don't point that thing at me, sir!! don't make it go all "cambloo cambloo" at me!! do you know who i am??i will sock you in the everlovin' face, i tell you!

DO NOT TRIFLE WITH THE KAREN!!!!

i need to interject here. karen doesn't know i am taking this over but when we were in the womb she used to totally kick me and bite me with her tiny toothless fetus-mouth like how cops beat their wives so the marks don't show. she was a criminal mastermind then, always trying to get me to go along with her schemes, and i was like, "we aren't even born yet!! patience!!" and then she would just bite me and sorta growl deep in the back of her babythroat.i have always tried, since then, not to piss her off; staying in the background so very few people even know i exist, but that girl is a self-hating-twin and she is nothing but bad news. please do not encourage her behavior.

3) eh!, i think you have a drinking problem and should stop being such a sex-toilet. you are living your life like some sort of kardashian and it is unfeminine. so, for you:

girlie interlude-intervention!

[image error]

4) ariel. everyone saw what you did and they are all talking about it and we are all going to kick your ass on friday. you are just a terrible ungenerous person.

law and order interlude:

jesse l. martin is on the phone for this entire scene, leaving jerry orbach to interview the suspect. (why is jesse l. martin always on the phone??

"so, you like to play with dolls, eh??"

"they aren't dolls, they are collectible action figures"

(makes that jerry orbach face that looks at once exhausted and amused) "hey, it's all geek to me..."

elliott stabler, inexplicably, enters the room.(do dolls count as "special victims"??) "so, you like to keep your toys in boxes?? that make you feel powerful?? like a big man???

suspect quakes with fear - he knows elliott is going through his third divorce from the same woman and is likely to snap for no reason in particular.

olivia benson saunters in the room wearing a tight sweater and a forced-sincere expression, "maybe you felt like you were keeping them safe?? so no one could hurt them or break them?? is that what you were doing??"

"yes, that's it - i...i was just *protecting* them! i am their GOD!!!!"

from the background, sam waterston yells "justice!!!" and a noise that sounds like "dunh dunh"

look, i don't know how to move product. i have seen *the wire*, but i don't know that i could write a better business plan than this hospital orderly. i know about cutting the product and i know you probably should get a cool orange couch,

(wouldn't that couch be gross after the first rain??)but it's a tricky business, and it involves guns and burners and hoppers and g-packs, and i just don't have the fortitude or the vocabulary to sustain it. instead, i am going to share some tips i have learned from retail. i am sure they are equally applicable to the sale of narcotics. make exciting endcaps. people like to see the merchandise. keeping it all bottled up will not show off its pretty colors and shapes. people love mosaics. make pretty patterns with similar-colored pills to lure in the visually oriented. put pills together whose goals are compatible: appetite suppressants next to uppers, viagra with heart medicines - make a bouquet garni of pills, wrap them in those little mesh bags they put jordan almonds in at weddings and tie a little ribbon around it.offer a membership card which gives its holder discounts on the narcotics they most frequently use, and also send emails periodically to entice them to broaden their narcotic experience. "hey, member, have you tried clomiPRAMINE hydrochloride?? it is pretty awesome and this week only, save 15%!!"

embarrass greg?? sure, i would love to. greg gave this movie five stars on netflix.com:

various reasons james gunn envies joss whedon:

1) james gunn's creations have never inspired a graphic novel spin-off

2)ain't nobody dressing as his characters for halloween

3) "james" vs "joss"... one rhymes with "lames" - one rhymes with "boss"

4)joss whedon: wrote the screenplay to *serenity*.

james gunn: wrote the screenplay to *scooby doo*.

5)james gunn's audience is "people who go out of their way to buy out of print books." joss whedon's audience ranges from young saucy teenage girls to straight white middle aged men with d&d cloaks in their closets and everything in between, excluding myself.

6) [image error]

[image error]

7)astrologically, joss whedon is a cancer:they are excellent business people and investors because of their intuitive and psychic ability and their creative forward thinking mind, they are able to predict future trends. they attract wealth very well. james gunn is a pouty leo: if leo's audience does not provide the needed appreciation, leo is too proud to ask for it and they will suffer a hurt ego, but no one will ever know and they will suffer in silence. The secret of the leo is that they need to be needed.(and he is still waiting on that second book deal)

8) no one ever mistakes joss whedon for *tim gunn*, and then has a disappointed face when their mistake is corrected.

9)joss whedon is older and could probably still win at arm-wrestling

10) [image error]

pause for more photos:

[image error][image error] (i googled pseudo-witty jokes, so i know these are accurate - the first one can count as an additional rhetorical question, so - score!!)

i encourage you to take a stand against alfonso's reign of terror w/r/t book challenges. don't vote for this

review, lest it encourage him to greater heights of whackassery: cut off a limb and take a picture of it being used as a bookmark for this book! what is the greenest thing you have ever thought about while pooping?? or some other bizarre shit. it needs to end here - they just don't make the review field large enough to sustain this madness.

i don't know if this counts as a dirty secret, but i learned last night that it is unusual to like this song, but i do: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUn0vv....> i am not the kind of person who has secrets that they have never told anyone - i am kind of a blabbermouth with no boundaries or sense of what people want to hear about. i tell complete strangers that i wet myself when i have seizures because i think it is funny and i have an underdeveloped sense of shame. oh, and i like this song, too - but i'm pretty sure it should be shameful: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j6WwjX....> but i am singing along now and no one can stop me - and i am making wizard-y gestures with my hands - wait it's going to get all guitar-y now -shhhooooomm. oh, and i love chris deburgh: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kNwvI....> i appreciate the theatrical elements of "rock and roll". also, littry.

and finally, i just want to take a moment to apologize for my ancestors. they lived in france, they had sexual intercourse, they moved to canada, they continued to breed and continued to be french and their children were canadian and continued to be canadian and i suppose they could have moved again - perhaps somewhere like finland or bruges, but they did not. and eventually, i came squirting out with my fingers and toes (and tail) and i was just filled with so much frenchness. and canadianness. and i could have changed - i could have stopped at any time. but i chose not to. and for that, i sincerely apologize. for my "decent."

Zack says

<http://www.examiner.com/books-in-denv...>

Will Ashton says

I wasn't exactly sure how I felt about *The Toy Collector* at first. It is a dark, demented, deeply disturbing novel, filled with trauma, depravity and inner turmoil, all told in a disjointed, twistedly humorous way. This book is intense and often uncomfortable, and it can be downright brutal at times. And I wasn't completely sure what it was trying to communicate initially, as the book was constantly bouncing between different point of time and different periods of reflection for our main protagonist. But as I dug deeper into James Gunn's first (and only) novel, the dots began to connect and the book reveals itself to be a disquieting, heartbreakingly and quizzically riveting look at grief, addiction, depression, anxiety and the fear of losing your inner child, even when your childhood was horrific. The resulting work of either fiction or non-fiction — it's hard to know where the truth begins and the fiction ends when your main character shares the same name as the author, and that's intentional — is a stunning meditation on what it means to grow up even when you're fucked up, which is something I ultimately relate to too much for my liking. Our main character can be completely unlikable and hard to sit with, but I sadly often found myself relating to his sense of inner dismay and bouts of self-destruction. There's a little bit of James Gunn in almost everything the author creates, from *Slither* to *Super* to the *Guardians of the Galaxy* movies (the second one, most especially). He has found a remarkable way to adapt and grow while still remaining connected to the child that drove him. *The Toy Collector* is ultimately another personal and reflective work of bitter comedy and deep sadness. While *The*

Toy Collector isn't quite as commercial as those Marvel movies, it connects to some themes brought up in this ruthless novel, and it is a tormented-but-powerful piece of work.

Stephanie says

This book was far more grim than I was expecting so I powered through and read the last half in one sitting. Man, I need a hug now.

Jeff says

We all know of drug addicts who steal things and sell them in order to fund their habits. This novel turns that concept around. The main character, James Gunn (yes, the author gave the main character his own name), is one messed-up individual. He works in a hospital and he and his friend/roommate steal pharmaceuticals to sell in order to fund their addiction to buying expensive vintage toys.

This book is an interesting psychological study as well as a wickedly funny black comedy. Episodes of the protagonist's messed-up childhood alternate with the present-day narrative in which we see his addictions (not only toy collection but substance abuse) and the havoc they wreak on his life and relationships.

In many ways, the main character is scum -- and yet there is something likeable about him, or else the novel would not work. I found myself rooting for him despite everything.

The author skillfully illustrates the tragic goofiness -- or goofy tragedy -- of one man's life and the effects it has on his friends, lovers and family. Highly recommended.

Nathan Evans says

While the book is aimless and unnecessarily gratuitous at times (especially toward the end where the story devolves into a series of pointless sexual liaisons and moments of graphic violence), The Toy Collector is an engaging read about a lost soul.

Deborah Katz says

This book is so damn good. And less troubling than the equally magnificent The History of Luminous Motion.

This is The History of Luminous Motion, but without needing to take a shower AND vomit afterwards.

I love it. I wish I knew what else this guy wrote.

Such fucked-up entertaining characters who are absolutely grounded in theory and not reality. But not in a Bertold Brecht kinda way, thank goodness.

Maybe if Bertold Brecht had a sense of humor, and an occasional flight of ugly fancy.

Ibtehaj Shaikh says

Twisted. Weird. Dark. Delightful (in a wicked sense).

This book resonated with me even though I have no interest in collecting toys. Coming from a different generation, I gravitate towards video games and in that regard, I connected with James Gunn (the character) quite a bit. Even when he did irreprehensible things, you still root for him, hoping he'd turn things around. Of course the tale is tragic and James Gunn (author and fantastic filmmaker) drives his point home.

Amanda Steinhoff says

It is a sign of James Gunn's talent that he took such a messed up main character - a violent drug addict who steals drugs from a hospital to buy toy robots - and managed to make me care about him, no matter how many horrible mistakes he made. Add on top of that some truly beautiful prose, even when describing the most bizarre or mundane things, and you get a fantastic read. Not for those who don't really enjoy dark humor. The book can get very, VERY weird and twisted.

s. says

I picked this up on a whim. Well, a lot because of the cover. Drugs and sex scenes were the last thing I thought about until I remembered part way through what little I knew about Gunn. The main character of the book was named after the author himself. As for how closely related to the truth of his life remains a mystery. The story focused on much of the main character's childhood which strongly tied where his love for toys began and how it tied into his adult life as a collector and drug addict. It was a good balance of his childhood and adult life to paint a clear picture of his obsession. As for the writing, it was a very easy read except that the sex scenes were (too) abundant and not so well written. A good short read and an interesting story of a toy collector.

Sam Koscelny says

The Toy Collector is about a guy named James Gunn, and is also the author, who is in his adulthood but is still stuck in his childhood. Him and his friend Billy illegally sell stolen pharmaceuticals to pay for their addiction of 1970's action figure toys. In this book you will find that James finds pleasurable alcohol, sex, and drugs. At times during the book I found it is hard to root for James because he constantly falls in and out of love destroying his relationships. You end up feeling more sympathy to the people he hurts than to him. But somehow you still want him to succeed. I think this is due to the fact that most adults have struggled growing up and leaving their childhood. You have a connection with James but it always gets hindered when he has a meltdown and tarnishes friendships and relationships with other people just out of a whim. James is obsessed with toys. The toys are the things he grew up playing with and when he buys these new toys there are flashbacks to his childhood with him playing with his toys. These toys represent his childhood and by buying them he is neglecting the fact that he is an adult and has other responsibilities. The Toy Collector is

an entertaining read but it is frustrating watching the protagonist destroy himself and his responsibilities. I recommend this book to fans of Paper Towns and Silver Linings Playbook.

Michael says

It would have been a lot better if it had been more about toys and less about drugs. I mean, the fact that he talks about Rom: Spaceknight is pretty great, as I got that toy for Christmas as a kid, and I loved the comics. In short: more Rom, less drugs. I think we can all learn a lesson from that.

Nik says

Der Spielzeugsammler

James Gunn ist dem ein oder anderen vielleicht ein Begriff, wahrscheinlich aber nicht als Autor klassischer Romane, sondern als sehr erfolgreicher Regisseur und Produzent, der sich vor allem mit dem Marvel-Film „Guardians of the Galaxy“ und der Fortsetzung eine ziemliche Reputation aufgebaut hat. Vor seinem großen Durchbruch im Filmgeschäft gab er im Jahre 2000 mit „Der Spielzeugsammler“ (The Toy Collector) sein Debüt als Romanautor, dem bis heute literarisch allerdings nichts nachgefolgt ist und somit den einzigen, einsamen Eintrag seiner Bibliografie darstellt (Mitwirkungen außen vor).

In „Der Spielzeugsammler“ folgt der Leser dem Protagonisten James „Jamie“ Gunn in personaler Erzählform über zwei abwechselnd fortlaufende Handlungsstränge: Einmal dem Gunn in den 20ern und einmal seinem Ich in Kindheit und Jugend.

Der „ältere“ Gunn arbeitet als Helfer in einem Krankenhaus, ist chronisch pleite und bedingt durch seine geringe Entlohnung an einen niedrigen Lebensstandard gewöhnt, den er sich zusammen mit seinem Kumpel Bill in einer WG teilt. Sie beide entwickeln eine Sammelobsession für Spielzeugfiguren, die sie sich mit ihrem regulären Einkommen aber nicht leisten können. Aus diesem Grund fangen sie an, bei ihrem Arbeitgeber Medikamente zu stehlen und diese zu verkaufen. Kurz darauf lernt er die junge, hübsche Evelyn kennen, verliebt sich und findet sich in der Situation wieder, dass sein bisheriges Hamsterrad von Leben überhaupt nicht für eine solche Beziehung geeignet ist.

Den „jungen“ Gunn verfolgt der Leser in mal mehr, mal weniger großen Zeitsprüngen durch seine Kindheit und Jugend. Diese prägende Zeit und all die Erfahrungen und „Abenteuer“ erlebt er mit seinem Bruder Torf und seinen Freunden Nancy und Gary.

Ich habe mir vorab keine Kritiken durchgelesen, höchstens ein paar überflogen, und hatte dementsprechend die sehr trügerische Erwartung, dass es sich um eher lockeren Stoff handeln würde, wie man es nach seinen Regiearbeiten im Marvel Cinematic Universe vielleicht erwarten würde. Das ist weit gefehlt, denn Gunn schafft mit dem gleichnamigen Protagonisten einen sehr bitteren Charakterentwurf, der etwas ganz anderes ist als ein humoristisch angehauchter Modelltyp des klassischen Nerds, der einfach nicht aus sich herauskommt. Es ist eine krasse Mischform aus Eskapismus, Soziopathie, Trauma und einer großen Portion Arschloch, von der ich nur hoffen kann, dass die autobiografischen Anteile möglichst gering sind. Aus dieser Perspektive, als Charakterstudie, ist das Buch sogar sehr gelungen, wenn es auch einiges abverlangt, einer solchen Figur über 300 Seiten folgen zu müssen. Der Autor beschreibt sehr detailliert und auch

nachvollziehbar, wie sich seine Hauptfigur ihr Leben ruiniert und in was für selbstzerstörerischen Denkmustern er gefangen ist, die immer dann greifen, wenn man schon dachte, es richte sich alles wieder ein.

Die Spielzeuge sind dabei selbstverständlich nur Symbole. Symbole einer verlorenen oder zumindest vergangenen Kindheit und der Sehnsucht nach Unschuld in einer Zeit, als alles noch „gut“ war. Dahingehend gibt es zwar viele namentliche Nennungen und Referenzen, wer aber ein Feuerwerk a la Ready Player One erwartet, wird enttäuscht werden. Sofern man kein Kenner von Actionfiguren ist, geht man leer aus.

Wesentlich mehr Aufmerksamkeit widmet der Autor dem Konsum von Drogen, Alkohol und einem anderen Symptom von Jamies Problemen, und zwar seinem unverbindlichen Sexualleben. Gerade Letzteres findet sehr viel Erwähnung und wird auch oft sehr detailliert beschrieben, generell sind sexuelle Elemente nahezu omnipräsent, und ab einem recht frühen Zeitpunkt sogar in dem Handlungsstrang um den jungen Jamie ausgiebig angelegt. Das passt grundsätzlich zum Charakterentwurf, auch in der Art und Weise, der Umfang ist aber zeitweise ermüdend und wäre in meinen auch in geringerem Maße absolut ausreichend gewesen. Die Beschreibungen sind dabei gerne recht bizarr, passend zum Protagonisten.

Eine Kostprobe (kein Spoiler-Alarm, aber pro forma):

„Dabei stellte ich mir Folgendes vor: Mein Sperma schoss durch Evelyns Körper, kam ihr aus dem Mund, umrundete die ganze Erde und landete schließlich dort, wo es hergekommen war.“

Direkt nach der Lektüre hatte ich sehr gemischte Gefühle, wie das Buch zu werten ist. Die Tatsache, dass der Protagonist für mich ein großer Unsympath ist, hat es schwer gemacht, hier trotz des guten Schreibstils und der sorgfältigen Ausarbeitung mit einem positiven Fazit zu schließen. Ich bin mir auch ziemlich sicher, dass „Der Spielzeugsammler“ bei weitem nicht für jeden etwas ist, aber als Charakterstudie gestehe ich Gunn zu, dass er hier durchaus abgeliefert hat.

Corey Edwards says

I picked up a used copy of "The Toy Collector" on a whim because ... I happen to be one.

While I found the book to be a quick and semi-engrossing read, I must warn my fellow toy-enthusiasts that they needn't pick it up if toy-collecting zaniness is what they're after.

While there are some amusing and interesting toy-geek moments, the book focuses far more on tales of drug and alcohol abuse, sex, violence, depression, and other adult hobbies.

While I did enjoy much of what I read, the book was ultimately disappointing in that it seemed to have very little new to say. A fun and gratuitous, if not terribly interesting, romp.

Jacob says

My reasons behind picking up this book is sort of a strange one. There's few frames of it in "Dr. Horrible's

Sing-A-Long Blog" and Joss Whedon mentions it briefly in the commentary. For some reason this was enough to get me to look up the book on wikipedia. I was sold. It sounded very Palahnuick-ish and he's one of my favorite authors.

When I started the book I wasn't sure I would finish it. Something about the beginning really turned me off. It took me about half the book to realize that the book was brilliant. It's so well written and while it did remind me of Palahnuick's style, Gunn managed to make it his own. The book is very funny but ultimately just one of the saddest books I've ever read.

Mariel says

I remember being able to relate to their feelings about the toys too much. It's hard to rate this book objectively as I was seriously depressed when reading it. I'm more fond of this in memory than when I read it (now I think about it when looking at toys, "Oh, I liked that"). There was just something desperate about it that made me feel even worse, though. I had the feeling that there should be more to life than toys, only I had no idea why. It's a sad kind of happy that I can't live with or without.
