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*Daniel Clowes*

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**Wilson** Daniel Clowes

AN ORIGINAL GRAPHIC NOVEL FROM THE OSCAR-NOMINATED SCREENWRITER AND AWARD-WINNING CARTOONIST

Meet Wilson, an opinionated middle-aged loner who loves his dog and quite possibly no one else. In an ongoing quest to find human connection, he badgers friend and stranger alike into a series of onesided conversations, punctuating his own lofty discursions with a brutally honest, self-negating sense of humor. After his father dies, Wilson, now irrevocably alone, sets out to find his ex-wife with the hope of rekindling their long-dead relationship, and discovers he has a teenage daughter, born after the marriage ended and given up for adoption. Wilson eventually forces all three to reconnect as a family—a doomed mission that will surely, inevitably backfire.

In the first all-new graphic novel from one of the leading cartoonists of our time, Daniel Clowes creates a thoroughly engaging, complex, and fascinating portrait of the modern egoist—outspoken and oblivious to the world around him. Working in a single-page-gag format and drawing in a spectrum of styles, the cartoonist of *GhostWorld*, *Ice Haven*, and *David Boring* gives us his funniest and most deeply affecting novel to date.

## Wilson Details

Date : Published April 28th 2010 by Drawn and Quarterly

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Author : Daniel Clowes

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## From Reader Review Wilson for online ebook

### Loyd says

Daniel Clowes has a misanthrope's spirit trapped in a young man's brain. His books are difficult to attach "stars" to, only pros and cons. Pros: exquisite art and book production; unique sensibility and approach; expert use of the comic medium. Cons: sour, nihilistic characters self-deluded that they are truth-seekers; the occasional obvious, smart-aleck, gross-out punch-line; a sad, morbid view of relationships bordering on the pathological.

Wilson is a sorry, wandering soul, deaf to the music of the world around him. He carries on a relentless internal monologue about the utter uselessness of modern life, and feels he is above such things. His only relationships are accidental; a man at a coffee shop, a woman who watches his dog occasionally; even a child he's never met that becomes more vital to Wilson as his life runs dry.

So there you are. A beautiful book about an ugly, pointless man. Well worth reading, especially to explore the utter purposeless that some people feel, but take a shower when you're done.

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### Enn\_oui says

Devastante, se ne esce distrutti.

A colpi di odiosissima e scorretta sincerità si insinua nelle crepe, nei piccoli disequilibri e deflagra.

Lo fa poi con uno strategico espediente, la divisione in capitoli che paiono autonomi e slegati, anche come stile grafico.

E la somma di questi frammenti schizofrenici si ricompone poi con un effetto valanga invisibile, non sai perché ma non respiri.

Poche volte ho letto di inadeguatezza con questa sintesi e crudezza. Infilandoci pure qualche risata.

Vi farà malissimo. Non è masochismo, è solo sincerità.

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### Erica says

The solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, yet not nearly short enough life of an internet troll who doesn't know how to use the internet.

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### Larnacouer de SH says

Well, based on people's comments, can say how funny Wilson is. For me? Yes, Wilson is self-deprecating person who is a quirky sense of humor is good enough but in terms of my enjoyment, it was only moderately okay. It didn't entertain me as they told me before. It wasn't full of story or humorous. It just felt empty.

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But i liked Clowes style, I'll check out other graphics which belongs to him later. ?

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## Greg says

Wilson is *that* kind of person. The person who has no problem while you're sitting and reading to come up and start his own conversation with you. The not very lovable stranger who asks quasi-personal questions and then editorializes about your life. The sad asshole type who just can't help but engage strangers and obviously feel like these strangers really give a fuck about what he thinks.

Part of the character of Wilson is self-incrimination of what I imagine the average Clowes reader is, and to what I picture Clowes himself to be like. Wilson says the rude things about people and modern life that I know I find myself sometimes thinking, and I'm sure I'm not so unique or alone in thinking these things. Wilson is saying the same kinds of things that Clowes was saying against all different types of people in his earlier short work in *Eightball*, and in the serialized story *Ghost World*. There is just something uncharming now about the stance Wilson has. Enid making snarky little observations about the poverty of modern life had a funny and cute feeling to it--Wilson saying similar things has the uncomfortableness to it. Yeah, maybe it was kind of counter-culture and good, or maybe it was necessary as a tween (shoot me in the face for using this term) to see through the bullshit and set yourself apart from it (as in the first half or so of *Ghost World*), but there has to be more to it. As the girls in *Ghost World* showed, the seeing through the bullshit is only half of the battle, and it's depressing as fuck if you can see through the bullshit and end up just getting caught in it anyway, or not be able to do anything more than see through the shit.

Wilson is sort of a less cute version of Enid now all grown up, middle-aged and bitter (and well male). Who see's how empty and worthless so much of modern culture is, can speak out against it, but has no answers for even living his own life in any meaningful kind of way. Maybe I'm just reading into what I thin Clowes and his other readers are like, but it seems like this is the ugly personal side of him (and them, and well me), the asshole who thinks he (or she) is better than all of the poor schmucks living the lie, but is really just a miserable sack of shit. Good times.

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## Stephen says

I'm not biggest Clowes fan anyway, but this seemed particularly pointlessly misanthropic. Each page is a single chapter, paced as a longer gag strip -something between a traditional US Sunday strip à la Peanuts or Calvin & Hobbes, and a one-page UK kids comic strip (a form with no tradition?). But, inevitably, each punchline is a gob of misanthropic bile, not a bon mot. The art style changes on each page, mostly rotating between a few standard styles - I wasn't quite sure why he did this.

There's definitely some good work here, it's just that I didn't find it enjoyable. And I say that as someone who generally gravitates toward downbeat and miserabilist art. I guess I want a bit more empathy with the character. As it is, it kinda feels like Clowes wants to create a dislikable character purely so that people can dislike him.

### **Rebecca McNutt says**

I really enjoyed this graphic novel and its originality and comedy. Its ability to deal with heavy themes of family dysfunction and portraying a deep main character, is very admirable.

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### **Sooraya Evans says**

A douche tries to reconnect with his ex wife and lost daughter.  
The narrative is broken down into 6 panel segments that start off witty and end with disparaging punchlines.  
I don't understand why the art style couldn't be consistent.

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### **Erin says**

Sad and unlikable Clowes characters are the best Clowes characters.

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### **Laura D says**

Wilson is a cynical old bastard. Wilson's redeeming quality is that he loves his dog, Pepper.

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### **Sam Quixote says**

Bill Bryson-lookalike Wilson lives alone with his puppy, narrating his life to no-one. When his father dies he decides to look for his ex-wife, in the process discovering that he has a teenage daughter he's never met. Together they strike up a flawed plan to (illegally) reunite their family.

Dan Clowes is best known for his oddball characters from Dan Pussey to Enid from Ghost World, Marshall from Mister Wonderful and David Boring. Wilson is my favourite of Clowes' creations because he's batshit insane. He's a complete lunatic who likes to believe he's a people person but when he strikes up random conversations with strangers, ends up insulting them. He's a self-centred, rude, abrasive asshole whose behaviour borders on the sociopathic - but he's so damn funny!

His conversations with strangers are hilarious, berating a woman he started talking to with "For the love of Christ, don't you ever shut up?", mocking a man for saying he's in IT by saying random groupings of letters, even at one point mailing a box of shit to his former sister-in-law! I was laughing out loud so many times reading this.

Clowes structures the book so that each page is like a self-contained story but they add up to a coherent, cleverly put-together narrative. You can't stop reading once you start, Wilson's life is such a train-wreck in slow-motion, you can't look away! But even though each page often ends with a punchline there's a lot of

pathos, tragedy, and drama within the story.

Through his random interactions we slowly see Wilson's life come into focus: the failed marriage, the distant relationship with his father, how isolated he is without family, friends or a job, how adrift he is within the modern world. Clowes reflects the many sides to Wilson by varying the art style constantly throughout. It's an inspired psychological portrait of a complex, probably crazy, person and how they view their world.

As funny as Wilson is, it wouldn't have been as good if it had just been a barrage of jokes, one after the other, so I'm glad Clowes mixed in the other elements to give the comedy more depth and nuance.

Wilson is one of Dan Clowes' best books that definitely holds up on re-reading. It's a smart comic but a really fun one too that all indie comics fans will enjoy.

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## Scarlet Cameo says

Una compilación de tiras cómicas que demuestran que la vida es una porquería, siendo nuestro protagonista una de esas personas que detestan la compañía pero aun así la buscan.

Aquí vemos la vida tratada con ironía, con desprecio y con una serie de pequeñas catástrofes que pueden volverse grandes problemas, especialmente cuando Wilson, cansado del vacío de su vida decide buscar a su ex-esposa e hija. A partir de ese momento veremos como la vida de Wilson da un cambio significativo a pesar de que, en cierto modo, todo sigue siendo igual.

En un mundo donde varias veces hemos visto a personajes inadaptados, Wilson destaca por aceptar su condición y al mismo tiempo combatirla mientras lo odia. Siendo misántropo por momentos y depresivo por otros, realmente nunca encontramos a Wilson como alguien agradable y aun así deseamos que le vaya bien, no porque creamos que lo merezca, sino para así ver su reacción. Wilson es un marginado en toda la regla y, en su conocimiento, desea que todos los demás lo noten y lo acepten, pero al mismo tiempo él nota que le encanta ser el extranjero porque no sabe ser normal, no sabe como pertenecer a estas personas, y busca forzar su lugar de las maneras más extrañas y negras posibles.

Definitivamente, el personaje es interesante y alguien como cualquiera, yo personalmente me vi en varias ocasiones reflejada en él, lo cual no me causo gracias, pero que lo descubres gracias a que Clowes busca reflejar lo peor de la vida en este personaje, en este ermitaño cuarentón necesitado de cariño que, en algún punto, como todos. Algo que llamo bastante mi atención fue al cambio en el dibujo, de una historieta a otra te encontrabas con que el color, el estilo y el trazo eran completamente diferentes, repitiéndose durante la totalidad del libro, pero pocas veces siendo consecutivo entre las distintas tiras.

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## Ray says

I just watched the film adaptation of Wilson, a very indie dark comedy starring Woody Harrelson as the titular character who wouldn't be my first choice but he did a good job--but this is a book review not a film review!) so I thought I would reread the graphic novel and think about what it is I love so much about it.

Wilson is an everyman who is both annoying optimistic and cynically grumpy. I can't quite place what it is that is so hilarious. It's pure Daniel Clowes, no other cartoonist could ever get away with such depictions. The experimental method in which every page is a different style is interesting, and the one-page almost

newspaper strip bits work very well. It makes the 77 pages feel like a true full novel.

It starts off random, and turns into something of a story with ex-wives and kidnapping and a prison sentence. It continues into his life; maybe the end of his life.

A sad pathetic story of empty people and losers and the driest one-liners ever, and somehow it is beautiful and it is above all funny!

I for one love it.

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### **Sharon says**

Daniel Clowes is a genius, period. He captures a particular voice so well, the voice of the misanthrope longing to make a connection, yet turned off by what society has become at every juncture. In his newest work, *Wilson*, he nails this again with a character nearing middle age and pondering the universal questions of family, what his life meant, what to do for a living, etc. Of course, Clowes' twist on this makes the material both exceedingly depressing and funny, often both at the same time. The book is done in a collection of one-page strips, mostly ending in a gag or revelation, in different expressive cartooning styles during a formative period in Wilson's life. As he ponders why he never had a family, Wilson turns around to yell at a screaming child in the playground to shut up in the last panel; as he tries to make a friendly connection with a businessman in the airport and the man describes his job in terms of corporate management-speak, Wilson sobs in the last panel and proclaims "God, it's so terrible the way people live."

Just read all of Clowes...he'll make you laugh, he'll make you cry, and if you're a certain type of person, you'll identify with all his work a little too closely....

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### **Ademption says**

I can't say that I disliked it, but *Wilson* makes me want to knock a few stars off everything Clowes did between this and *Ghost World*. *Wilson* is better than all of that (David Boring, Caricature, Pussey!) but doesn't approach *Ghost World* or *Like a Velvet Glove...*

The strips are 2X4. Wilson is a pessimistic, lazy misanthrope. He yammers like a retarded Woody Allen through 6 panels, stares through 1 panel of awkward silence, and finishes with a verbal venom bomb, that is dark dark as your introverted, lonely soul. Clowes is articulate and seems funny in interviews, but his characters remain awkward and very angry about their inability to connect. In *Wilson*, the awkwardness is heavy-handed and makes for tiresome reading.

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### **Andrea Motta says**

Deliciosamente irônico, pessimista e nonsense (com esteriótipos e preconceitos) - e ainda assim cativante.

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## Stacy says

I liked the different art styles on every page and the format. The story, idk yet.

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## Melki says

The first two panels of this graphic novel feature Wilson proclaiming, **I LOVE PEOPLE!** and **I'M A PEOPLE PERSON!** I can't tell if he's hopelessly optimistic or just self-deluded, as he spends the years of his life that are shared with the reader as a mostly miserable, unfriendly son of a bitch.

A lifetime of loneliness and dread have made Wilson a pretty unlikable fellow, and he freely shares his misery with his dying father, his ex-wife, anyone he sits near at the coffee shop, everyone he passes on the street, etc.

Wilson's only redeeming quality? His love for his dog Pepper.

Clowes employs different drawing styles on almost every page. I like this technique, as it helps alleviate the dreariness. Make no mistake - this is a thoroughly depressing, yet somehow compelling read.

This book is certainly not a waste of time. Despite the gloom and doom, it is an absorbing look at a misspent life. If nothing else, Wilson serves as a shining example of how **NOT** to be.

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## Craig Maxwell says

My first Daniel Clowes graphic novel and what a fantastic witty introduction. The character Wilson is completely hysterical individual that I completely fell in love with.

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## ♥ Sandi ♡ says

A graphic novel, in single page stories, tells of a middle aged divorced man through the rest of his life to a senile old man, alone. Pages of losing his father, finding his ex-wife, kidnapping his grown daughter, going to prison, looking for his dog, marrying his dog sitter, meeting his grandson and as the circle of life moves, ending up alone.

Story contains a lot of dry humor. Will be made into a movie in 2017.

3.5 stars

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