



Mush!: Sled Dogs with Issues

Glenn Eichler, Joe Infurnari (Illustrator)

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Venus wants Buddy to quit asking her to "make puppies."

Buddy wants Winston's help wooing Venus.

Winston wants Guy's respect.

Guy wants Dolly's job.

Dolly wants to know the meaning of it all.

Nobody knows what Fiddler really wants, not even Fiddler.

But mostly...the sled dogs just want to run.

Sound simple?

It should be, but even dogs have their office politics.

And let's not even start on their humans.

Mush!: Sled Dogs with Issues Details

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From Reader Review *Mush!:* Sled Dogs with Issues for online ebook

Melissa Mcavoy says

The ruminations of sled dogs might not seem of compelling concern to high school kids or adults, but Glenn Eichler, a writer for the Colbert Report and Joe Infurnari, Eisner nominated artist, have crafted a graphic novel that makes sled dog angst both relatable and hilarious. Over the course of the novel, alliances shift and relationships deepen as the pack chew over everything from puppy love to the meaning of life: "But what if we invented the fence to avoid taking responsibility for our own destiny?" Not only will sharp teens recognize their peers, they may lift some lines: "Will you excuse me? I just remembered I can't stand listening to you." Infurnari's drawings support both the humor and the nuance. The dogs are flattened by their ennui, sometimes pictured in long horizontally divided panels that visually stretch out time. Their manic, joyful runs are full of violently slanted perspective. Infurnari's formatting variety and shifting color palette support and enhance the changing moods of the characters and the emotional arc of the story. The subplot, involving the master and his mate, initially seems dark, but parallels the dog's ability to work through their problems and rise to the occasion to defend what really matters. *Mush* manages to be witty and profound, effective and uplifting.

Lindsay Ross-Roberts says

Not horrible but not great either.

Shazza Maddog says

This graphic novel takes place in the far North, where six sled dogs and two humans are navigating the dangerous terrain known as 'life'. Okay, so it's not that bleak. But the dogs, Dolly, the lead dog, Venus, a wheel dog, Buddy, Venus' not-so-bright partner, Winston, the purebred, Gus, the devious one, and Fiddler, content to follow Dolly - all they really want is to run. Well, and Buddy wants a relationship with Venus because they've had a couple of litters in the past, and Gus wants to take Dolly down and will use whoever he can to do it. The Boss and his Wife are going through their own problems, a difference of opinion in what their lives mean up in this cold land.

This is a fun story but the art for the dogs is kind of off-putting. That being said, the story is well-written, the characters come alive. I'm interested in seeing more work from the author and artist.

Chris says

I started 2012 with two graphic novels I got for Christmas.
One of them made me laugh and one of them made me cry.**

This is the one that made me laugh.

Who knew sled dog teams were so full of relationship issues, office politics, and all-out existential angst? (Apparently, Glenn Eichler knew, but I had never given it a thought.)

Spend some time with...

Dolly, lead dog, questioning both her ability and desire to lead.

Fiddler, who ponders life, the universe, and everything

Venus, who resents the fact that the boss keeps breeding her, year after year.

Winston, snobby purebred Samoyed.

Guy, ambitious and aggressive, who wants Dolly's lead position.

And, my personal favorite...

Buddy, a lovable lump who can't figure out why his repeated breedings with Venus doesn't mean they have a relationship. Bitches can be such...well, *bitches*. His attempts at conversation with Venus (and the *practice* attempts at conversation with her that he has with Fiddler) had me laughing, sympathizing with him, and rooting for him at the same time.*

The relationship issues, office politics, and existential angst all go on during the dogs' boredom between runs. If there's the slightest hint of a possible run, all that falls away and their faces exude pure doggy joy.

There's an accident, an attempted coup, and...oh yeah...a subplot involving the intense, isolated lives of *the boss* (who doesn't realize it takes a village to keep a couple from wanting to kill each other) and *the boss's mate* (who among us hasn't had the equivalent of the "*APRICOTS*" argument). The plot elements aren't *surprising*, but are well handled and always serve to deepen the characterizations rather than just *happening*.

Highly recommended!

*And may I say to all of my Goodreads friends that your turd piles were most pleasingly formed this morning. Wait...wait...did I say something wrong? Stop...don't *unfriend* me...

**And here's the link to *WE3*, the one that made me cry.

<http://www.goodreads.com/review/show/...>

Abigail says

I saw this book and just had to have it! I got it for a good deal and I'm super happy to have bought it. This book is so silly and funny. I love how the humor can be so morbid and dark sometimes. Each sled dog is so different it makes the book funnier and just full of so much character because of all the personalities in it. I love the art style in this book as well. It's amazing and just hilarious! This book was pretty predictable, but it didn't make me lose my interest because it's written so well. Such a silly, quick, and easy read

Peacegal says

Wonderful idea and a great execution. *Mush* focuses upon a team of sled dogs with very different (and often clashing) personalities. They live for the brief thrill of going on "runs" when their gruff trapper owner can be bothered to hitch up his sled to check his traplines.

At all other times, the dog pen is filled with ennui, "office" politics, friendships forged and broken, and speculation on the goings-on of the "boss" and his long-suffering "mate." It's like *Balto* for adult working stiffs.

Of note: Real sled huskies are normally chained to individual doghouses in their dog yards--not left to roam off-leash when not working as these canines are.

Emilie says

My feelings on this book are pretty neutral, mostly because it turned out to just not really be my cup of tea. One of the best points for me was probably the art. It was really nice; the characters all looked distinctive (which isn't always the case with animal characters, in my experience), and their emotions were shown very clearly through their expressions and body language (also not always the case with non-human characters). The style was just really great, and made all the dogs seem so endearing!

The story was nice enough, although I found it a bit dull and very predictable.

All around I'd say it was a nice, light-hearted read, and the reason I'm not very enthused about it is probably just because, like I said, it turned out to not really be my cup of tea.

(I received this book for free through Goodreads First Reads. Unfortunately, it arrived much, much later than the site told me it should, to the point that I marked it as 'not received'. I didn't receive it before the general release date, and so couldn't leave an advanced review. At least I received it eventually, though, which I'm quite grateful for!)

Sharon Tyler says

Mush! Sled Dogs with Issues is a graphic novel written by Glenn Eichler and Illustrated by Joe Infurnari. It is set for release on December 6 2011. This is the story of one team of sled dogs, their master and their master's mate. Power struggles and politics are not reserved for people. Even a seemingly simple team of sled dogs has their struggles. Venus wants Buddy to stop trying to be her mate. Buddy wants help wooing Venus, and to ultimately secure her as his mate. Winston wants to be respected. Guy wants to lead. Dolly wants to know the how's and why's of the world. Nobody has a clue about what Fiddler wants, including Fiddler. The one thing they all want is to run. Even their master, and his mate, has some serious issues.

Mush! Sled Dogs with Issues is entertaining as it comments on the climate found in some families, work places, and in society in general. Everyone seems to want something, even if it is just the time to think deep thoughts. There always someone that seems to want more than they have, or deserve. *Mush!* also comments on the idea that the best person to lead is often the one that does not feel the drive to do so. Throughout the book, Dolly doubts her ability to lead while Guy wants little more than to take the lead spot. It is the very concerns that Dolly voices, about doing the best for the entire crew, that makes her a great leader even when

she makes mistakes, whereas Guy simply wants the power of the position. In the midst of all the serious topics lie the sardonic humor of Glenn Eichler, which I loved in *Daria* (a cartoon series aired on Mtv in the nineties).

In the illustrations for this graphic novel, at least in the digital galley that I read, are not as deep or clear to me as the story itself. Guy does look generally sinister and Buddy generally looks goofy, as fits their personality and actions, the dogs as a whole do not seem very well detailed to me. There is almost a sketch like quality, rather than a complete or finished feel to the artwork. That might be part of the story, but it just felt a little off to me. That being said, there were some panels that the artwork did a perfect job of capturing the action and feel of the tale.

I recommend *Mush!* for young adults and adults that enjoy dry, sardonic humor in their graphic novels. I do not suggest this as a foray into the realm of graphic novels for those that would otherwise avoid them. Those that remember *Daria* and the combination of dry wit and social commentary fondly, like myself, might want to pick up this work and enjoy some great examples of both. I enjoyed the graphic novel, but it did not leave me wishing for more.

Jill says

I won this book in a Goodreads book give away. I was excited when it arrived and read it right away. This is a graphic novel told from the point of view of a team of sled dogs. The illustration are done in muted browns, blue and white. I have not read many graphic novels, though my kids at school love them. This one is definitely more for teens or adults as breeding is part of the story. It was a quick and enjoyable read. The characters are interesting and lovable. You have the leader who not sure she should be leading, the philosopher who questions and over thinks everything, the new dog on the team who wants to be the leader, the snooty dog whose easily coerced by his vanity and my personal favorite the big and sweet oaf who just wants to get the pretty dog. Really this is a story anyone can relate to, the themes are seen in just about any office in America.

Michael says

Hair-brained philosopher, reluctant hero, conniving backstabber, blue-blood snob, hey, dogs are people too!

Leilani says

I loved the art, a few of the characters (Fiddler and Dolly's philosophical debates were the highlight of the book.) and a handful of lines...but otherwise the story was underwhelming and content occasionally crass. (To be fair, my surprise at the level of innuendo is probably all my own fault for not reading the dust jacket ahead of time.) That said, the dynamic crosshatching elevates this book to a three star rating.

First Second Books says

We just got copies of this book in the office, and it looks terrific! Joe Infurnari is such a talented cartoonist -- this book is set up north, so there are 160 pages of snow. And he manages to make them all look gorgeous.

I don't know how he did it.

Altivo Overo says

I haven't read a lot of graphic novels or comics. However, this seems considerably more subtle than most I have read. Anthropomorphic indeed, these sled dogs have real human personalities and weaknesses. The two humans in the background seem shallow by comparison. Fiddler is a philosopher, Dolly is a leader with fears of inadequacy, Venus might be a budding feminist if she'd allow herself to choose a path, Winston is a vain and unimaginative aristocrat, Guy is ambitious but not very bright (fortunately,) and Buddy is the office chauvinist with only one thing on his mind (if you can call it a mind.) The subtitle, "Sled dogs with issues," is probably accurate though I'd call it "Sled dogs in spite of themselves." Because, you see, all of them want to run and will immediately drop all other lines of thought when interrupted by an opportunity to do just that.

Though nothing here says explicitly that there will be or might be more volumes, the story certainly is open-ended. The art work is good, conveying a lot with relatively little complexity in the lines. I'd certainly read the next issue if there is one.

Emily says

Actually 2.5 stars.

This was by no means a bad book, but I certainly wouldn't classify it as a great book. It's meandering somewhere in between the two. First of all, it was written from an animal's perspective and it didn't appear to be the type of book to make me bawl, so when I found this in the library on some random shelf I was *all* over it. I do not regret my decision because dogs will (and currently do imho) rule the planet, so anything even vaguely having to do with them is worth picking up.

I wasn't an enormous fan of the art, but man do I love Fiddler! I know he was created to be the likable and deep-thinking character, but I was ever so happy to fall into that trope because a dog who likes philosophy? C'mon. Try resisting it, go ahead. I'll wait over here until you come crawling back and admit to me that it cannot in fact be done. I'll be humble in my victory.

Anyways, the cartoonist is Canadian, so brownie points there. Felt it necessary to point that out because I'm... y'know... me. Ahem.

Overall it had a cute ending and some lines & sequences that made me smile and even one that made me crack up internally (that sounds painful, but I just mean it wasn't out loud). So worth the read for a couple of laughs and a good reminder that snow is coming in this country currently plagued by insane heat.

Winter is coming.

(See what I did there? Yeah I'll see myself out.)

Christina says

A fun silly yet also serious graphic novel about sled dogs in the snowy wilderness, told from the point of view of the dogs (so they can't understand anything their humans say to them, and in fact they talk pityingly among themselves about the humans, as if they are the unevolved animals and the dogs are the superior creatures). The lead dog is tired of being the lead dog and having the responsibility; one of the male dogs is constantly flirting and trying to get the female dog to mate with him; one dog is very philosophical about life; another dog is on a power trip and wants to challenge the lead dog for the position, and they have to do it by fighting but he's sneaky and is trying to trick another dog into doing his fighting for him. There's basically inter-office politics among the team, and gender rivalries, and so on; they're very human-like in their canineness, if that makes sense. The only thing keeping me from giving it five stars was the art, which was sometimes confusing--the individual dogs were sometimes hard to tell apart.
