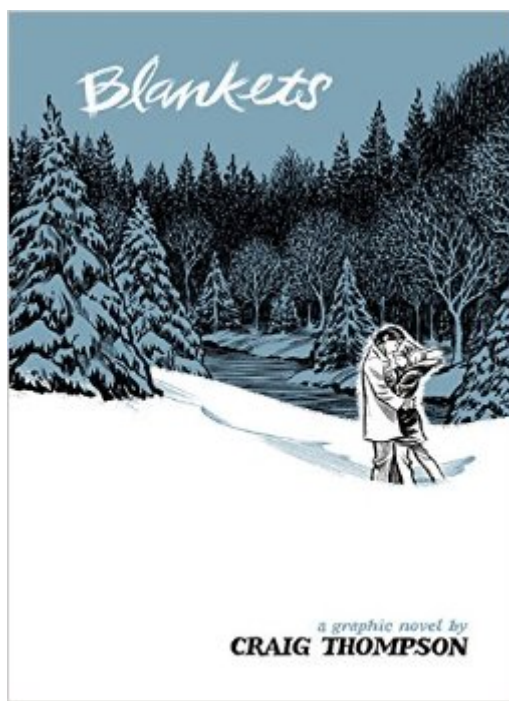


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Blankets



Synopsis

"Quaint, meditative and sometimes dreamy, *Blankets* will take you straight back to your first kiss."
--The Guardian
Blankets is the story of a young man coming of age and finding the confidence to express his creative voice. Craig Thompson's poignant graphic memoir plays out against the backdrop of a Midwestern winterscape: finely-hewn linework draws together a portrait of small town life, a rigorously fundamentalist Christian childhood, and a lonely, emotionally mixed-up adolescence. Under an engulfing blanket of snow, Craig and Raina fall in love at winter church camp, revealing to one another their struggles with faith and their dreams of escape. Over time though, their personal demons resurface and their relationship falls apart. It's a universal story, and Thompson's vibrant brushstrokes and unique page designs make the familiar heartbreaking all over again. This groundbreaking graphic novel, winner of two Eisner and three Harvey Awards, is an eloquent portrait of adolescent yearning; first love (and first heartache); faith in crisis; and the process of moving beyond all of that. Beautifully rendered in pen and ink, Thompson has created a love story that lasts.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (358 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Craig Thompson's *Blankets* is a big, hefty, slab of a graphic novel -- the kind of book that requires you to develop strategies for holding it up when you're reading in bed or draping yourself over the edge of the couch. I found that the book was easiest to read in bed with my knees in the air. That way, its massiveness could be propped up on my knees and the pages fairly easily turned. *Blankets* is an elegantly inked autobiographical coming of age story about a boy, Craig, who is dealing with

mid-west mullet-sporting hicks, extremely overzealous Christians for parents, an only minimally explained instance of childhood molestation (by an apparent stranger with bad skin), much more direct and violent abuse from the before-mentioned extremely overzealous Christian father, and relief from all of this only in the form of church camp. When church camp spells your relief from it all, you know you're in trouble. The character Craig's childhood is rendered sweetly charming by the author Craig's portrayal of two brothers sleeping in the same bed together in a poorly insulated attic room and managing to weather the turmoil of the childhood they didn't choose for themselves or each other. They draw, but most of all, they summon creativity: that force kids can bring to life in even the worst of situations. At church camp one year, much later in his adolescence, Craig meets Raina, the alluringly drawn bad-for-a-Christian girl who Craig falls for and then the book falls for -- about half of the text, right up until a very-nearly tacked on section at the end, is spent describing Craig's slow-boil relationship with Raina.

Much has been made in recent years of how the graphic novel-and as a result, the comic book-has matured and come into its own. This is indeed, true, as subject matter and approach in the comics industry has become much more fluid. Yet, most stories were still serialized before they were printed in book form, and the ones that struck out on their own and did it in one-go (including some by my own company, Oni Press), were significant, but not yet reaching the full breadth that the word "novel" implied. Enter Craig Thompson. Nearly five years ago, he released his first major work, GOODBYE CHUNKY RICE. It was an excellent piece of sequential fiction, but much like, say, the first album by Nirvana or Andi Watson's SKELETON KEY (or even THE COMPLETE GEISHA) or Todd Haynes' POISON, it was only a glimmer of what was to come. Since that time, Thompson has locked himself away and honed his first masterpiece-an ambitious narrative clocking in at nearly 600 pages. Sure, you can write it off as a coming of age story (a coming of age story in an art form that still is coming up with its standards for most literary genres, and thus still coming of age itself), but that would be to say THE BELL JAR is merely the story of a depressed poet or GOODFELLAS about a guy who gets an interesting job. BLANKETS is the story of an artist in a state of becoming, a boy walking down a road where people in the houses on either side are attempting to get him to stop and play in their yard. It's the tale of said boy figuring out how to stick to the middle, and stay true to himself. Semi-autobiographical, BLANKETS outstrips the standard coming-of-age novel by giving it a perspective that only the comic book would allow him.

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