



The End

Anders Nilsen

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Assembled from work done in Anders Nilsen's sketchbooks over the course of the year following the death of his fiancée in 2005, *The End* is a collection of short strips about loss, paralysis, waiting, and transformation. It is a concept album in different styles, a meditation on paying attention, an abstracted autobiography and a travelogue, reflecting the progress of his struggle to reconcile the great upheaval of a death, and finding a new life on the other side. The book blends Nilsen's disparate styles, from the iconic simplicity and collaged drawings of his *Monologues for the Coming Plague* to the finely rendered *Dogs and Water* and *Big Questions*. Originally released in magazine form in 2007, *The End* has been updated and expanded to more than twice its original length, including a 16-page full-color section.

The End Details

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Author : Anders Nilsen

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Comics

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From Reader Review The End for online ebook

David Schaafsma says

Don't Go Where I Can't Follow is a book Nilsen put together after the death of his partner, a kind of scrapbook initially devised exclusively for his family and friends as a kind of remembrance. The End is culled from his sketchbooks and letters and photographs, and it is of course about grieving, and grief, and getting through, and all the things he went through. . . which is, as it turns out, not all that different from what we all go through when we grieve. . . or at least many of the same motions. . . all those stages. And can we learn from Nilsen's meditations about death and dying and grief, like all the novels and memoirs about it? Of course, and in this one it is no different, really. Even if he didn't really construct it for us outsiders. Maybe in a way it is even more powerful because of that, that it is not self-consciously "literary." I found Don't Go Where I Can't Follow more moving because it felt more raw and immediate and in the moment of a young man's baffling loss of a loving partner. Its focus is more on her.

The End is more contemplative, more about Nilsen, and his coping and failures to cope and his trying to regain his sense of humor. They are a very nice and affecting pair, these two books, and well worth checking out. There's a vulnerability and spareness to The End that is typical of his work, but in the spareness there is much depth, I find. It's almost like a principle of comics; the more detail you provide, the less connected you feel with the story (McCloud talks about that in Understanding Comics). Here, this story, so much his, also feels like it is yours, or that you share a kind of intimacy with him. I'm thankful I read the book and highly recommend them, but as a pair.

Gustav Magnarsson says

I do love Anders Nilsens work. His whimsical auto drawings often carry a precise clarity to them. I actually prefer his "Monologues" and sketches to his more thorough work, like "Dogs and water" and "Big Questions". Same thing with "The End". It's another view of the same writings as in "Don't go where I can't follow". I like them both but "The End" spoke more directly to me, because that's what it does. It speaks directly, without filter and it's painful and hard and very very human.

It is the history of the death of a loved one. Trying and failing to come to terms with it, trying to accepting things that are impossible to accept, and coming to no reasonable and logic conclusion but still have to go on, alone. It may well be the most honest work about grief that I have ever read in any medium.

Both "The End" and its twin work "Don't go where I can't follow" are no picnic. They hurt. Be warned.

Zane Chleboun says

I cried from beginning to end. Immensely heartbreaking, yet so, so beautiful. Nilsen has a knack for reflecting the absurdity of the human condition successfully through minimalism and there's certainly nothing different in this book, but, unlike his other works, The End hits an emotional nerve because Nilsen actually lost his Fiancée to cancer. A very accurate meditation on loss and the grief thereafter. Highly recommended.

Elizabeth A says

Blurb: The End is a collection of short strips about loss, paralysis, waiting, and transformation.

This is probably not the graphic memoir I'd recommend picking up in the middle of the night when you cannot fall back asleep. But then again, it might be the perfect one to read while the house is dark, and the only illumination in the room is from your book light falling on the page. The book is assembled from the author's sketchbook in the year following the death of his partner, and is a lovely meditation on love, and loss, and grief, and life.

Tanvir Muntasim says

Drawn from the author's personal experience of grief and coping with loss. At times incoherent, as coping with grief can be, but still a poignant read.

Michelle says

I know we all grieve differently but I just couldn't get on-board with Nilsen's muddled and more than a little selfish perspective portrayed here. This book pushed all my buttons. It screamed of self indulgence and lack of responsibility. Most people do not have the luxury of grieving to the all-encompassing extremes Nilsen depicts here so instead of empathizing I was alienated from the protagonist. I can't stress enough that this is my emotional reaction to this book as opposed to a rational review of its value as literature and art.

Michael Seidlinger says

Live with the weight of a cinder block on your chest until you can almost believe that she is still alive.

She never left. She's in the other room. Call her name and you'll hear her voice. Say that you do. Say it: Her name, and all you get in return is the emptiness of the apartment echoing out the sadness so evident in your voice.

Joey Dhaumya says

Prologue - 5

Is that all there is? - 5

Since you've been gone I can do whatever I want all the time - 5

I have two lives - 5

Solve for x - 4

In the future - 4

Pulling a giant block - 5
25 dollars - 5
Eternity analogy - 4.5
You were born so you're free - 2.5
Talking to the dead - 4.5
How can I prepare you for what's to follow? - 1.5
Only sometimes - 5

It will crack your soul like a mirror and you'll feel silly and condescending for considering to rate it at all.
I hear the shuffling of leaves outside.

rose says

Maybe I shouldn't care, but a couple of the critiques on this little compilation are, er, fascinating. Is there an extent to which you can choose to grieve? Should the weighing-in of the ways in which you experience loss be our reaction to seeing the soggy pile of a dirty t-shirt you might become? Is the inability to hold your shit together while hammering nails in walls for whatever bucks an hour, thanks to all the day's preceding instances of holding your shit together depleting your already-taxed mental energy--is this part the self indulgence? Is it the solitude? The space? Social obligations or none, in those minutes on that train/bike/bus/yacht/curb, or in those last minutes of your day when maybe it's finally just you and a sudden negative space from which you may or may not have been distracted for one semi-sane second of business-as-usual at a time, for maybe a bajillion seconds forming just choppy sequences of semi-distraction (to whatever extent that's even possible for that ol' brain of yours alone, with whatever tools at your disposal)--in those minutes when you can imagine this pause drawing out into some great, deep hibernation and you haven't yet learned how to not want only this then, is that where we draw your "too wallow-y" line? Does this sound absurd yet or should we keep reminding each other in those moments that there's always someone worse off? "Suck it up, bud. You just need a little perspective, y'know?" So, does another's experience of grief negate yours, and yours mine, and mine theirs?

Anyway, 5 out of 5 things for what *The End* is meant to be and how Anders achieves this. His style choices, from super sparse to weird to postcard-purdy, fit each bit well and add the layers of context, contrast, & progression that make the sum greater than the parts.

Sarah Firth says

I loved the space and sparse pages and the echoing of longing, sadness and tender memories punctuated with the acid of pain and anxiety.

“People complain a lot. People are blessed. We are blessed. I was blessed. Cheryl and I were blessed. But she’s gone now. We are blessed but we are not entitled to our blessings. Everything is a gift, everything is a borrowing.”

Rebecca says

I liked it ... i kind of really liked it ... certainly it resonated. But because i have middle aged eyes and some of the text is written quite small and in pale blue it was quite difficult to read in places ... tho' in a way that difficulty felt appropriate. It's a pretty raw story and the generosity and bravery of the author/illustrator is appreciated.

Joanna says

strange and sad, its power lying in its minimalism

Pete says

This is tragically beautiful and soul crushingly mournful. Through these simple images and honest narrative, Nilsen's raw emotions are put put out there to be viewed by the reader. The reader, can't help but feel like a voyeur, spying on private moments willingly shared by the author. Through a sense of ... modesty, sympathy ... or is it discomfort, the reader feels intrusive while at the same time is instantly and emotionally linked through this sad, hollow, angry and cathartic journey. If you aren't emotional as you read this... you must be dead inside. (Yes, I am judgey!)

Miriam says

This seems like a pretty true depiction of grief (at least grief as experienced by someone who doesn't have serious obligations such as children and can wallow, and also take multiple foreign vacations). Possibly it would be meaningful to someone who just lost a partner. I can't say. I recently lost a family member -- an aunt, to whom I was close, but certainly not as close as the relationships depicted here -- and I haven't found that reading about other people's loss, fictional or not, holds any greater appeal for me than it did a few months earlier. Possibly this is just a matter of taste or personal psychology, or perhaps I just have had enough people die and known enough people who lost those close to them that I don't need stories about it.

The art overall didn't do much for me, although I found some of color panels interesting. I preferred Nilsen's simpler, heavier line work in *Rage of Poseidon*.

Leah says

I would give this book 4.5 stars! I had no idea that I needed this right now on my grief journey, but I definitely did. And I'm so incredibly grateful I stumbled upon it.

This collection was incredibly insightful and helpful for defining grief. Anders Nilsen hit the nail on the head when it comes to losing someone that you can't picture life without; he truly expressed how grief can be disorienting and teach us how weird life is without the people that we define it with.

I relate so much to the portions of this collection where he describes what life is like without his partner and how now all of this free time exists. Free time means extra time to cry and to spend missing those you have lost and reminiscing and having cathartic moments and reliving awful moments and remembering the best ones and everything.

I would recommend this to all and any who want to find a way to keep realizing that they are still alive despite immense grief in their life. It was a good lesson for me in my journey and I hope it can be to others.
