



Same Difference

Derek Kirk Kim

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When Derek Kirk Kim (*The Eternal Smile*) published his debut graphic novel back in 2003, it made an immediate stir. The story about a group of young people navigating adulthood and personal relationships is told with such sympathy and perception that the book was immediately hailed as an important new work.

Seven years later, it's clear that *Same Difference* has won a place among the great literature of the last decade. It stands not only with *Fun Home*, *Persepolis*, and *American Born Chinese* as a lasting graphic novel, but with much of the best fiction of this young century. Derek's distinctive voice as an author, coupled with his clear, crisp, expressive art has made this story a classic. And this classic is now back in print, in a deluxe edition from First Second.

Same Difference Details

Date : Published December 6th 2011 by First Second (first published 2003)

ISBN : 9781596436572

Author : Derek Kirk Kim

Format : Hardcover 96 pages

Genre : Sequential Art, Graphic Novels, Comics, Young Adult, Fiction, Contemporary, Graphic Novels
Comics

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From Reader Review Same Difference for online ebook

Stephanie says

As far as graphic novellas go, it's just plain good. And honest. Excellent characters. It doesn't try to do more than it can, and because of that I want more of it. The effect, at the end, is a little like that Raymond Carver short story, "A Small Good Thing," which would be so much better as a graphic novel. *Same Difference* is not tragic. It's comic all the way through, but it asks... What do we do with our regrets? Our egos? The people we've hurt? Nancy and Simon's friendship is perfect, enviable.

Here's a keeper... What is Oriental flavored Ramen? "Is there one specific flavor that encapsulates the entire 'Oriental' sector of the world or?... Here you got Chicken Flavor and here you got Beef. Deductive reasoning would indicate that they grind up 'Orientals'..."

Dani Shuping says

The first publishing of Derek Kirk Kim's "Same Difference & Other Stories" (by TopShelf) is one of my favorite graphic novels of all time. I fell in love with Derek's method of storytelling and his ability to capture the human emotion within his characters faces. That hint of surprise, that pang of sadness, or the look of longing over a lost loved one so eloquently captured in the characters faces. And while I missed out on the chance to buy a new version of the older book, I was excited to see FirstSecond offering a new edition of "Same Difference" in a nice hardcover format. And while it is a beautifully designed book (I especially love the mylar cover with the fish)...I'm a bit disappointed that it is literally only "Same Difference" and that the "other stories" got left by the wayside with no way for new readers to enjoy them unless they go and purchase a used copy of the original book.

The actual story, "Same Difference," is still absolutely fantastic and remains timeless. In the story we meet a group of friends sitting at a local restaurant, in front of the fish tank, discussing where they are in life and what they want from the future. Over the next few pages Simon and Nancy both share secrets about themselves...and in order to resolve a couple of them they head off to Simon's hometown. And the theme of the fish tank, the kinda of outside looking in theme from going back home and watching folks but not really fitting in, reverberates throughout the story in many ways. Especially with the new mylar cover where the reader feels like they're inside the fish tank looking out and hearing the stories being told is a nice touch. The artwork in the story is evocative and captures the emotions of the characters well.

Overall it's a really nice edition of "Same Difference." I just wish other readers had a chance to see the variety and breadth of Derek's abilities without having to purchase a used copy of the original (like I did) and that this new version had a place for the other stories.

Sesana says

About half way through this book, I realized that I'd actually read it before, probably in the original edition. But I remembered very little about it, so I kept on reading. Besides, it's very short. I can't remember what I thought of it the first time around, but I ended up with mixed feelings this time around. Kim's art is fantastic.

The cover actually does a great job of showcasing it. And his characters and dialog are very natural and realistic. But I just found these people unlikable. Not enough so to make reading the book unpleasant, but enough to leave a bad taste in my mouth. Honestly, if the art and writing weren't as good as they are, I would have probably hated it for the characters alone. But not everybody will dislike them as much as I did, and there are enough good points to make this worth a read.

Kaleb says

Not quite sure how to articulate my love for this comic.. It's everything I wanted and more. When I do figure that out I'll be sure to let you know. Until then, I highly recommend giving this a read.

First Second Books says

We're so excited to be publishing a deluxe new edition of Derek Kirk Kim's *Same Difference* -- it's a book that inspired us all to see what comics really could be.

Also our designer's treatment of the deluxe-ness is so cool! There's an acetate jacket on the book -- it's clear - - printed with the fish that you see. Then the title and the people are actually printed on the case.

How neat is that?

Jan Philipzig says

What a wonderful little book! Kirk Kim needs only eighty pages to tell a fully realized, subtly poetic coming-of-age story--one that features some of the most believable, compelling, and memorable characters I have come across in a while. Brilliantly conceived and beautifully executed, *Same Difference* fully deserves all those Eisner, Harvey, and Ignatz Awards it won.

David Schaafsma says

This is a ten year anniversary hard cover edition with a beautiful cool clear dust jacket with fish on it, a very funny intro by his friend and sometime collaborator Gene Yang (*American Born Chinese*) and an afterword on process by the author. The story itself focuses on buds Simon and Nancy and lies they tell and have regrets about. The story is good, okay, not remarkable, but the dialogue is really wonderful, funny, entertaining and finally affecting. The art is the best I have seen from Kim, and this is the best work I have seen from him. Pretty great stuff. The friends are mid twenties, but Simon's story is one of a high school lie, so it could well be appreciated by high school readers. I liked it a lot.

Mariah Roze says

I received this book 2 years ago for free from the World Book Night U.S. And when I was looking on my self for a book to read I stumbled upon this one. I am a high school special education teacher and was really excited when I saw this book because its a graphic novel. I miss understood that because my only experience with graphic novels are young adult or children books. This is NOT one of those. This is for sure an adult book.

But in other words, this was a fun read and kind of funny. I am now passing it onto my boyfriend so it can become a "couples' read."

Karen Henspeter says

o Your full name: Karen Henspeter

o APA citation: Kim, D. (2011). . New York, NY: First Second.

o Genre: Realistic Fiction

o Format: Graphic novel

o Selection process: Lesesnie, T. (2011). Same difference. *Voice of Youth Advocates*, 34(5), 494.

o Review:

The opening of Derek Kirk Kim’s graphic novel finds Simon and Nancy, two Korean Americans in their twenties, shooting the breeze at a pho restaurant in California. From beginning to end, readers have the opportunity to eavesdrop on their conversations, ranging from trivial banter to more introspective discussions about love and purpose. While finishing their food, Simon notices a former crush waiting at the bus stop across the street. Irene is beautiful and blind—and in high school, Simon was too scared to pursue a lasting relationship with her. Even now, he struggles to face his fears and talk with her again.

The story slowly progresses as Nancy reveals her own secret. For several months, she has received mail from a love-struck boy, intended for a girl who used to live at her house. Nancy has been replying to the mail as a joke. Now she convinces Simon to journey with her to Pacifica, the home of the “stalker” boy, just for entertainment’s sake. Pacifica is, ironically, the place where Simon grew up. Nancy and he head off for the little town, not knowing what to expect.

At the grocery store in Pacifica, Simon runs into Irene and finally makes peace. The “stalker” is also discovered, and Nancy realizes that he is not much different than she. He is just a regular person trying to love someone and live a happy life. The story closes with Nancy and Simon discussing life over cartons of Cherry Garcia ice cream at the beach—and then dropping an apology and a carton of ice cream off at the home of the love-struck boy.

Although *Same Difference* is not particularly earth-shattering, it is a highly realistic story with detailed, well-drawn illustrations. Readers will likely appreciate the opportunity to think about life while listening to Nancy and Simon discuss their own.

o Recommendation level: Recommended*

*The story is creative and insightful, encouraging readers to think about what really matters. Strong language

should be noted.

Laura says

I'm a huge sucker when it comes to book presentations, covers, and displays. If done just right, a book's "hello" or first impression can awe a reader even before opening the book. Pure magic when it happens!

Same Difference by Derek Kirk Kim possesses that kind of power. The beautiful and fun wonder of the moving fish bowl effect for the book's jacket lured me right into the story. I was already happy!

Have you ever felt as if everyone around you changed and moved on, but you remained the same?

Simon and Nancy are in their mid-twenties, working, living, and still trying to carve out a path of their own in the world. They both seem to be looking back on past decisions and regrets with a mix of hope and guilt. With a little adventure and stalking, they could even end up using the past to help influence their future. Perhaps change who they are now.

Simon's regret was turning down a girl's invite to a high school dance. Simon liked Irene, but let his fears get in the way. Irene is blind. Here is where the story turned personal for me. My niece, who is blind, has to deal with so much just getting around in life, but this story stabbed me in the gut with something I am not ready to think about with her. Boys! Haha... But I guess I should, she is thirteen now. :D So, as much as I wanted to slap Simon across the face, I found myself applauding the honesty of his story. The emotions and event felt very realistic to me. Brutal, but honest.

All that said, I can't really say I liked Simon and Nancy. Their friendship and banter made me laugh, but also roll my eyes at times. I might not have liked these characters all that much, but I understood them and could identify with their humor and insecurities.

Oh, added bonus! The shout outs of love for Tom Waits and Bill Nye the Science Guy made my heart happy! :D

A fun, sarcastic, meaningful story told with unflinching honesty all wrapped up in beautiful illustrations filled with emotion. A surprising read, which hit close to home for me.

Sarah says

An interesting story about two friends that is overall a fun read, but the ending is underwhelming. I felt like the book stopped just when it got good, when the real plot started. Nancy was a very one-dimensional character, just there to listen to Simon process his feelings. But her story and why she corresponded with Ben Leland was far more interesting than his mopey pretentious artist ennui.

Sooraya Evans says

A very satisfying read.

Loved the plot and jokes.

Gorgeous artwork!

In the appendix section, we get to see other works in different art styles.

Alena says

Graphic novels are definitely outside My reading comfort zone. I decided to read this one (actually more of a novella) because it's one of the World Book Night 2014 selections.

I feel really unqualified to even attempt a review because I'm sure I'm supposed to appreciate how the illustrations propel the story, but I'm just too much of a word person. I want to create those visuals in my mind, so I have to sort of tap another part of my brain when I approach a graphic novel.

At its core, Same Difference is one day in the life of two 20-somethings in Oakland. It's funny and thoughtful. The characters are likable. I liked the deeper them of how we deal with mistakes in our lives, but there just wasn't enough story, development for me.

Best line (or should say, best frame?)

"Where's your curiosity?"

Under my bed along with my dignity and pride, where it should be."

John says

SAME DIFFERENCE seems to have won every award the comic world gives out (The Eisner, Harvey, Ignatz) and for good reason. Kim creates well-rounded, likable characters with sharp, realistic conversation and a pleasant drawing style. The adventure centers around Simon and Nancy, two aimless twenty-somethings facing the changing world of transitions and past missed opportunities. One being a high school lie Simon still dwells upon with unresolved regret. While Nancy has been responding to unrequited love letters arriving to the former tenant of her new apartment. The lessons both characters learn while tracking down the letter writer in Pacifica, CA. are both sweet and poignant.

Calista says

Set in the Bay area, this is a memoir of Derek Kirk Kim. It tells of his time as a college student remembering running into mistakes he made during his high school years. He actually liked a blind student and because of being embarrassed what people would think of him, he did not go to a dance with her. He grapples with this aspect of himself.

It's a black and white comic and the art is good. It's humorous in a good way. The story is good and I enjoyed this little book. It was an interesting story. It almost feels like there will be a sequel, but I guess not after 6 or

so years.
