



The Cute Girl Network

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Jane's new in town. When she wipes out on her skateboard right in front of Jack's food cart, she finds herself agreeing to go on a date with him. Jane's psyched that her love life is taking a turn for the friskier, but it turns out that Jack has a spotty romantic history, to put it mildly. Cue the Cute Girl Network--a phone tree information-pooling group of local single women. Poor Jane is about to learn every detail of Jack's past misadventures...whether she wants to or not. Will love prevail?

In this graphic novel from Greg Means, *Americus* author MK Reed, and Joe Flood, the illustrator of *Orcs*, comes a fast, witty, and sweet romantic comedy that is actually funny, and actually romantic.

The Cute Girl Network Details

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Author : Greg Means

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From Reader Review The Cute Girl Network for online ebook

Steve says

At its core, it's a cute, charming little love story that is as much about honesty as it is about the touted "following your heart, not listening to what others say." Say what you will about (main character) Jack - yes, he's a huge screwup, a "layabout," with a minimum-wage job and basically no drive or ambition... but he's never dishonest, even about his most glaring faults. It's rare (and nice) to have a love story that skips past all the "Oh, I messed up, I'm going to hide it. Oh she found out that I hid it, I bet she hates me now. Oh she still likes me despite my flaws this is a valuable and character-building lesson," and just moves to the "Hey, I'm kind of a dork, but I like you and I'll keep trying to do better." On top of that, it's a story that proclaims - in an all-its-own, unique way - the age-old lesson that it's worth risking love, even if you might fall on your face (literally or figuratively). Is settling for a socially inept idiot, who's honest, caring, and loves you more than anything... really settling at all?

It tries its hardest to set up stereotypes and then break them down. Sometimes it succeeds, but other times it squanders those opportunities - some characters break out of their initial "type," but others remain as caricatures (the sexist roommate, the snobbish ex, the clueless skaters, etc.) to prove a point. And sometimes the "battle of the sexes" aspects of the book feel too over-the-top or forced, given how down-to-earth most of the book and its message are.

But I actually really enjoyed this one. And the art's great too.

Michelle (Undeniably Book Nerdy) says

I liked it but I didn't love it. I thought I was getting a cute YA-ish romance, but it's more NA than anything. It's also a lot denser--not as fluffy as I thought it would be.

Christina (A Reader of Fictions) says

In Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, Anne Elliot allows her friends and family to talk her out of an imprudent marriage to the poor Frederick Wentworth, even though she loves him, and then spends her life regretting that decision. Oddly enough, the graphic novel *The Cute Girl Network* reminds me a bit of *Persuasion*. Reed and Means tackle the difficulties of modern dating and the question of how important the opinions of others are in dating choices.

Read the full review at [A Reader of Fictions](#).

Simone says

???? 4 stars

Wholesome story and good moral. Graphics were super cute but could have used more rep and maybe less problematic characters ?

sj says

I kind of (totally) hate the name of this comic, and my four stars are only mine (I really don't know that it would resonate much with anyone else), but the story told here is much like mine with my husband (and that has a mostly-happily-ever-after, so...).

It's cute.

Girl moves to town, meets silly and sweet boy that doesn't treat her like an accessory to boost his cred, enjoys dating him, but finds out that he's got a gaggle of angry exes who think he screwed them over. Said angry exes are all part of "The Network," which exists for the sole purpose of making sure no girl ever dates anyone again? No, but really, they all get together and dish on what poor schlubs did that might have caused their breakups so "fair warning" to the new girl.

Whatever. Because people don't ever grow up, right?

Anyway, this was pretty sweet and (as I said), the story was kind of a funhouse mirror held up to my own courtship, so I enjoyed the hour I spent reading it.

'ware swearing and fornicating.

Thanks to First Second for the review copy!

Karen says

I want a sequel all about Wendy and her documentary. That was some complex imaginative play those kids had going on with their Barbies.

Jennifer says

Ooooh wow, what a story! It was kind of hard for me to decide who the audience is for this story--I am actually leaning toward a new-adult graphic novel. And I say that because this story centers around Jane making decisions for herself vs listening to the Network.

If you are looking for a graphic novel that is quirky, real, and contemporary, then you should definitely put this graphic novel on your to read list.

It was kind of hard for me to decide who the audience is for this story. Originally, I thought it looked and sounded like a YA graphic novel, but then my library added the book to the adult graphic novels section. After reading this book, I am actually leaning toward a new-adult graphic novel. Also, there is a lot of explicit sexual content (nothing raunchy, but it is illustrated), which I know is a part of YA literature. I think

the tone of this book is a bit more mature than YA, which is why I lean more towards classifying it as New Adult, dealing with life after high school and learning to navigate the “new adult” culture.

I really liked the relationship between Jane and Jack. Throughout the course of this story, they are just real with each other. Jack really likes Jane because she is sure of herself and just “super cool”. Jane appreciates Jack’s quirky, and sometimes forgetful, personality. They both just enjoy being with each other and can have fun being their goofy, real selves. It is refreshing to see this kind of a relationship in a book, especially a graphic novel. With the illustration aspect of this story, I felt really comfortable with the both of them, and I really appreciated that. This depiction of a relationship was as down-to-earth as I have read in a while, and it was just refreshing

This book explores some interesting topics that are pertinent to today’s culture. The first major one is sexism. Jane is a skater girl who doesn’t take crap from people, yet the customers at the shop where she works treat her with disrespect. Same with the skaters at the park—she gets no respect first, simply because she is a woman. When she proves her knowledge or skill at different parts of the story, and the men disrespecting her comment about it, she essentially tells them to STEP OFF. This chick has some spunk, and I just love that the authors of this novel really let her stand up not only for herself, but for women everywhere!

The other major issue addressed in this novel is the nature of the title—a network of girls. In an effort to “help a girl out”, Jane’s friends hold an intervention when they discover she is dating Jack because “he’s a bad guy.” It goes even further when the network of women across the city is notified, and they start showing up with horror stories about Jack. In some ways, it is like a hive—trying to force someone to think like the rest do. It is an interesting phenomenon that is really not addressed so openly in literature all the time, so it was really cool to read a story with this issue at the forefront of the story.

Overall, I found this graphic novel to be fun and quirky, just what I wanted and a bit more. I loved the characters, I loved the quirkiness, and it was just a joyful hour of reading!

Rincey says

Meh.

Tara Anderson Gold says

Of the First Second books I've read, this is the first that seems like it's really meant for an older audience. Not adults, per se, but I would place it in the New Adult category. Jane and Jack both seem to have the kinds of jobs and lifestyles that point to them being in their 20's and still figuring life out a bit. Both have roommates and very little money to spend on dates, so they have to be creative about spending time together. Who knew that stealing products from old vending machines could be so romantic?

What I liked about this novel is that it is, ultimately, about Jane's right to make a choice. Her choice is either one of respectfully cutting ties with Jack to find a partner with a little more ambition, or bucking society's expectations of what the "right guy" for her should look like. Both decisions are valid. The choice isn't an easy one, considering the evidence presented to Jane via the Cute Girl Network.

I also appreciated that Jane's book club (her initial connection to the Cute Girl Network) was reading a thinly-veiled version of Twilight and mocking it throughout the entire novel. I can't help it -- I love a good Twilight dig. And I also found Jane's healthy sexuality to be refreshing. She's basically adorable and knows what she wants. I've met some awesome leading ladies in graphic novels over the years, and Jane has been added to the list.

My only complaint about the The Cute Girl Network is essentially a spoiler for the story: (view spoiler)

Final Grade: B+

These graphic novels are always a quick, fun read. I loved Jane's character and the overall message of the story. This is a good example of feminism not being about building walls around feelings and beating up bad guys. Sometimes it's about loving your own life and making choices that make you happier in your own situation -- regardless of what the rest of the world says you should do ("girls can't skateboard" or "girls shouldn't pay on the date," for example). The Cute Girl Network is required reading for fans of graphic novels and anyone interested in non-traditional forms of femininity and masculinity. I recommend this for a high school or public library, but be aware that there are visual images of sexual encounters.

Dana says

I didn't love this.

I like the art style, and who can resist that cover? But the story itself was...it was okay. Just okay. Middle of the road for me. I had a very hard time telling how old everyone was supposed to be. We have Jane, our female protagonist living with roommates and seems to be financially independent. But then she jokes around about having a burrito baby after ingesting the food, and then saying "when you come out you're gonna be so smelly!" What adult does this?

To add in more confusion: It seems as though everyone is around the same age but a lot of them are really up and up on their wine. I KNOW this is a generalization, but being wine-savvy tends to kick in during the late 20s, not early 20s. When I was 20 I was hopped up on Jack Daniels and Natty Ice, not Merlot. Everyone was supposed to be older but then they had the mentality of 10 year olds. It was weird.

Nobody was likable.

Michelle says

It's like "MEH: The comic book" for me. The plot is weak and the characters are unlikeable. I love unlikeable characters and some anti-heroes, but these 20-somethings are boring. Jane is supposed to be quirky but it just seems pointlessly immature. Jack is supposed to be goofy, but he actually seems like there's something wrong with him mentally. The exes and friends all seem needlessly bitter. Also, the roommates/bookclub was confusing because their names were doled out very slowly in the book and didn't seem to have any personality. It seemed like clothing style was a substitute for characterization.

I get that it's a slack love story about the war of the sexes, but it felt like stumbling upon a half-finished idea. The strength of the book is the artwork, which is cute with lots of great details and is good at backgrounds.

It's hard not to compare this book unfavorably to Scott Pilgrim. Imagine if SP was one book where the Ramona's exes complained about how she dumped them. The linear nature of the story and the weak characters just made this book so boring.

Sam says

Very cute little graphic novel on what it means to make mistakes, but also know that you are loved regardless.

Booknut says

The Cute Girl Network is a testament to modern day love stories. A graphic novel with a chick-lit twist, it provides a romantic comedy that will touch both the heart *and* the funny bone!

Although the storyline can tend to become stagnant at times, it's very hard not to like the two main protagonists, Jane and Jack. Their relationship - from the jokes, stumbling, stuttering and the awkwardness to the locked gazes and sweet smiles - is cheesy...and yet weirdly satisfying. Despite its somewhat juvenile format, the novel lends its characters a depth not often reflected in graphic novels. Jane and Jack both deal with issues close to the heart: *who* to love, *if* to love, and whether or not love *can* win despite the odds in today's world.

So if you're into chick lit, detailed illustrations, or are simply looking for a book to lift your spirits, pick up *The Cute Girl Network* and give it a try :)

Raina says

Cute little hetero-romcom. Yeah, it's got a bit of the hipster to it, a bit of a flail towards feminism. The illustrations are pretty bomb.

Just not where I'm at mentally right now. Which is kinda disappointing, bc this is normally my jam. I found myself more interested in side characters than the protagonists.

First Second Books says

I really like this book.

One of the reasons that's the case is because while comics is absolutely full of action-adventure and fantasy and outer space, one of the things that it has much less of is books for adult women set in a contemporary and realistic setting.

(That's one of the whole reasons for the Bechdel test!)

THE CUTE GIRL NETWORK is awesome that way because it's full of adult women, and they're all pretty great, even the Evil!Harriet (who turns out to be just trying to look after her friend). You've got skateboarding girls and documentarian girls and barista girls and bookstore girls -- all the sorts of girls! And they all seem to be relatively sane and having stable and interesting lives that revolve around themselves, instead of revolving around guys.

That's pretty great -- and something I wish we'd see more in books in general, much less in comics!
