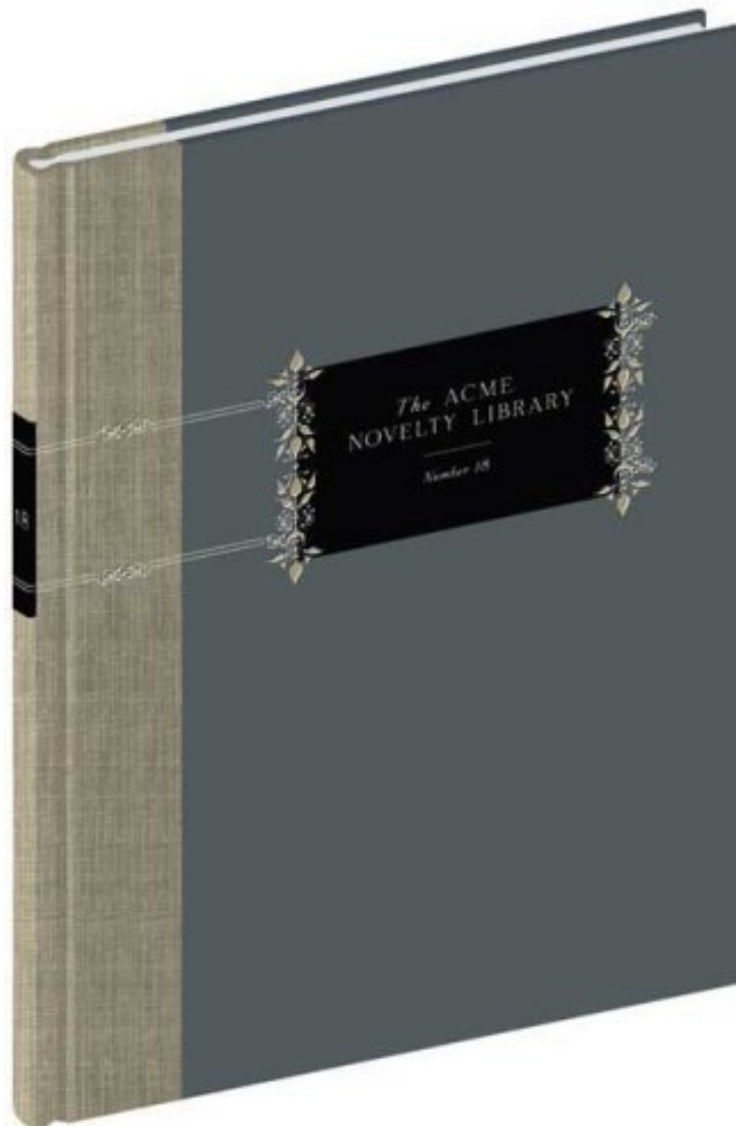


(Free pdf) Acme Novelty Library #18 (No. 18)

## Acme Novelty Library #18 (No. 18)

*Chris Ware*

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#1919139 in Books 2007-12-10 2007-12-10Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 10.37 x .53 x 8.50l, 1.20  
#File Name: 189729917656 pages | File size: 46.Mb

**Chris Ware : Acme Novelty Library #18 (No. 18)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Acme Novelty Library #18 (No. 18):

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Some new ground, some old groundBy Erik KetzanA must-read for Ware fans. It's a compelling narrative with the same quality artwork we've come to expect and is reasonably priced for such a beautifully-designed hardcover.That said, it's a valid criticism that Ware treads too much familiar territory, here and in all his post-Jimmy Corrigan work. Yes, he experiments in this book, but it's in the style he had already carved

out by 1995. We see Ware experimenting with different artistic styles in his notebooks, so why never in his comics? Ware's layouts, lettering and unconventional use of panels in this issue are interesting as always, but it's hard to say his style has evolved or grown in the almost fifteen years he's been doing Acme. Artistically, we've seen this all from Ware before. Thankfully, Ware *is* evolving as a storyteller. Jimmy Corrigan, although inventive, was a bit too much about being Chris Ware, and it's nice that here, in issue #18, Ware is exploring the world of a female protagonist. Certain scenes, particularly the sex scenes, have never been portrayed with this level of damning honesty and accuracy in any other medium. Ever. Some people decry Ware's perennial exploration of loneliness and depression. The great comic book writer Grant Morrison once said, "I love Chris Ware's work and consider him a formal genius, but... I sometimes feel like slapping him upside the head and telling him to stop moaning about everything. Sorry, but I live in one of the poorest cities in Europe, and when I see privileged Americans whining about how awful everything is in their sunlit world, I have to gag into my porridge. Kill yourself or get over it, buddy." It's hard to disagree, but perhaps we can appreciate Ware as the best and most determined artist exploring a certain type of American... not outcast, exactly, but people with lower social status or perceived value: the chubby girl, the cripple, the socially awkward guy, the uncool kids... People who are rarely represented in the media and who our American culture, which celebrates the beautiful and confident, looks down upon. Ware is their patron saint, of sorts, but presents them with flaws just like the rest of us. I'd personally like to see Ware loosen up, artistically and thematically, but whatever. This issue is a powerful read.

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Reader Be Ware  
By Ian Gazarek  
I've always been a huge fan of Chris Ware, and this latest Acme installment doesn't disappoint. His themes don't often vary, but his richness of style makes up for his monotony of topic. He is also the only comic author and one of the few authors of any type that makes reading about stifling depression and loneliness anything but boring.

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. "Stunning" Masterpiece  
By Rodolfo Jaquez  
With his latest "comic book" offering, Chris Ware has again demonstrated a mastery of the medium uniquely his own. His design sense and technical skill as an illustrator long unquestioned, his writing routinely (and especially here) deserves the same consideration. Underneath the story's typically apparent theme of alienation (with new characters in the Acme Library, if I'm not mistaken), there is much more at work. Amazingly, over just 56 pages, Ware's finely crafted drawings along with well considered dialogue and occasional stream-of-consciousness narration provide the reader an awful lot to ponder (a good prose writer would need hundreds if not thousands of pages and could still not fully convey the beauty in this slim volume). However, the mind is further boggled when Ware concludes his details-laden enterprise with one very... simple... tiny... wordless... panel. The effect is instant having read it, and I recommend all experience it. The author describes this as part of an ongoing story, and that may well be. However like all good comics, this story is complete as is. Indeed within the book, certain single page, two page, and especially a few multi-page spreads also constitute complete satisfying stories. Should the reader approach the work with even some of the imagination Ware himself must employ, every single panel is itself can be a complete story. As an illustrator in the truest sense, that may be Ware's intent. So the "Stunning Masterpiece" title given this review is not to indicate one should ever be surprised when Ware tops even his own earlier triumphs, but rather because the reader may actually be left stunned at the story's conclusion, fair warning given. There are always great expectations placed on Mr. F.C. Ware, who here delivers devastating inspiration (inspired devastation?) in the calm and measured manner of a master at work. Wow.

In keeping with his athletic goal of issuing a volume of his occasionally lauded ACME series once every new autumn, volume 18 finds cartoonist Chris Ware abandoning the engaging serialization of his "Rusty Brown" and instead focusing upon his ongoing and more experimentally grim narrative "Building Stories." Collecting pages unseen except in obscure alternative weekly periodicals and sophisticated expensive coffee-table magazines, ACME Novelty Library #18 reintroduces the characters that New York Times readers found "dry" and "deeply depressing" when one chapter of the work (not included here) was presented in its pages during 2005 and 2006. Set in a Chicago apartment building more or less in the year 2000, the stories move from the straightforward to the mnemonically complex, invading characters' memories and personal ambitions with a text point size likely unreadable to human beings over the age of forty-five. Reformatted to accommodate this different material, readers will be pleased by the volume's vertical shape and tasteful design, which, unlike Ware's earlier volumes, should discreetly blend into any stack or shelf of real books.

From Booklist  
Interrupting the ongoing saga of pathetic man-child Rusty Brown, subject of the previous two Acme Novelty Library volumes, Ware essays a gentler, bordering-on-sentimental tale about a lonely young woman with a prosthetic leg. In exhaustive, excruciating detail, Ware recounts her painful early adulthood: her sole love affair, which ended badly; her unfulfilling stint as a nanny; her failed attempts at becoming an artist or writer; her current dead-end job as a florist. Self-reflective to a fault, the nameless protagonist relates her story and reveals her character through extensive first-person voice-over narration, making this the most text-heavy of Ware's works. Even if the prose does most of the heavy lifting, Ware's characteristic graphic approach—clear drawings, meticulous compositions, and geometrically varied panels—conjures the hard-edged atmosphere offsetting the story's potential mawkishness. Applying the formal rigor of the landmark Jimmy Corrigan (2000) to a more naturalistic narrative, Ware creates a sympathetic

heroine who, despite the slim books somewhat daunting denseness, may appeal to more readers than the off-puttingly doltish Jimmy and Rusty. --Gordon Flagg

About the Author  
Chris Ware is the author of Jimmy Corrigan-the Smartest Kid on Earth, which received the Guardian First Book Award and was featured in the Whitney Biennial. A regular contributor to The New Yorker and the first cartoonist to be serialized weekly in The New York Times Magazine, he is the editor of the thirteenth issue of McSweeney's Quarterly Concern and the Gasoline Alley archival series Walt Skee-zix. Ware was born in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1967 and currently lives in the Chicago area with his wife, Marnie, and their daughter, Clara.