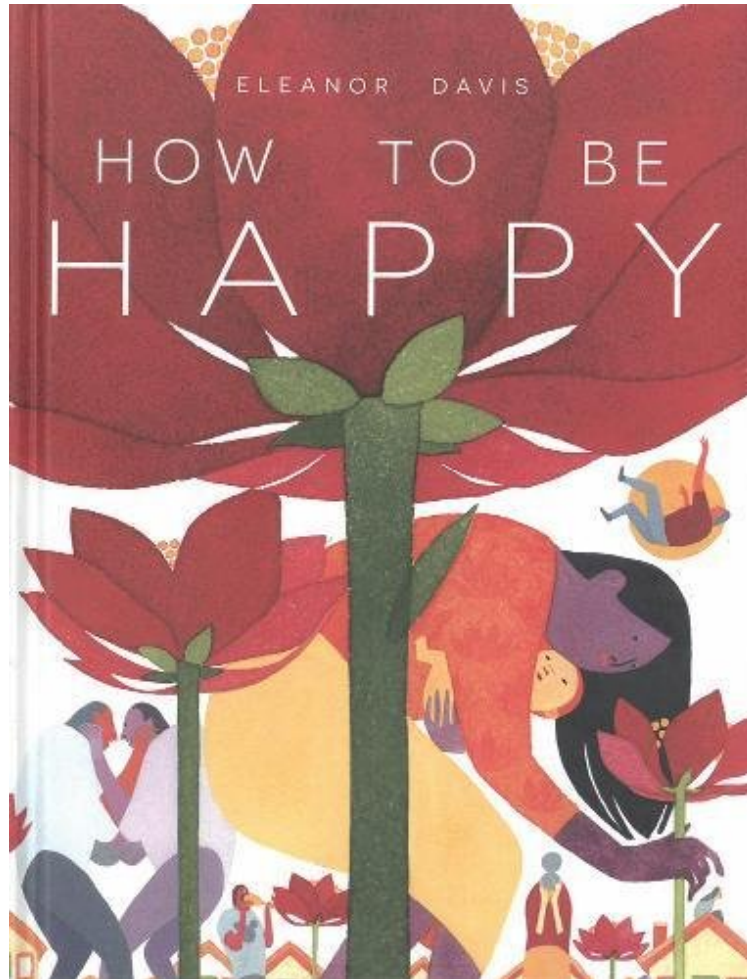


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How To Be Happy

Eleanor Davis

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Eleanor Davis : How To Be Happy before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised How To Be Happy:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great graphic book, misleading titleBy M. T. CrenshawHow to be Happy sounds like the title of a motivational or self-help book but, as the author herself reveals in the foreword, this book is not a book on how to be happy. After reading the book, and despite the stories being quite different in style, tone and story, I think the book has a main theme. Most of the stories are very introspective, people looking inside to get their suppressed emotions out, people struggling to feel, numbed people, depressed people. One of the stories in the book provides us with what I think would have been a great title for the book: "No tears, no sorry. No sorry no joy". That is way closer to what the the anthology is about. I think giving the book a title closer to what the vignettes are about would be more honest, even if less marketable.Davis is an amazing versatile visual artist. The collection of strips in the book showcases her talent. Her images go from the very simple linear and sketchy images, to the very

painterly and detailed drawings, from the classic naturalistic drawings to the vectorial compositions, from the ezine-like comic strips to the surreal, from the slice of life to science fiction. She is good with black and white, and even better when she uses colours or sepias. Her colours are glorious. From a narrative point of view, Davis is able to create stories that focus on the inner world of her characters: their feelings, emotions and thoughts, their approach to life, the way they 'see' the world. Her narrative is concise, precise and poignant, introspective, but also expressive and full of humour. Some of her worlds transport us to Sendak-ish magic worlds that one would like to explore in long books. Some of the texts in the book are brilliant despite their brevity. I especially like the "Darling, I've realised I don't love you", "I used to be so unhappy" and the statue of the best self, but there are a few brilliant mini-texts in this book. I hated the story of the skinning of a fox, revolting to me, and the comic strip of the trip from Georgia to Los Angeles was OK. This book was included in several lists of best graphic books of the 2015 I came across. I think the inclusion is well deserved as this book showcases Davis' talent perfectly. I found the price for the Kindle edition a bit high, because this digital edition does not require of the use of paper, ink or manufacture. Besides, these stories were published previously not new for the book. Finally, I pay for the downloading of the bulky file myself to my Internet provider. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A treat by TV Eye Obviously not really a manual on how to be happy. Excellent graphics, Matisse like, and moves the story without excess verbiage. The stories are interesting and sometimes touching. There is not too much complex plotting, which is shouldn't be the point of a graphic novel or story anyway. Some readers still don't get that a graphic stories are not substitutes for, or a novel by another means. They are an entity of themselves, and offer great visual pleasure. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A masterpiece! By Jay Whipple How to be happy is beautiful and haunting at the same time. A masterpiece!

This is the first collection of literary short comics stories by an award-winning cartoonist. Eleanor Davis How to be Happy is the artist's first collection of graphic/literary short stories. Davis is one of the finest cartoonists of her generation, and has been producing comics since the mid-2000s. Happy represents the best stories she's drawn for such curatorial venues as Mome and No-Brow, as well as her own self-publishing and web efforts. Davis achieves a rare, subtle poignancy in her narratives that are at once compelling and elusive, pregnant with mystery and a deeply satisfying emotional resonance. Happy shows the full range of Davis's graphic skills sketchy drawing, polished pen and ink line work, and meticulously designed full color painted panels which are always in the service of a narrative that builds to a quietly devastating climax. Named one of NPR's and Publishers Weekly's Best Books of 2014. Shortlist, Slate's 2014 Cartoonist Studio Prize for Best Print Comic of the Year 2015 Ignatz Award Winner: Outstanding Anthology or Collection Full color with 48 black and white pages

The success of this collection suggests that short pieces are likely Davis' mtier, but what's here is so accomplished that it's natural to hope for a book-length work next time out. - Gordon Flag, Booklist... How to be Happy [is] an imaginative collection of graphic literary short stories... Don't be fooled by the title, though; you won't find the key to happiness in these illustrations. Instead, the story that emerges from them forms a cryptic play on society's expectations for happiness. - Amber Hage-Ali, Columbus Alive Though Davis' tales can be wildly different in look and narrative, they are united by themes of yearning, of characters searching for the thing that will make their lives better. ... Remarkable ... exquisite ... How to Be Happy left me wanting more. - Carolina A. Miranda, Los Angeles Times Lies! Deceit and rank mendacity! Eleanor Davis promises what current pop music insists is perfectly possible that you can be happy and then she doesn't deliver. Instead she draws comics full of hilarious surrealism, gut-tugging tropes and eloquent despair. How dare she? ... In her roundabout way, she dramatizes not the prospect of happiness, but the promise of it. Her natural territory is found in all the funny and tragic effects of that promise. - Etelka Lehoczky, NPR Books [Davis's] stories often feature tremendous longing and sadness, but they also lushly suggest what a blessing it is to be alive and in the world. She presents, in short, a more realistic picture of what it means to be a human, with our ever-present mind/body tug-of-war, than almost anyone else out there making art. And what art it is: there may be nothing Davis can't beautifully illustrate. How to Be Happy is fearless and fantastic, unafraid to break rules or to make new ones. - Hillary Brown, Paste [Starred] The excellence and variety of the art in this short comics story collection is matched only by the painful incisiveness of the stories, most circling around attempts both foolish and sincere to find happiness. Some of Davis's art styles are reminiscent of her children's books (Secret Science Alliance, Stinky) simple supple black and white line drawings others resemble Little Golden Books, bright blocks of colors and button nosed characters, but only as if written by Raymond Carver. ... A powerful collection that resonates with all the ills, real and imagined, of our modern life. - Publishers Weekly This collection... is impressively varied and emotionally resonant. With images ranging from scratchy black-and-white line drawings to robust images saturated with color, Davis is comfortable in a variety of styles, carefully choosing each one to best fit her tone and mood. - Kelly Thompson, Publishers Weekly... [How to Be Happy] is an inspired and inspiring collection of short work clearly establishing Davis as a leading cartoonist of the Tumblr era.... Davis' clever and sometimes jaw-droppingly beautiful artwork makes [these] stories feel real. - Dan Kois, Slate Eleanor Davis breakthrough short story collection How to Be Happy is a gorgeous book filled with exquisite cartooning. Davis switches between styles and subject matter with each story,

flitting between melancholy, heartbreak, and nostalgia with a casual virtuosity. - Tim O'Neil, *The A.V. Club* Sad or happy, Davis is one of the greats. So is this book. - Sean T. Collins, *The Comics Journal* Davis's brightly coloured, melancholic short stories catalogue different approaches to the form -- here a science fiction tale, there a glimpse of suburban young love -- all featuring lost souls desperate for happiness. - Sean Rogers, *The Globe and Mail* Eleanor Davis's stylistic inconsistency is one of her greatest strengths, and *How to Be Happy*, a collection of her short pieces, shows off the breadth of her artistic range. Almost all of her characters are casting about for ways to fight off despair... They're doomed to failure, of course, but they keep trying. - Douglas Wolk, *The New York Times* Davis is rightfully a rising talent, and one of her greatest gifts is her ability to build narrative momentum. She creates suspense, mystery and come-hither curiosity by never overtopping her artful hand. - Michael Cavna, *The Washington Post* Imaginative and funny and fanciful, but it's also very thoroughly worked out. She's not afraid to be clear. - Francoise Mouly *The art of Eleanor Davis sits proudly and comfortably on a continuum with the celebrated work of David Mazzucchelli (Asterios Polyp), Jeff Lemire (The Underwater Welder), and David B. (Epileptic). Cartoonish yet naturalistic, her art limns a world that can shift from very real to utterly surreal, sometimes within the same story. ... Like the body of a dead fox as depicted here by Davis in all its gruesome magnificence, these stories hide thick raw sinews beneath their glossy pelts.* - Paul DiFilippo, *Barnes Noble* Whether she's working in ink or in color, in longer or shorter stories, from slice of life to science fiction Davis shows herself to be a gifted and versatile storyteller. - Alex Dueben, *Comic Book Resources* *How to Be Happy* is an argument for empathy, but not of the call-and-response kind. The stories here know the world is often heavy and intolerable. And also worthwhile; sometimes touched by light, sometimes full of music. Empathy is knowing both sides of the world, shouldering them and carrying on, searching for the still unblemished parts of the soul. - Paul Arrand Rodgers, *Heavy Feather* It's a stunning body of work that brings together loosely personal and wholly fictional stories about joy, anguish, fear and loneliness emotions all motivated by that essential quest to be the best you can be. - James Cartwright, *It's Nice That* The book is a unique showcase for Davis' range, combining everything from minimalist, sketchy cartoons to lushly-illustrated full-color pieces and extended works -- tales that explore the simple-yet-sometimes overwhelming problems of being human. - Zack Smith, *Newsarama* This collection of short stories about people desperately trying to suppress or embrace or just somehow deal with all the difficult emotions careening around in their brain just underscores... that [Davis] is a tremendous talent, and one of the smartest voices working in comics today. - Chris Mautner, *Robot 6* The book contains about 12 strange, beautifully drawn short stories, depending on how you count them, as well as several short vignettes. None of the stories is especially linear. Each feels almost like a sketch from experimental theater: disturbing, and emotionally pungent. - Karen Sandstrom, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* This collection is astounding because of how hard Davis works to sequence each story and provide appropriate interstitial material. Seeing all of these stories at once provides a remarkable and surprising sense of cohesiveness, as many of them are about restless, lost, and sometimes doomed people. The drawings, the use of color, and the overall packaging all fit into this feeling of reading almost a hand-made item. - Rob Clough, *The Comics Journal* Davis plays with different styles, while simultaneously mesmerizing the reader with the color choices. Her watercolors in particular are beyond gorgeous, and funny enough, the reader can feel a rush of happiness after reading the book in its entirety. - Cameron Hatheway, *Bleeding Cool* I could praise what Davis achieves in this book all day -- it's as fine comicking as you could hope to come across: the enmeshing of wonderful art with good, strong narrative that naturally prompts and drives discussion and thought without it feeling overt or jaggedly superficial, is superb. Exceptional cartooning is when those elements come together in a cohesive manner, and Davis' work is on that plane. I haven't come across any comics that raise similar themes and ideas and yet *How to Be Happy* is widely, deeply applicable and resonant. It works and works and works some more. For many people this volume will be their introduction to Eleanor Davis' work; I can't imagine anyone coming away unimpressed. - Zainab Akhtar, *Comics Cola* I appreciated my time in Eleanor Davis' worlds. She offers plenty of food for the hungry of thought even if thought may ultimately be the root of our troubles. She invites readers into realms of nostalgia and of mystery and of existential terror. The portholes through which we can view these kingdoms of hope and pain are small and smudged, but we see enough. Enough to apprehend them, enough perhaps even to judge them. And certainly enough to enjoy the experience of their lessons. - Seth T. Hahne, *Good OK Bad* About the Author Raised in Tucson, Arizona, Eleanor Davis lives in Athens, Georgia with her husband, the cartoonist Drew Weing.