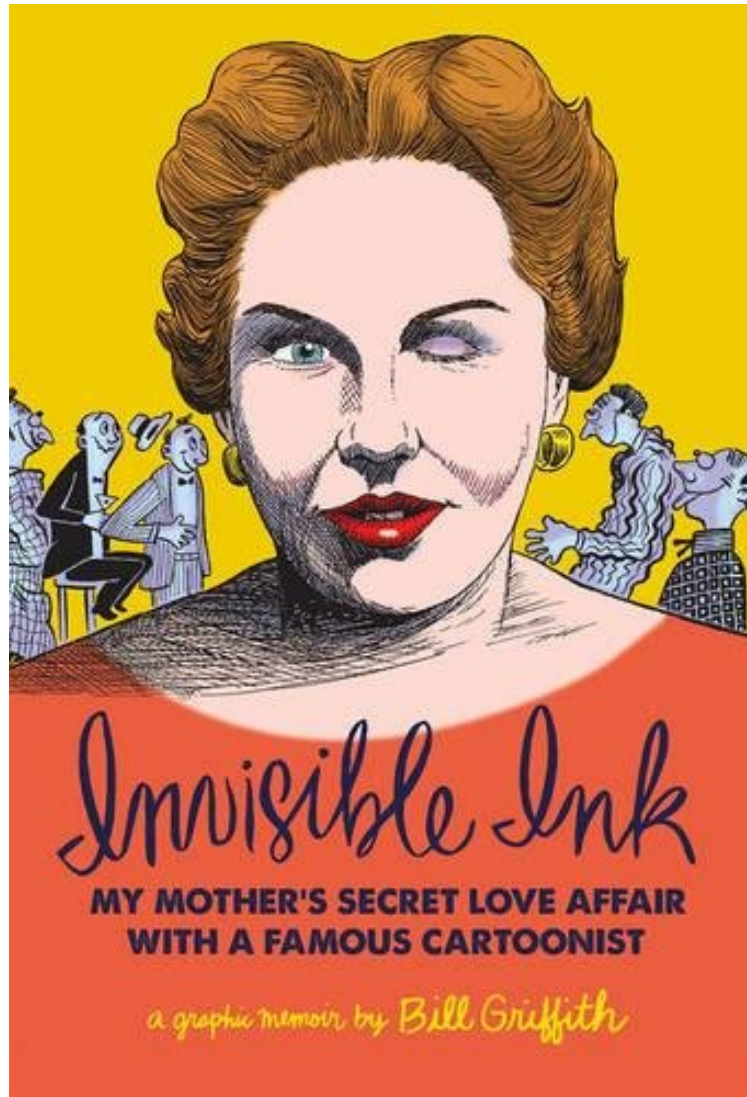


Invisible Ink: My Mother's Love Affair With A Famous Cartoonist

Bill Griffith

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Bill Griffith : Invisible Ink: My Mother's Love Affair With A Famous Cartoonist before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Invisible Ink: My Mother's Love Affair With A Famous Cartoonist:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Griffith Has Done Something Fantastic! By John Benson Bill Griffith has a hell of a story to tell about his free-spirited mom's romantic and sexual adventures, and he's captured a complex personality in wonderfully human terms. But that's just the start, because this book is vigorously embellished with the author's personal reminiscences, fascinating family history and his research into his mother's lover's career. (This last

might seem a digression, the story of a journeyman hustler who worked in virtually every aspect of American popular mid-Twentieth Century culture, but it's essential because every great book is not only about the characters but the world they lived in.) Griffith's handling of all the material is breathtaking, the sophisticated and densely-layered weaving together of all the disparate elements. The art is an amalgam of the classic Griffith "Zippy" style, the big-foot cartooning style of Lawrence Lariar (his mother's lover), and especially his evocative fine-line illustration, all mixing seamlessly with each other and with the book's changing narrative needs. He uses a complex variety of narrative techniques and though the book is tightly constructed it feels open and liberated. In saying all this, I still feel I've hardly touched the surface of what's great about the book. As soon as I got this book I sat down and read it straight through. It was an exhilarating experience! A few days later I read it again. I haven't been so fired up about a book (of any kind) in a long time. It has my highest recommendation.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. a fascinating personal historyBy Frank L. Greenagel II3.5 starsThis is a wonderful book that covers a 100+ year history of Mr. Griffith's family that focuses a particular amount of time in 2015 (Bill and his elderly uncle) and his Mom's affair with a famous cartoonist in the 50's and 60's. The openness in which Griffith share his family's story is fantastic, and I admire him for his ability to detach and see his Mom as a person with a life and desires outside of being his mother.It reminds me of the work of Harvey Pekar, which is high praise indeed.I read this over the course of about 10 days, and so I dinged it down from a perfect rating for it's inability to hold me spellbound. That's not a major criticism, but something that I do need to acknowledge.The art is very well done. I deeply appreciate Mr. Griffith's ability to draw furniture, cars, fixtures and clothes from the 40's, 50's and 60's.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Graphic Memoir of a Mystery MotherBy Rob HardyIf you know the work of Bill Griffith, it is probably because you are familiar with his comic Zippy the Pinhead, one of the few survivors of the comix heyday of the early seventies to continue into daily syndication. Zippy might be known for his surreal take on popular culture and his non sequiturs, but Griffith often draws himself into the strip as a voice of cynical reason. Sometimes, given the free-form nature of the strip, there is no Zippy at all, just Griffiths drawings and reflections about his upbringing and his past. You get the idea that he is trying to make sense of it all. He has now given us a graphic memoir, a full-scale book, to look at his mysterious family. *Invisible Ink: My Mothers Secret Affair with a Famous Cartoonist* (Fantagraphics Books) tells family secrets, some painful but some merely secret and now secret no longer. Along the way, Griffith rambles into some big and perplexing questions about art versus commerce, the place of women in American society before feminism, and the irresolvable mysteries of contingencies like what might have happened if he had started to draw Zippy with a specifically commercial purpose.It all starts out with a letter from Griffiths Uncle Alan who wonders if Griffith might come for a visit and also look through a box of memorabilia and things left by his mother after her death. It all did little to illuminate the life of Griffiths dad, an uncommunicative and violent man who died in a bicycle accident. For sixteen of the years of her marriage, Griffiths mother had had an affair with a striving and cultured cartoonist, Lawrence Lariar. She was smart, liked men, and liked to drink; she was as Griffith recalls, no June Cleaver. Lariar also published how-to books for aspiring cartoonists. In a poignant and funny series of pages, Griffith imagines what might have happened if Lariar had become his stepfather. Would he have then followed Lariars system of drawing a cartoon, which included starting with peanut shapes for heads and for torsos. Griffith then draws himself and Zippy according to the peanut system. They do look a little like the characters in Zippy the Pinhead, but oversimplified and without the careful inking of shade, stipple, and cross-hatch that represents the style we Zippy fans are used to seeing.The pictures on display in this book, of course, all show those details, but they are produced in service of a heartfelt attempt at understanding family members and others who are now long gone. Griffith reflects on all the memorabilia here; he not only had his mothers box, but also Lariar had unaccountably donated his papers to the University of Syracuse, where a librarian tells Griffith that he is the first one to ask to see them. In one panel here, he depicts himself at his drawing board looking over one of his mothers albums. The word balloon over his head says, She once told me the best way to deal with a difficult thing was to put it down on paper. He has done so, and produced a thoughtful and unique memoir thereby.

2016 Eisner Award Winner for Best Writer/Artist! Underground and Zippy the Pinhead cartoonist Bill Griffith uncovers his mothers hidden past in his first graphic memoir. This is the renowned cartoonist's first long-form graphic work a 200-page memoir that poignantly recounts his mothers secret life, which included an affair with a cartoonist and crime novelist in the 1950s and 60s. *Invisible Ink* unfolds like a detective story, alternating between past and present, as Griffith recreates the quotidian habits of suburban Levittown and the professional and cultural life of mid-century Manhattan in the 1950s and 60s as seen through his mothers and his own then-teenage eyes. Griffith puts the pieces together and reveals a mother he never knew. Black white illustrations throughout

Starred : [Griffith's] intricate drawing style, which exploits a range of backdrops, from blank to near-photorealistic depictions of architecture, complements the richness of hisverbal narration and the veracity and particularity of the dialogue he creates for the many relatives andfamily friends he portrays ... [A]bsorbing and moving. - Ray Olson, BooklistThis autobiographical story by the creator of Zippy the Pinhead will ring true to anyone who has ever watched

their parents marital misery around the dinner table and wondered what was really going on. ... Weaving a tapestry of family dysfunction and clandestine liaisons set against the backdrop of the 1950s and 60s, Griffiths... archaeology of his familys past is an evocative portrait of postwar America. - Publishers Weekly Already a pioneer of underground comix, and perhaps the last great daily comic strip artist (his Zippy the Pinhead carries giddily on), Bill Griffith now earns yet another distinction, as memoirist. Invisible Ink is a dense, digressive personal essay that tries to understand the fading world of his parents especially his mother, an irrepressible and adventurous soul ... [W]ith his meticulous, etching-like drawings and conversational tone, Bill Griffith imagines his mothers ambitions and passions with empathy and stirring respect. - Sean Rogers, The Globe and Mail Employing a jauntily crosshatched style, Griffith zigzags through recollections of a Long Island youth and a postwar mom conflicted enough to beam over her son's success in underground comics... but to refuse to show his work to her friends for 'fear that people may say to me, "Your son draws dirty pictures.'" Here, when Griffith draws his mother having sex with her illicit lover, the pictures are not dirty; they're heartbreaking. - R.C. Baker, The Village Voice... [An] engaging and poignant tale... - Mimi Pond (Over Easy), Tech Times [Invisible Ink] might be Griffiths best work to date, an emotional, intimate, and almost startlingly sympathetic look at the secrets we hide from our family and how we often fail to see our parents as fully rounded people, ultimately to our own detriment. - Chris Mautner, The Comics Journal There's an edginess and intelligence to this work that reaches back to the best of Americas underground comix, a movement from which Griffith emerged in the 1970s. ... Its the best work so far by an artist who has given us decades of superlative work. - Paul Tumeo, The Comics Journal [Invisible Ink] is an elegant, serious, well-crafted book from an artist who works with a kind of serious fury that's kept him going for years and years now. - Tom Spurgeon, The Comics Reporter What makes this story extraordinary is that Bill Griffith has definitely met his match with his mother who gives his storytelling skills a run for their money. If truth is stranger than fiction, then this must be one hell of an example of that. It boggled the mind of Bill Griffith, one of the great mind-bogglers in comics. - Henry Chamberlain, Comics Grinder About the Author Bill Griffith is the artist behind the legendary weekly comic Zippy. Griffith's prolific output has been included in such publications as the Village Voice, National Lampoon, and the New Yorker. Along with Art Spiegelman, Griffith co-founded the influential anthology Arcade and is credited for coining the popular phrase, "Are we Having Fun Yet?" He currently lives in Connecticut with his wife, the cartoonist Diane Noomin.