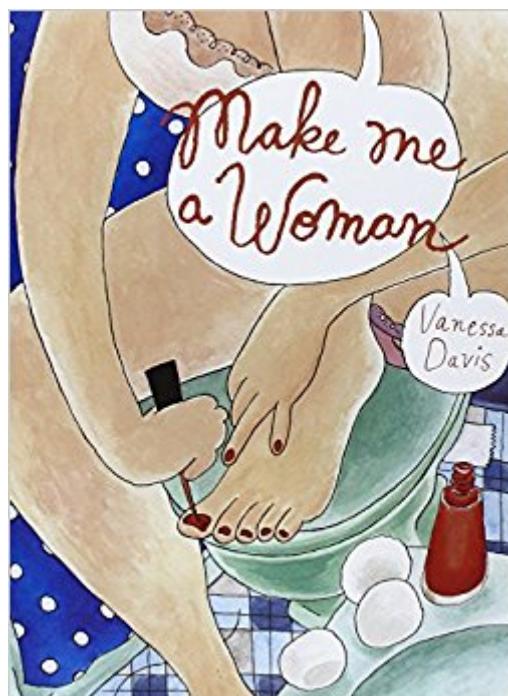


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Make Me A Woman



Synopsis

Make Me a Woman offers charming vignettes about being young, Jewish, and single. It's easy to understand why Vanessa Davis has taken the comics industry by storm and is poised to do the same with the world at large. Davis's comics are pure chutzpah, gorgeously illustrated in watercolors. No story is too painful to tell, like how much she enjoyed fat camp. Nor too off-limits, like her critique of R. Crumb. Nor too personal, like her stories of growing up Jewish in Florida. Using her sweet but biting wit, Davis effortlessly carves out a wholly original and refreshing niche in two well-worn territories: autobio comics and the Jewish identity. Davis draws strips from her daily diary, centering on her youth, mother, relationships with men, and eventually her longtime boyfriend. Her intimacy, self-deprecation, and candor have deservedly earned her many accolades and awards. Her deft comedic touch, lush color, and immediacy will set Davis apart not only as one of the premier cartoonists, but as one of the leading humorists for her generation, too.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

These beautifully rendered watercolor and pencil collages capture confessional moments from bat mitzvah to the author taking her boyfriend home to West Palm Beach, Fla., to visit her mother. While treading in the autobiographical path of many cartoonists before her, Davis's sweet and well-observed sketch-diary entries and more structured pieces for such magazines as the *Tablet* deal with growing up as a Jewish woman. Some time is given to fashion and dating, but the focus is mostly on the daily humor of surviving a boring day job and squabbling family. What sets Davis

apart, as least as she portrays herself, is her general sanity and good humor. The problems are more Family Circus than *Fun Home*: a sisterly blowup comes down to the disposition of a doughnut, and a relationship problem involves several half-eaten packages of cheese. An early strip deals with a trip to a fat farm, but even that ends with remarkably little self-loathing. What this collection does show is Davis's evolution from sometimes awkward swirls of penciled diary pages to constantly inventive and very accomplished painted art. It's hard not to find something to identify with or smile at in these pages. (Oct.) (c) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Womanhood is about femininity, but it's just as much about maturity and marking cultural passages with formal and informal rituals. By collecting years of earlier story arcs and sketch pages in this volume, Davis offers readers access to all the ways in which she has addressed the goal of making herself a woman and being seen as a woman. The lushness and diversity of page types—many full-color, talkative snippets that extend across dozens of panels; some black-and-white single-panel cartoons; and others employing the busy but expressive nonlinear relational perspective Lynda Barry has honed—echo the varied story elements, which include Davis's Bat Mitzvah, changes in girlhood friendships, dealing with parental pressure (and lack of thereof), dating, moving, and changing careers. While the volume can be read front to back as a memoir, each piece stands independently and as such may be attractive to different audiences. Good browsing for Davis's cultural peers, their younger sisters, and their parents as well as any readers interested in the complexity of contemporary womanhood. --Francisca Goldsmith

The book arrived as promised-good condition. I had to read this for a class. While some of the artwork is great watercolor, other drawings are left unfinished and in plain pencil. The book has a diary like feel to it. As for the content, it is a somewhat light read.

This is a phenomenal book! Vanessa Davis' observations and comments about life are so wry and witty. She manages to see and hear things that go unnoticed by most people. I'm not really a fan of comics, but this book is just amazing. I could relate to so many of her experiences. I highly recommend this book!

Vanessa Davis is a gifted storyteller and artist. Her drawings are luscious and her panel pacing is

spot on. She lets you in her world, even and especially when a story ends and there are full page drawings from her sketchbook. It's a rare look into someone's funky and inspired mind. The Jewish story threads are pitch perfect, but don't worry, even non-Jews get to laugh. I'm so happy I have this book.

Davis's sense of humor and irony brought back many memories (some fond, some not) of summer camp, becoming bat mitzvah and negotiating relationships. I loved the full color stories; some of the black and white sketches did not seem appropriate for a hard cover book.

Vanessa Davis is amazing. There were so many times while reading this book that I pointed to a page and told my friends, "Read this! This is totally me." On top of having these really good, charming sketches and paintings, she is so easy to relate to. I love the pacing of this book, and I always feel inspired to draw up my own daily stories after reading anything by her. Be sure to check out her other book, *Spaniel Rage*, as well! Definitely recommended.

I guess I'll be the voice of dissent here, and say I didn't enjoy Davis's book all too much, even despite being Jewish, growing up in Florida, and then moving to New York, like Davis did herself. I first read these comics online, and the only new additions in the book are little black and white sketches, about a page or half a page long. They stand as a microcosm of the rest of book: they don't really DO anything. They're mostly cute jokes, or random thoughts. I can say the same thing about the individual comics that are collected in the book (which are usually about 2 pages long), in that there is not enough action and they are ultimately unsatisfying. Hence they are only 2 pages long: there is nothing cohesive that could sustain the stories if they kept going. I believe, however, that Davis could have done this, and I think she is quite talented. The threads about her non-Jewish boyfriend might have been extended. The jokes are funny, and it is slightly interesting to see Davis's "slice of life" or whatever, since it is similar to mine, and I like the difference her gender brings... but I just felt like I needed something more substantial. Therefore, I recommend reading it online or getting it from a library. I also recommend Adrian Tomine's excellent graphic novels (*Like Shortcomings*), issued by the same publisher. As for contemporary Jewish novels, Steve Stern and Nicole Krauss certainly deliver.

Vanessa Davis is one of my favorite cartoonists. She has a really unique sense of composition; her comics don't look like other people's, but it's still clear how to navigate them. Her stories are funny

because of the constant little sparks of recognition the details she presents cause. Buy it so she can keep working!

This is one of the best comics I've read in ages. Vanessa Davis has such a wonderful sense of humor.

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