



Spiral-Bound: Top Secret Summer

Aaron Renier

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With an ensemble cast straight from a box of Animal Crackers, this is a delightful tale of ambition, morality, and self-discovery drawn in a decidedly beautiful fashion reminiscent of Richard Scarry and Lewis Trondheim, yet utterly unique. Renier's fully-realized and compellingly adventurous narrative is at once both achingly naive and profoundly worldly. A remarkable debut, this tightly crafted novella is the real deal, and will charm your socks off.

Spiral-Bound: Top Secret Summer Details

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Author : Aaron Renier

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From Reader Review Spiral-Bound: Top Secret Summer for online ebook

Elisa says

I had to stop reading this less than halfway through. The artwork is ADORABLE. The animals are so cute and every panel was incredibly detailed. But I could not follow the story for the life of me. It kept jumping around and yet nothing really happened. The only reason I'm giving it two stars instead of one is because of the art.

As a middle school teacher, I like recommending graphic novels to struggling or reluctant readers. Unfortunately, I can see my students trying to read this and just getting frustrated and confused.

I received a copy of this ebook from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Andrew says

Charming, twee yarn set in a (beautifully realized) town full of cute animal characters. Lots of offbeat humor, comic surrealism, mystery, and adolescent social drama. Like the Harry Potter books/movies, *SB* is focused on a group of kids who do a lot of unauthorized exploring via secret passageways. *SB* appears to be aimed at adults, but could easily be enjoyed by kids.

Chloe H. says

This was a wacky book. The setting is kind of like a wildly chaotic Busytown, populated mainly by adolescent characters of various species. The plot is tangled and silly, but it's a fun read anyway.

Twan says

It's got an elephant in it called 'Turnip'.

What else do you need?

Jaina Bee says

It's a sweet, funny story, with lots of call to adventure, but my favorite part is the natural sound of the dialogue. The characters' voices are really unique and perfectly tuned.

Johnny says

A fun, cute book--think Scott Pilgrim for younger kids. The plot seems like it could be a little thick and jumpy for kids at times, and the whimsical sometimes takes hold of the wheel too hard (this book has little grit--I guess that's the Portland rubbing off on it). But, regardless, enjoyable, with good, kid-friendly but complex art to boot.

Libby says

A group of teenagers find outlets for artistic expression and solve a mystery in a uniquely whimsical world. The art is too busy on most pages, which diminishes the effect of the truly fantastic double-page vistas, but overall, a unique story delightfully told with good design and solid art.

Wayne McCoy says

'Spiral-Bound: Top Secret Summer' by Aaron Renier follows around an adorable cast of animal characters as they follow different pursuits.

In a town full of all kinds of animals (including whales that roll around in giant aquariums), we meet a series of younger animals that are looking for things to do for the summer. Little elephant Turnip wants to go to art school to create a sculpture based on Viola, the girl he's got a crush on. His friend Stucky, a dog, wants to finish up a submarine he's making. A little bunny named Carrot Flower may have a chance to join an underground newspaper. There are also concerts and town conspiracies.

The story was a bit confusing at times, but the black and white drawings are what kept me turning the pages. Every frame is filled with details, and the animals that inhabit the pages are cute beyond measure. It's a perfectly appropriate graphic novel for kids, and I enjoyed it.

I received a review copy of this graphic novel from Diamond Book Distributors, Top Shelf Productions, and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. Thank you for allowing me to review this graphic novel.

Katbyrdie says

Cute children's graphic novel about an animal city that fears a monster in their city pond. The town-animals lose their shtako when an art teacher wants to turn the area around the pond into a park. Obviously that means feeding their children to the monster. I only had access to the first half of the story due to it simply being a preview on netgalley, but I definitely plan on borrowing it from the library to discover the truth of the evil monster! Anyone with munchkins or who wants to enjoy a simple story with interesting characters should enjoy this.

Kirsten says

This is a fun graphic novel, but I found it lacking in some respects. Parts of it really shine -- moments of awkwardness between the teenage animals in the book (an elephant named Turnip, a rabbit named Ana, an ambitious and popular dog named Stucky), occasional wild flights of imagination -- but overall I found that the plot was needlessly confused, and I often felt that there was too much information and too much action packed into very small panels. So I didn't feel it was a wholly successful effort, but it's definitely worth a read.

Raina says

I really liked the holistic approach of this graphic novel. The cover, the end papers, the author's note. Very cool presentation. An extremely anthropomorphized (and rather sci-fi) town of animals ride out a mystery involving a mysterious monster, a summer art class for kids (which seems to be free), and a truly underground newspaper. The illustration style is a little overly cute for my taste, but it's fun to see Renier's ideas of humanized animals (the goth giraffe is a highlight for me). An interesting mix of realism and imagination. One I'm marking down for that Jr. Pageturners Graphic Novel kit I'm eventually... planning on putting together.

Jeremy says

Kind of a mess, but pretty fun. Just like childhood. Overall, I'd probably give childhood about three stars out of five, so I'd say this all works out.

Magda says

For a start I'd like to mention that the publisher did not provide me with the full book, I received about a half of it. Unfortunately, it wasn't mentioned in the description on Netgalley since I tend to avoid partial reads. You can't really get a full image from simply glancing at it. But, on the other hand, I wasn't really much into the story anyway. It only just started to be interesting when the sample ended and I was left hanging.

This story is designed for kids and yet I have a feeling a kid would get lost here and quickly get bored. Characters are fun, but a bit chaotic. You don't really know what's going on most of the time. Until, finally, you're getting some explanation, some hint of a character's destination, what they need to do and who will be actually doing it.

The book does look like fun it certainly has a potential. I did like the variety of character portrayed as animals. All of them walking, flying and driving in big aquariums around the town. I liked that part.

With a story like this book could really use some colors. Especially with the audience, it was intended. The simple black and white drawings were nicely done, but I still wished for some colors at least in some places.

Or maybe some textures here and there.

To sum it up, the novel seems fine and a good ending might add a point or two, but, for now, I can only tell you I did not enjoy it much.

I received a preview copy of this book from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. check my reviews at maginibooks.wordpress.com

Parry Rigney says

Although very fun, at times the plot is a little convoluted, with a couple of "huh?" moments...but no biggie because the characters and the world are really what I liked about it. Aaron Renier does a real sweet job of conveying both the urgent excitement and painful awkwardness of being a kid.

And Turnip. Turnip is a shy, awkward elephant who doesn't know his gifts yet. And he eats when he gets nervous. I loved how Turnip's new friendship with Stumpy Hound (and the rest of the gang) is a total universal fantasy (at least for shy kids?). Who didn't want to meet someone who just immediately introduced you to a whole new world of friends, excitement, music, art - all while being totally encouraging and completely accepting of you?

Anyway, my review tipped to four stars just because of that last panel when Turnip loses his self-consciousness and really gets down - so sweet. I stared at that one all stupid smiley like for a while.

I think older elementary school kids and middle school kids would like this one, kids who like quirky characters and settings.

Jen Abounader says

Cute and very funny. My only fault with it was that it was a little bit busy at times, and was sort of tiring to read. This was negated by the cuteness factor, however, and I'd recommend it to anyone who enjoys comics.
