



# The Boulevard of Broken Dreams

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**The Boulevard of Broken Dreams** Kim Deitch , Simon Deitch , Art Spiegelman (Editor) , Chip Kidd (Editor)

The newest addition to Pantheon's growing list of graphic novels: a visually beautiful, narratively intricate, and powerful book by one of the most original, and—until now—least recognized comic artists at work today.

The place is New York City in 1933. The setting: the Fontaine Talking Fables animation studio. Teddy Mishkin—definitely alcoholic, possibly insane—is hard at work on the latest cartoon short for Waldo the Cat, the "star" of Fontaine's stable of animated characters. But little does anyone (except Teddy) realize that Waldo is real—and that he is Teddy's insidiously helpful assistant.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

## The Boulevard of Broken Dreams Details

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Author : Kim Deitch , Simon Deitch , Art Spiegelman (Editor) , Chip Kidd (Editor)

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# From Reader Review The Boulevard of Broken Dreams for online ebook

## Robert B. Miller says

Read by Marcie, Spring 2007:

"There is some explicit language and nudity, that would be more appropriate for older adolescents. I chose the book because the title sounded interesting. This is a story about people in the cartoon industry. The star is a man named Ted Mishkin, who is a cartoonist. He has a brother Al Mishkin. The brothers were separated for a while as children, and Ted put into an orphanage. To compensate for his loneliness, he develops an imaginary friend, Waldo the cat. Ted draws his friend Waldo, and his career is born. His brother Al works in the industry also. Al is a womanizer and disloyal to everyone. Ted finds him in bed with Lillian, the girl he has loved from childhood, and has a nervous breakdown and lands in a mental institution. In the end, people have ups and downs in the industry and most of the older people die off. Al's son now sees the mischievous cat, Waldo, that his uncle used to see. He is now in the cartoon business. Ted and Lillian finally marry in their old age."

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## Jon Hewelt says

Man, what a trip. A freaky, freaky terrifying trip.

I love anything doing with turn-of-the-century animation, and this book delivers on the silent terror of black and white films.

Ugh. SO, SO GOOD.

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## Jodie says

I always knew there was a reason early animation scared the living hell out of me. Who knows how many fun characters were actually delusions, demons sent to plague their creators?

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## Holly says

Graphic novel by Kim Deitch, whom Art Spiegelman calls "an American Original." This is a graphic novel about cartoons, which is interesting. Ted Mishkin and his brother Al stayed at a settlement house when their mother "was going through some hard times." She eventually married a tailor but could only take one boy into her new home. Ted, the younger brother, stayed at the settlement house alone, and it was then that he started to see Waldo the blue cat, his imaginary friend/hallucination. When Al would visit on the weekends, Ted would draw Waldo. Eventually Al went into the cartoon business with Fontaine Fables and found Ted a job as an animator. The studio liked Waldo and incorporated him into their cartoon business; therefore Ted's hallucination, his sickness, became a commercial success and Ted was encouraged to focus on Waldo, this fascinating mix of art vs personality disorder. Waldo was evil; he tormented Ted, driving him to drink, which

became Ted's crutch. Ted spent significant time, off and on, in the Berndale Acres Sanitarium, where his condition was studied by Dr. Reinman, a psychiatrist.

Deitch's graphics are jam packed; there is nothing spare about them. The book is gritty; there is nudity, sex, and fabulous scenes of Ted's drunken debauchery. Ted is the artist, and Al is the businessman who wants to capitalize on Ted's talent. It is a credit to Deitch that Al is a complex character who also does seem to love his brother.

Cover art by Chip Kidd (heart, heart).

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## **Danilo says**

Liked the art, the story could've been better structured

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## **Tony says**

Deitch, Kim and Deitch, Simon. THE BOULEVARD OF BROKEN DREAMS. (2002). \*\*\*.

I'm not a big fan of graphic novels, but this one came highly recommended. It is classified as a Young Adult novel, but I'd take a close look at the "kids" who check it out of the library. It's really more of a collection of three "adventures" of the artist's hero figure, the cartoon cat, Waldo. Waldo is created by his fictional cartoonist who then becomes subject to Waldo's directives – he takes over the artist's life. Waldo is not the best persona to lead another's life. He lacks any sense of moral decency as he cavorts through the pages of these comics, using his powers to guide other characters into acting out his fantasies. Once created, Waldo is destined for success in the cartoon world. He makes sure that this happens by influencing his creator and the circle of artists around him. His first goal is in the new world of animated film, and soon becomes a viable alternative to Disney's Mickey Mouse. Finally, he wants to be the subject of a theme park, where the various maniacal dreams of his can be acted out in rides and side shows. Waldo – who looks amazingly like Krazy Kat – is certainly not a loveable cat, as soon becomes apparent when his creator and his associates end up in various mental institutions. None of his ancillary effects matter to Waldo, however, just so long as he manages to keep his career on track.

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## **Salomão Diniz says**

Arte fantástica (5 estrelas neste quesito) e história não linear em excesso. Faz um panorama legal sobre a história da animação, mas o drama em si não me pegou. A narrativa é muito quebrada, não é confusa mas um pouco desnecessária. 3.5 estrelas.

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## **Diego Munoz says**

I didn't get it at first, as the first few pages jump to and from tenses. But the drawings always intrigued me.

1/4 the way through, it caught my full attention. A story of loss, compromise, creation and love.

I'll have to read it again, in order to appreciate this great original work.

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### **Michael says**

As usual, Deitch frames this utterly peculiar tale as a piece of his own history, telling of a meeting with Nathan Mishkin, an animator who'd worked with Deitch's father (Deitch's father, btw, really was one of the big guys in animation in the middle part of the century). Nathan Mishkin was the son of Al Mishkin, and nephew of Ted Mishkin. From there, he flashes back (and forth - jumping along the timeline is a hallmark of Deitch's comics) to young Ted and Al as young animators learning the business, meeting the fetching Lillian (Ted's dream girl, Al's weekend fling) and trying to stay ahead of the commercial curve. Waldo the Cat Demon torments Ted, who boozes, and Al makes commercial decisions at the expense of artistic integrity...

This book doesn't have the same love of old movie serials, vaudeville routines and pop culture trash that Deitch's books typically have. It's a more character-driven piece, with the animation industry and Waldo being a backdrop to the piece. It's filled with great twists, surprising character connections, and some strong characterization. And it is relentlessly fun.

Kim Deitch continues to climb toward the top of my favorite cartoonists list.

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### **Drew Lerman says**

I liked the structure of this book, which felt very much like a GRAPHIC NOVEL, as opposed to, you know, a comic. There is a very rich world suggested in these pages, which are often overfull with thoughtful details. Deitch's drawing style always turns me off a little for some reason -- kind of like Scott McCloud's -- there just seems to be something inherently dorky about it. The cups/glassware in these comics are always too small for the characters' hands, for example. I think this is a supremely earnest book, with a deep feeling for a century of cartoon history, which is its subject. The story is a familiar one: the way true believers in a popular medium watch it become cheapened over time. The magnetic presence of Waldo, the ghost haunting this tale, kept it from becoming TOO familiar.

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### **Sam Quixote says**

Set primarily in the early 20th century, this is the story of a burgeoning cartoon studio that becomes famous producing animated shorts featuring Waldo the Cat. Except he's real but can only be seen by the head animator! The story follows disturbing events that led to the downfall of the studio and the wreckage remaining years later.

Anyone who has read Kim Deitch before will recognise many of the same themes prevalent in this book as explored in previous books: the early days of cinema/animation, early 20th century curios, unreliable narrators usually drunk/on drugs, and the hinting that Waldo is a demon in cat form. This is all well and good

but after reading most of Deitch's books ("Shadowland", "Alias the Cat!", "The Search for Smilin' Ed", "A Shroud for Waldo") it's getting a bit repetitive and boring.

Don't get me wrong, I still like his work, I mean his artwork is always brilliant and inventive, his layouts imaginative and drawing style instantly recognisable - but coupled with a mediocre story where there's no real main character and the theme seems to be anti-corporate art, "Boulevard of Broken Dreams" isn't a very involving read and rambles at times. The characters have an on-again-off-again romance but compared to, say, the inventiveness of "Smilin' Ed" or "Shadowland", "Boulevard" is a drab and uninteresting book set in drawing studios or run down apartments. Waldo pops in now and then but doesn't play a big part in the story.

Deitch is a wonderful comic book artist and writer and I had hoped "Boulevard of Broken Dreams" would be a masterwork but it's a disappointing and fairly minor piece. I recommend others to seek out "The Search for Smilin' Ed" or "Shadowland" for better examples of Kim Deitch's brilliance.

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### **Nicholas Whyte says**

<http://nhw.livejournal.com/551536.html>[return][return]To be honest, after I'd read the first quarter, I thought I was probably going to have to write this up as a dud. Deitch's style is very close to Robert Crumb's; I find it crowded and grotesque, I had difficulty telling the difference between some of the characters, and it all seemed to be about the difficult life of the graphics artist (though specifically here on animated films rather than dead tree comics).[return][return]But then I started reading the next section, and suddenly realised that this was a rich, multi-layered narrative, where the same events were told over again from different points of view, and that was in fact saying much more about human relationships than about the comics writer's lonely life. I put it down with difficulty last night, half way through; then read it to the end this evening and then went back to the start to pick up things I had missed first time round. I still don't much like the drawing style, but am prepared to put that aside for the story.[return][return]What's it about? Well, on one level it's about the Mishkin family, Ted Mishkin being the graphic illustrator who is the central character, and their various professional acquaintances; but on another, we have the cryptic figure of Waldo The Cat, visible only to Ted (and later to his nephew Nathan) and in a sense his Muse, but also the star of the cartoons that he writes successfully. There's also a certain amount of history of the industry mixed in - I assume that the depiction of vaudeville cinematography in 1910 is more or less accurate, and the skewering of Walt Disney in person is a brief delight. An animated excerpt (with no spoilers for the rest of the plot) can be found here. On balance I would recommend this, but it makes you work harder than I sometimes like to do.

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### **Phillip Lozano says**

Bizarre and sublime work by one of the true masters of graphic storytelling. Nearly impossible to explain without a generous essay. Highly recommended.

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### **Ben Cheng says**

Not only does this book provide a fascinating insight into the first steps of the mainstream cartoon industry, it provides an incredibly convincing and realistic cultural backdrop, due to the fact that the author Kim Deitch's father did work in that era. One can really perceive the emotion told through these panels due to the

convincing setting, like when the player of a horn looks at his cartoon adaptation as it's playing the horn onscreen. The initial fascination with cartoons in the 1920's is an incredibly interesting reaction to read about, and the way cartoons were creatively utilized back then, such as blending them with traditional vaudeville acts, will keep you turning the page. There is an abundance of cultural references, whether it be old Bing Crosby songs or the now defunct automats of NYC. But references isn't the only redeeming quality of this book. The story is perplexing and dramatic, intertwining several different points of view all while chronicling the relationship of the imaginary cat Waldo and his destructive motives and influence to whoever can see him. The art is good, while not being outstanding it fits the style and theme of 1920's cartoons well. Overall, this book succeeds in its medium by exhibiting incredible emotion as well as a profound sense of realism. It's almost a wonder why there hasn't been any film adaptation of this yet.

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## **Paige says**

While this book was very visually interesting I don't think it was for me. This tells a story of a medium being cheapened over time and the people who suffered through this commercialization. I think I can mostly say that I was just overwhelmed most of the time while reading. There was so much to take in from the characters, the connections between them, how Waldo functioned to others and to the creators, the history of all cartoons, the distance of humor and understanding between now and then, etc. I have to be honest I spent most of the time looking at the pictures, because I had to limit the amount I took in or I felt overwhelmed and anxious. I just wanted better for Lillian and Mishkin, I felt like I was hurting along with them in an unproductive way.

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