

We Hate This Place Here; It's Our Home

Graphic novel explores the strange world of Edmonton at Christmastime

Christmas in Edmonton has always struck me as an incredibly strange time. I mean, partly that's because Christmas is just strange, in the most basic ways: holidays shut down the day-to-day business of life. And then of course there's just the Christmas stuff that more or less everyone has to deal with: rampant commercialism versus brotherly love, close proximity to your family, the stresses of appropriate present selection, etc. And then, also, there's the whole New Year's thing: just when we have all this time off to think and reflect on our lives and such, here comes a day that's just a painfully acute metaphor for all that, and the entire world gets obsessed with cataloguing the year that was and looking to the future and et cetera.

But on top of all that, Christmas in Edmonton is strange for a young guy because it's a time of return. Being young in Edmonton, and especially of any kind of progressive or artistic bent, is a repeated lesson in letting go of people. New flocks of people leave the city with the regularity of migrating birds, the exception being they're not usually coming back when winter's over. But they do come back for Christmas. And so, for about a month, the city is transformed. It's like a little glimpse into the what the city might be like if we could provide for them all. Although how accurate this portrait actually is is mitigated somewhat by the fact something about the season also involves copious amounts of alcohol. But anyway, it's as close as we get.

It's in that space that the graphic novel *We Hate This Place Here; It's Our Home* exists. It's about, at its simplest, the overlapping lives of a group of Edmontonians—some still living here, some thinking of going,

some returning—in the weird season that is Christmas. It's also about all that other stuff I mentioned above. And more. Like whether mothers are destined to be abandoned. And appropriate deathbed wisdom. And the optimum volume of car speakers for solo sing-alongs. Oh, and all the characters are Bisons, for reasons both metaphoric and visually humorous.

To be published in six individual chapters, *We Hate This Place Here; It's Our Home* is the work of local freelance writer **David Berry** (*Vue Weekly*, *BeatRoute*, *Alberta Views*) and award-winning local illustrator **Josh Holinaty** (*Transworld Skateboarding*, *the Globe and Mail*, *Vue Weekly*, *International Beauty Saloon*). The first chapter will be available, appropriately enough, at the latest edition of the Royal Bison Art & Craft Fair, taking place **November 28 and 29** at the Cosmopolitan Music Society, with the subsequent chapters to be published over the course of the next year.

Attached, please find a little teaser of the first chapter, which we hope you'll enjoy. For more information, or to arrange interviews, review copies, etc, feel free to contact David Berry at **780-628-4316** or **davidberryedm@gmail.com**. And be sure to look for updates at **holinaty.com/blog**.

Thanks for your time, and an early merry Christmas.

yours,
david



SQUEEEK

JESUS, I HAVE TO CUT THIS OUT. I MEAN, SERIOUSLY...

I CAN JUST PICTURE THE DISAPPOINTED GRANDKIDS NOW.

THIS ISN'T MAKING ME HAPPY ANYMORE. YOU SHOULD DO WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY.

WOW. I'm A GENIUS.

"DO WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY..."

HOPING FOR A PEARL OF WISDOM:

THEN I PUMP THE MORPHINE BUTTON AGAIN.

GATHERED AROUND MY DEATHBED. FOR OBVIOUS WISDOM THOUGH I'M SURE NOT FOLLOWING IT.

DO WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY

MAYBE THAT CAN WORK AS MY DEATHBED WISDOM. I COULD LIVE WITH BEING AN OLD MAN, DISPENSING DEATHBED WISDOM. NURSES WALKING AWAY, TEARS IN THEIR EYES, COMFORTING MY FAMILY...

YOU HAVE A SPECIAL MAN IN THERE...



THEY START CRYING TOO.

"YES, WE KNOW."

MY ESTRANGED SON FORGIVING ME AS MY SIMPLE TAKE ON LIFE SOFTENS HIS HEART.

"I NEVER COULD ACCEPT THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN RIGHT, DAD. I JUST - I'M SORRY."

WE CRY TOGETHER.

"IT'S O.K., SON. YOU WERE DOING WHAT YOU THOUGHT MADE YOU HAPPY..."

FLICK!

SHIT...

BRRRRR...

THAT DOESN'T WORK AT ALL.

DEATH BED WISDOM HAS TO BE PROFOUND I ASSUME.

THAT DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING, "DO WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY..."

I MIGHT AS WELL TELL THEM:

FUCK OFF, I HAD TO FIGURE IT OUT MYSELF, NOW YOU GO AND DO IT.

ACTUALLY, MAYBE THAT'S PERFECT DEATH BED ADVICE. A NICE WAY OF TELLING THEM TO GO DO IT THEIR FUCKING SELVES.

THAT'S PROBABLY SELFISH.

ALTHOUGH, FUCK IT, I'M DYING, I SHOULD THINK OF MYSELF.