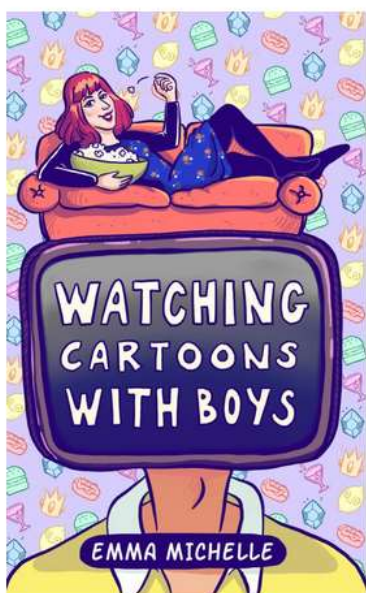


ODDFEATHER CREATIVE

I READ, WRITE & EDIT

— AWWC 2017, BLOG, REVIEWS —

Review: Watching Cartoons With Boys, by Emma Michelle



Watching Cartoons With Boys (2017) by Emma Michelle

One of the things I love about this book is the comment before the contents:

As nearly as possible in the spirit of Emma Michelle, age nineteen, urging a seated companion to accept the evening's choice of *Sealab 2021* DVD, I urge my reader... lover of the long shot, protector of the unprolific, defender of the hopelessly flamboyant... to accept this pretty skimpy-looking book.

This book is indeed skimpy-looking. At 121 pages, with a cute, cartoony cover and a contents page full of my favourite light entertainment – *The Simpsons*, *Adventure Time*, *Futurama*, *Rick and Morty* – this book is deceptive in its unassuming appearance. But don't be fooled: in the infamous words of Bernard Black 'You'll laugh, you'll cry, it'll change your life!'

This book is a small but significant collection of personal essays recounting Michelle's childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood; it tracks, expounds, rummages and dissects life, love and relationships in the context of watching her favourite cartoons. Each chapter is a personal essay entitled with the cartoon, and through the chapter is revealed the significance in the author's life of that cartoon; the people, times and

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places she associates it with, and the parallels and crossovers between that cartoony entertainment and that person, time or place in her life. The chapters are short enough that these recollections and dissections aren't harrowing, but many of them tug at the heart strings and can recall both nostalgia and shame at one's own experiences of joys, comforts, disappointments, humiliations and heartbreaks.

There is something about this book that captures a chunk of the inner and outer lives of the Millennial generation. Perhaps not in its entirety – it is after all a large generation full of many experiences – but in the details: share house after share house with people who might be your best friend or worst enemy, or both; job after job, both secure and insecure, humiliating and wholesome; relationships that go quickly somewhere and then abruptly nowhere; moving between cities because it's the right time and it may be scary but it's what you need to do; feeling adrift in a sea of incompleteness but holding onto what you know and love, even if that's just a cartoon that you associate with the last time you were happy. I related to so many of the everyday life things described in this book, and not everyone will, but those who do will appreciate the candour, humour and bravery of sharing things that are both ordinary and extraordinary.

This book may be skimpy-looking, but it is heavy with life, and not to be taken lightly.

For an interview I conducted with Emma Michelle for Underground Writers, [click here](#).

🕒 DECEMBER 18, 2017 👤 JEMMA 📁 AWWC 2017, BLOG, REVIEWS

🔖 ADVENTURE TIME, AUSTRALIAN WOMEN WRITERS CHALLENGE, AUSTRALIAN WRITING, AWWC, BOB'S BURGERS, CARTOONS, CREATIVE NON-FICTION, EMMA MICHELLE, FAMILY GUY, FUTURAMA, HARVEY BIRDMAN, HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE, INTERVIEW, MILLENNIALS, PERSONAL ESSAY, POKEMON, REGULAR SHOW, RICK AND MORTY, SEALAB 2021, SELF-PUBLISHING, THE ADVENTURES OF TINTIN, THE BRAK SHOW, THE SIMPSONS, THE VENTURE BROS, UNDERGROUND WRITERS, WATCHING CARTOONS WITH BOYS