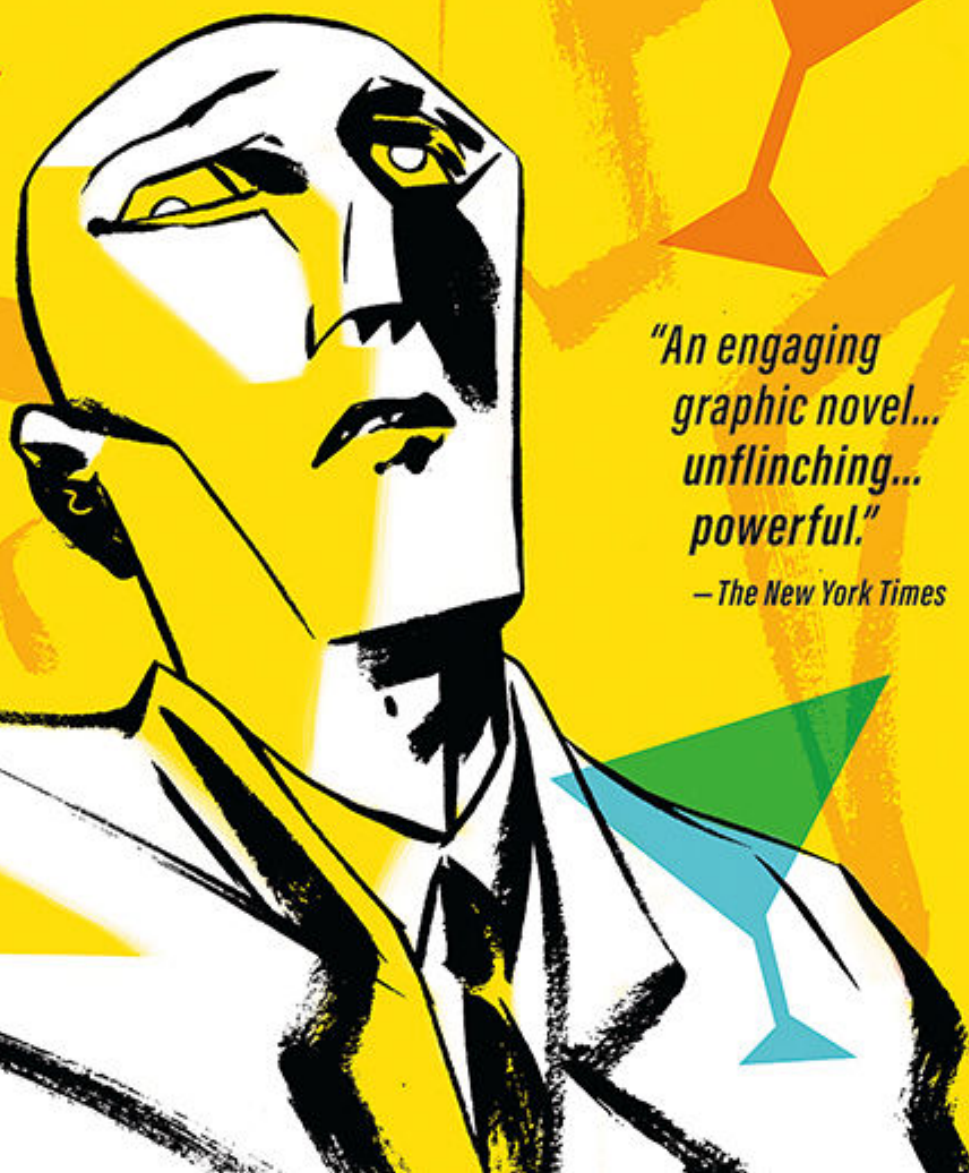


THE

JONATHAN AMES

ALCOHOLIC™

DEAN HASPIEL



*"An engaging
graphic novel...
unflinching...
powerful."*

— The New York Times

DINO!
2018





As soon as my hair was gone, I regretted shaving it off. But to grow back my fringe to a length where I could perform my comb-back would take months, and an in-between phase, with a fringe that didn't reach all the way to the back of my head, would look ridiculous.

I was going to have to keep shaving it.





I had thought, at first, that I would just get sober again, but the booze had gotten into my skin, my psyche. I had felt some relief that day in Asbury Park.



It was the relief of oblivion.

So for the first few weeks, I reveled in drinking again. I was getting drunk five out of seven nights, but nothing too disastrous--like fleeing from policemen in Asbury Park--had occurred.



I felt like I was controlling it, that maybe I wasn't an alcoholic.

I discovered that if I drank vodka I wouldn't get hung over. This was a great revelation and seemed to explain, to me anyway, the high rate of Russian alcoholism.



One night, I went to this bar where this old friend of mine, Bill, was the bartender. He was an ex-con and I often tapped him for information for my novels.

He had spent five years in prison for dealing drugs, but don't get the wrong idea--he was also a painter and quite a sweet guy.

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR HAIR?

BUZZED IT OFF. WAS LOOKING RIDICULOUS. CAN I HAVE A VOOKA SODA?

I THOUGHT YOU DIDN'T DRINK.

I FELL OFF THE WAGON.

YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?

Bill gave me his pipe and told me to go smoke some pot in the bathroom. He said that the marijuana, a healing herb, would help with my heart and my ass (my IBS).

I'M HER BITCH! I'M HER BITCH!

I felt that Bill's assessment of my situation was spot-on. I didn't know how to change it, but at least I had it spelled out.

I chewed his ear off about Seattle.

SO SHE NEVER CALLS ME BACK, AND YET I DREAM ABOUT HER ALL THE TIME AND WHEREVER I GO I'M LOOKING FOR HER, EVEN THOUGH SHE'S IN SEATTLE.

I THOUGHT YOU SAID HER NAME WAS SEATTLE.

WHEREVER SHE LIVES, THAT'S WHAT I CALL HER.

SO WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THE WHOLE SITUATION?

IT'S SIMPLE. YOU'RE HER BITCH.

ON THE INSIDE, YOU DON'T HAVE A CHOICE WHEN YOU'RE SOMEBODY'S BITCH, BUT YOU'RE ON THE OUTSIDE. SO WHEN YOU'RE READY, YOU CAN STOP BEING HER BITCH.

BUT YOU MUST LIKE IT.

I hadn't been stoned for years and I loved it. I was watching the drips of water on the beer-tap and they were the most beautiful things I had ever seen.

Then the pot hit me bad, and I couldn't lift my head and I felt like if I moved I would vomit all over the place.

I CAN'T HAVE
YOU PASSED OUT AT
THE BAR. I'LL GET IN
TROUBLE.



Bill carried me to the
manager's office. I lay on that
couch for hours, feeling like I
was hanging on for my life.

10:30
p.m.



1:30
a.m.



Eventually, I
was able to
get up.



It was around 3 a.m. on
September 10th, 2001.







The next day, I would try to clear all the coke residue out of my nose with a netti pot, this yoga thing I had that flushes your nostrils with salt water.

After bingeing, I'd be obsessed with detoxifying myself.



I started going all the time to the Russian baths, which have been around for over 100 years.

They have steam rooms, a sauna, and the Russian room--which is like a furnace. It gets up to 200 degrees in there.



It was classic alcoholic behavior--I would tear down and then build up. I was playing out my own little repetitive Phoenix myth.



The problem with the baths is they made me feel a lot better. So good that I would start the whole mad thing over again.



I was trying to keep my life together, to not lose myself completely so I kept going, even if I was hung over, to see Aunt Sadie.

YOU LOOK TERRIBLE. WHAT'S THE MATTER?

I HAVEN'T BEEN SLEEPING WELL.

Getting out of the city for a month seemed like a good idea--to get away from the despair of 9/11, and, also, I could use my time in the country to sober up.

I was a bit concerned, though, that Dean Wilcox hadn't read my books. All my novels have a strong undercurrent of sex.



What if Dean Wilcox actually read one of my books? I wasn't the most appropriate choice for an all-girls school.



THE KEY TO WRITING IS FINDING A SUBJECT THAT YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH.



They put me in a little house on a hill, overlooking the athletic fields. I loved watching the girls in their little field-hockey skirts.

But the whole thing was deeply absurd--it was like the setup for a pornographic horror film. My little house on the hill was like the *PSYCHO* house.



It was early October--we had started bombing Afghanistan, and there I was surrounded by hundreds of girls. It seemed like a safe place to be during a time of war. I wrote a little short story about it called "Womb Shelter."



