

Manfried the Man

Caitlin Major

Kelly Bastow, Illustrator

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In an entertaining and often laugh-out-loud twist on reality, Caitlin Major and Kelly Bastow portray a world where cats live daily lives of work and responsibility—including taking care of their pet humans—in *Manfried the Man*.

Steve Catson, an anthropomorphized cat, is a slacker who loves his pet man Manfried. When Manfried goes missing, Steve attempts to find him, tracking Manfried through his sometimes hazardous explorations of the world outside.

All of the pet humans in *Manfried the Man* are male, an interesting, unexplained choice. While featuring only one gender simplifies the behavior of the pet humans and limits the book's potential to offend, it also draws a line in the sand regarding where Major will and won't go with her plot. In its regular incarnation as an online comic strip, *Manfried the Man* goes for humor and mostly keeps it simple. This graphic novel creates a story line but preserves the all-ages feel of the strip; though there is extensive male nudity, it's cartoony rather than erotic.

The humor is abundant, though cat owners might appreciate the proceedings more than others: instead of "meow," the men say "hey"; rustling a potato-chip bag summons Manfried from hiding; middle-aged men groom themselves with one leg extended straight up in the air.

While there's not necessarily a lot of deep characterization in *Manfried the Man*, it's pleasant, light entertainment for all, and many people, especially cat lovers, will absolutely adore it.

PETER DABBENE (March/April 2018)

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