

We Are Here Forever

Michelle Gish

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Michelle Gish's bizarre and beautiful webcomic comes to the printed page in *We Are Here Forever*, a collection of interlocking stories about her adorable alien characters, the Puramus.

We Are Here Forever is ominously preceded on the book's cover by the words "After You Are Gone." The story follows the Puramus, a roundish, four-legged species living on Earth after some unrevealed event wiped away humanity. The Puramus are cute and a bit naïve, at least when it comes to exploring the remnants of human society, but that gives Gish a potent weapon for commentary. The Puramus utter statements like "I love weapons!" and "Why did humans have so many things???" Later, they discover war—and its antidote.

The book's tone is leavened with plenty of humor, as Puramus "invent" a shelf using an old instruction manual—"Use something sticky! Like jelly!" one builder suggests—and read poetry at an open mic night. Spanning hundreds and possibly thousands of years, the book arrives at a distant future with stories that tease and tantalize, showing Puramus venturing into space to explore their origins. These tales reveal clues, but provide no definitive answers.

Gish's writing takes a minimalist approach, using words sparingly but effectively. Her cartoon-inspired art is equally direct, aesthetically pleasing but never showing more than what's needed. Sure to be a hit with fans, *We Are Here Forever* is also a splendid introduction to Gish's rich, deceptively complex, post-human world.

PETER DABBENE (July/August 2019)

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