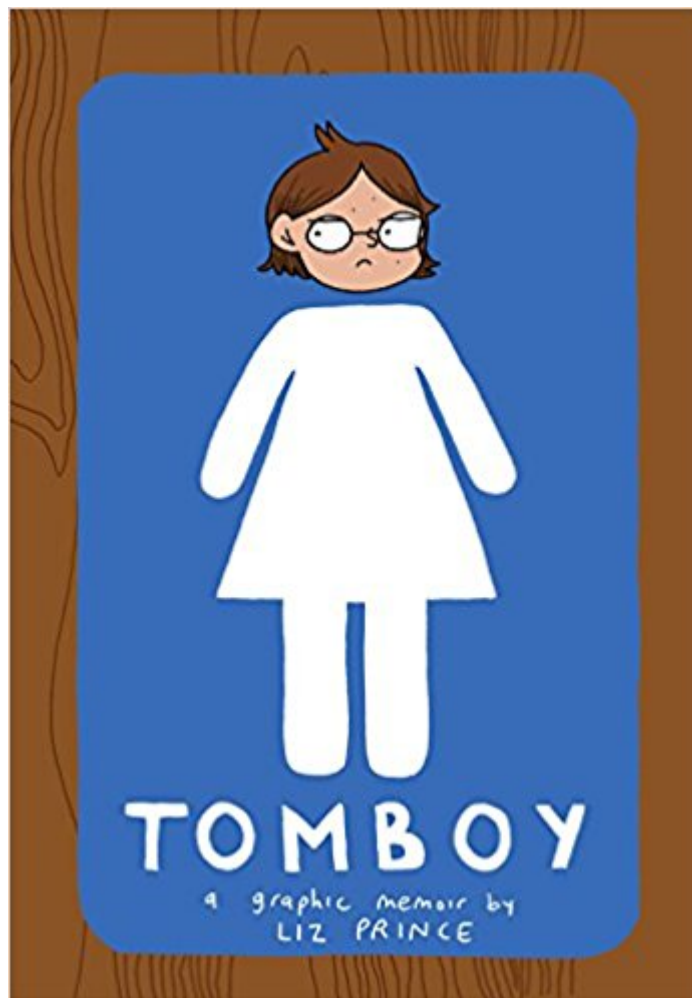


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# Tomboy: A Graphic Memoir



## Synopsis

Growing up, Liz Prince wasn't a girly girl, dressing in pink tutus or playing Pretty Pretty princess like the other girls in her neighborhood. But she wasn't exactly one of the guys either, as she quickly learned when her Little League baseball coach exiled her to the outfield instead of letting her take the pitcher's mound. Liz was somewhere in the middle, and *Tomboy* is the story of her struggle to find the place where she belonged. *Tomboy* is a graphic novel about refusing gender boundaries, yet unwittingly embracing gender stereotypes at the same time, and realizing later in life that you can be just as much of a girl in jeans and a T-shirt as you can in a pink tutu. A memoir told anecdotally, *Tomboy* follows author and zine artist Liz Prince through her early childhood into adulthood and explores her ever-evolving struggles and wishes regarding what it means to "be a girl." From staunchly refuting anything she perceived as being "girly" to the point of misogyny, to discovering through the punk community that your identity is whatever you make of it, regardless of your gender, *Tomboy* is as much humorous and honest as it is at points uncomfortable and heartbreaking.

## Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up—Prince knew from an early age that she was not a typical girl. The only pictures of her in a dress were from when she was a baby and could not protest. She hates dresses and all things "girly." Fortunately, she had supportive parents who did not force her into traditional gender roles and who let her wear the kinds of clothing she wanted. Most of Prince's friends were boys, and her fantasies and playtime were devoted to being a hero, not a princess. Her wardrobe choices made her the target of ridicule and bullying in Boston and in Santa Fe, where her family moved when she was in early elementary school. In their first neighborhood, most of her friends were boys, but she found some girlfriends after the family moved. It was the first time she found girls with similar interests in comics and *Ghostbusters*, and it was also when she realized that she did not want to be a boy but, rather, wanted the freedom that came with being one. Meeting a good friend of her mother's, who encouraged her talent and interest in comics, and transferring to a very small, highly experimental high school helped her become comfortable with her choice as a tomboy. Although Prince has created a work that will affirm the choices of tomboys, the black-and-white illustrations show little variation among characters, and the text is sometimes difficult to read. The chronology is also confusing, as Prince often jumps from childhood to adolescence in the space of one frame and then jumps back to childhood again. Purchase where graphic novel memoirs are in demand.—Suanne B. Roush, formerly at Osceola High School, Seminole, FL

"When addressing childhood, most memoirists tend to over-inflate their adolescent intelligence and underrepresent their flaws. They put adult words into the mouths of children and let the privilege of hindsight influence the retelling of their characters's lives. Liz Prince somehow manages to avoid these pitfalls. She portrays the awkwardness and humiliation of childhood with wonderful (not to mention painful) accuracy. Any kid that picks up this book is going to be privy to secrets most of us don't learn until it's too late, and any adult who reads it will be reminded of an essential truth: that it's okay to be exactly who we want to be, no matter how weird everyone else thinks we are. Tomboy isn't a self help book, but it should be."

— Julia Wertz, author of *Drinking at the Movies* and *The Infinite Wait*

"Liz Prince tells gender norms to eat dirt. A delightful, thoughtful, and compulsively readable memoir. And an important one."

— Ariel Schrag, author of *Adam: A Novel* and *Potential*

"It's not very often you read a goofy coming-of-age comic written with an astutely critical lens... And then there's Liz Prince's *Tomboy*. By tackling everything from Green Day to girl-hate, Prince does a kick-ass job at dissecting gender politics (and playground politics) through riotous anecdotes from her childhood, making this feminist inquiry, well, fun."

— Suzy X., illustrator at *Rookie Magazine*

"It's hard to imagine anyone failing to be charmed by this entertaining, clever, and genuinely funny memoir of growing up with gender identity confusion. Even this pretty unconfused regular old dude found plenty to identify with in Liz Prince's story of adolescent bafflement, exploration, and discovery • all delivered, like all the best such stories, with a light touch, wry wit, understated irony, and not one iota of preachiness. Meaning: I'm a fan. Go Liz!"

— Frank Portman, author of *King Dork*

"Liz Prince may have been an uncertain, confused kid, but she's a confident and sincerely expressive cartoonist. *Tomboy* is a funny and relatable look at what every child has to deal with at some point - figuring out who you really are inside, when everyone else only sees what they think you should be on the outside."

— Jeffrey Brown, author of *Clumsy*, *Jedi Academy* and *Darth Vader and Son*

Liz Prince's first book, *Will You Still Love Me If I Wet the Bed?*, was nominated for several awards and won the Ignatz Award for Outstanding Debut in 2005.

"Prince explores what it means to be a tomboy in a magnificently evocative graphic memoir. Simple, line-based art provides a perfect complement to her keen narration, giving this an indie, intimate feel and leaving readers feeling like they really know her. Liz's story, captured with wry humor and a deft, visceral eye, is a must-read for fans who fell for Raina Telgemeier's work in middle school. Spectacular; a

book to make anyone think seriously about society's preordained gender roles." • Kirkus Reviews (Starred Review) "Liz Prince tells gender norms to eat dirt. A delightful, thoughtful, and compulsively readable memoir. And an important one." • Ariel Schrag, author of *Adam* and *Potential* "Liz Prince may have been an uncertain, confused kid, but she's a confident and sincerely expressive cartoonist. *Tomboy* is a funny and relatable look at what every child has to deal with at some point—figuring out who you really are inside, when everyone else only sees what they think you should be on the outside." • Jeffrey Brown, author of *Clumsy*, *Jedi Academy* and *Darth Vader and Son*

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