



The Wild Piano

Fred (Illustrations) , Richard Kutner (Translation)

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"Not since Carroll's Alice has there been such a marvelous and incredible adventure."—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

Look closely at the map in your library, classroom, or home to discover eight fantastic letters: A-T-L-A-N-T-I-C! You'll be shocked at all the magic that one little word can hold. The farm boy Philemon knows better than anyone what the Atlantic promises; he tumbled down a well last year and fell out the other side onto the island of "A"! That time, Philemon barely escaped with his life. Now he must return to the Atlantic and search for the friend he left behind. His journey will take him deep into those little letters on your map—so deep, in fact, that he fears he might never see his farm again. What surprises await him on the mysterious island of "N"?

The Wild Piano Details

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From Reader Review The Wild Piano for online ebook

Markku Kesti says

Tampere kupliin suurimmat löydöt olivat pari Filemon albbua. Olen aina sanonut, että absurdi ja hauska eivät ole synonyymeja. Tämä on sekä, että, mutta ennen kaikkea absurdi. Näitä lukiessa 'mitä vittua nyt taas' toistuvat lukijalla vähän väliä. Filemonin maailmassa kun majakkapöllöt, kaleerivalaat ja niitä metsästävät pelikaanit ovat normisettiä. Huonepalvelu kuljettaa voisarvet kirjaimellisesti etanapostissa ja tutkimusmatkailija ylittää atlanttia jalkapatikassa ja yöpyy merellä teltassa. Miten näistä muka voi olla tykkäämättä?

Anna says

My 6 year old read this on his own before I did. I was surprised to find out that there is pipe smoking and a beheading in this book. Might be better suited to late elementary and middle school kids than to 6 year olds. My kid didn't even mention the beheading, though, so it may be OK for some early elementary kids. And even Curious George books featured pipe smoking, I'm afraid.

Jon(athan) Nakapalau says

I am so glad to have discovered the work of this French master! Truth be told I did not know anything about him until reading this book (still lots to learn about comics/GN around the world). If you like Alice in Wonderland, Gulliver's Travels, The Wizard of Oz...you will love the surreal adventures of Philemon.

Nancy Kotkin says

Story: 4 stars

Art: 4 stars

Full-color children's graphic novel in the fantasy genre. Originally published in the 1960s in France. This second book in the Philemon series ends abruptly with a Narnia-esque escape through a wardrobe. What the book lacks in character development, it makes up for in vibrant imagination. The art has a very Seussian feel to it. Includes notes in the back of the book about the creator's influences.

Barbara says

In this continuing adventure from France, Philemon realizes that his uncle may be able to help him get back to Bartholomew. But the man makes a mistake, and after he shrinks his nephew and sends him off to join his elderly friend, Philemon lands in the Atlantic Ocean and not one of the islands toward which he hoped to

head. After almost drowning, he is rescued but then sent back into the water and then onto land. From there, he is arrested, tried, imprisoned in a zebra, and sentenced to a fight with a piano. When he and Bartholomew finally meet up, they must evade a rug that seems determined to mow them down. This is wacky zaniness at its most creative. Each one of the books in this series gets more and more outlandish. Fans of Lewis Carroll may find the titles right up their alley.

Tijana says

Filimon je pravi psihodelični (da ne kažem LSD-ovski) strip sedamdesetih, ali mnogo topliji i razbarušeniji od npr. Mebijusa (nikad nisam volela Mebijusa i njegovu kombinaciju infantilnog humora i ledeno savršenog crteža, sudite mi). U pogovoru Rastko Žiri kaže da je Filimon uticao na njegov stil, i to se vidi, a možemo odmah da dodamo i Zografa na taj spisak. Zografovsko je šašavo ulančavanje šarenih nadrealnih prizora uz klasične onirične prelaze iz jedne scene/scenografije u drugu: pad u bunar, pad u tunel, vožnja liftom ili samo ulazak u ormar, nije važno, svaki prelaz vodi na sasvim drugačije i jednako ludo mesto - pomenimo samo hotel u kome kroz beskrajne hodnike zaprega džinovskih puževa razvozi džinovske kifle a pekar/korišćajući jaše na kifli. Za sve ljubitelje nadrealizma.

Kim says

Originally written in the 60s and only recently translated and brought to the US.

tony dillard jr says

Philemon is a young lad who discovers a secret world one day when he accidentally falls into his family's well. In this fantastic world, Philemon learns that the letters on a map that spell out Atlantic are actually a series of hidden islands in the shape of each letter. In his first adventure, the young lad met the first outsider to discover the islands, but they got lost along the way back home. With the help of his uncle and his talking donkey, Philemon ventures back to the A-T-L-A-N-T-I-C in order to save his friend but ends up having to fight for his life by battling a living breathing wild piano.

Philemon is a popular French cartoon series that recently has been translated into English by the fantastic young adult publishing series Toon Graphics. Not only does the company introduce American readers to some of Europe's most popular comics and artists, but they include extensive learning guides and activities for aspiring cartoonists. It's both fun and educational without being too overt about it!

Though many of the books reissued by Toon Graphics are aimed at kids, I've learned quite a bit over the past year about many European artists that I otherwise might have overlooked. This series was created by the late Frederic Othon Aristides (AKA Fred) in the early 70s. A French artist born into a Greek immigrant family, the book's ocean motif filled with surreal characters is a fusion of both Fred's heritage and birthplace.

The back of this book likens the Philemon series to Alice in Wonderland meets Gulliver's Travels and Les Misérables. I can see that but when a co-worker asked me what this book was like, I responded that it was like Monty Python meets the Smurfs. I think both descriptions are accurate. With whimsical beasts, absurd

officials, Victorian photography, and the wildest imagination this side of a school full of kindergartners, this book will challenge and delight.

The Wild Piano is the second book in the series. 'Cast Away on the Letter A' is the first book but my library didn't have it, nor does this book say 'Volume 2' on it. However, you really don't need the book to be caught up with the action in the series thus far. But that doesn't mean you should skip it. I'm on the lookout for Cast Away and I hope to be able to travel with Philemon to all 8 islands of the A-T-L-A-N-T-I-C.

Jennifer says

Pros: Surreal, nonsense adventure in the nature of Alice in Wonderland. Love the colorful, crazy illustrations and the many allusions throughout.

Cons: Why is it called the Wild Piano when that is such a small part of this story?

Eric says

Really enjoyed this wild fantasy story where nothing made sense and as such you couldn't really predict much about the book. Every other page there was a delightful shift in what you thought was possible. Loved it.

Jason says

So fun and imaginative. Obviously evokes Alice in Wonderland, but has its own feel to it. And it's truly an all ages book (a rare thing)!

Clarissa says

Strange, but fun.

Seung Lee says

Not as good as the "Castaway" book, but a solid sequel.

Stuart says

Frédéric Othon Théodore Aristidès, but more commonly known as Fred, was a French cartoonist best known

for his series called Philemon. Shortly before his death in 2013, Fred finished volume 16 of this popular series and effectively brought the series to a close. One year after his death, TOON Books started translating these titles to English. To date, there are three published - 1. Cast Away on the Letter A, The Wild Piano, and The Suspended Castle. Allow me to tell you a little bit about the series and each of the books individually.

Philemon is a French teenager whose best friend is a donkey named Anatole. He is also a bit lazy, a bit of a dreamer, and has a dad who gets easily aggravated at the "tall stories" that Philemon tells him. The first story Cast Away on the Letter A begins with Philemon falling down a well and landing on a beach. It is here where he met a well-digger named Bartholomew and finds out that he is on the island. The island is the letter A and part of the words on the map "ATLANTIC OCEAN." Who knew that those words on the map were actual places. :) He also encounters a centaur while on this particular adventure. Later in the adventure, Bartholomew and Philemon enter a ship in a bottle and sail to the other A in Atlantic where they enter into a labyrinth. Philemon loses Bartholomew and his wandering around, he escapes back to his home.

In The Wild Piano, Philemon's dad thinks he's crazy, but his Uncle Felix remembers Bartholomew and is stunned to learn that Philemon found him. However, Uncle Felix seems scared to talk about the letter A island. He also fancies himself a bit of a magician, and he decides to help Philemon return and try and save Bartholomew. While there, Philemon breaks a law and must perform a concert on a wild piano. This ends up looking like a mix of concert and bull fight. Because he was able to defeat the piano, he is rewarded with an elevator ride. On this ride, he finds Bartholomew and they try to escape. While trying to escape, they encounter a giant man (perhaps Gulliver of Gulliver's Travels). Eventually, they do escape through a wardrobe (C.S. Lewis anyone?), which leads them back to Uncle Felix's room.

In The Suspended Castle Bartholomew is sad to be back in his village. Having been gone 40 years, he feels completely out of place. He doesn't like the clothes he wears. He misses his castle and his centaur butler. Uncle Felix decides to help him return, but Bartholomew forgets his hat when leaving. This causes Philemon to chase after him. This time they end up on the letter I. They try to make it back to the letter A and Bartholomew's castle, but are captured by a captain with a boat shaped like a whale (thoughts of Melville come to mind). While Bartholomew and Philemon were rowing on the whale boat, pelican-shaped boats flying in the sky tried to capture the whale. They were only able to capture Bartholomew and Philemon though, which they took to a castle suspended by a rope. They were then mistaken as "cutters of the rope," whom the people had been awaiting for 2,000 years. Philemon and Bartholomew cut the rope (improperly) and the castle sank with everyone escaping except the captain who went down with his castle. Philemon and Bartholomew also make it back home.

The first three books in the Philemon series are absurdly delightful. The illustrations are crude, but the number of literary references are astounding. If you are looking for a trip through strange lands, then you'll enjoy this series. I think it's more geared toward teenagers, but adults might find some pleasure in it as well.
