



Manfried Saves the Day

Caitlin Major

Kelly Bastow, Illustrator

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Everyone's favorite pet man returns in Caitlin Major and Kelly Bastow's graphic novel *Manfried Saves the Day*.

A follow-up to last year's *Manfried the Man*, *Manfried Saves the Day* brings back Manfried's owner Steve Catson and his girlfriend Henrietta, and also introduces a few new faces. The basic concept is the same: large talking cats are the "humans," with jobs and responsibilities, while tiny men are the pets, lying around, eating, or getting into trouble. This time, Henrietta's man shelter is in danger of being closed down, and the gang rallies to raise money by training to win a "man show" with a big cash prize.

The underlying switcheroo generates genuine comedic moments, like the men being dressed in funny costumes, or Manfried being groomed by another man with a comb, but much of the action recalls similar scenes from the first book, and the same question that arose in the first book still lingers here: Where are the human women? Even when they're pitted against an evil real estate developer, it's sometimes difficult to root for the protagonists: Henrietta passes on a large offer for the ramshackle shelter, even though she'd be able to open a new, much bigger one elsewhere, simply because she prefers to live in the city.

Bastow's art is a pleasure to behold, and Manfried is at the core of the book's appeal. Fans of the first book should enjoy this sequel.

PETER DABBENE (May/June 2019)

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