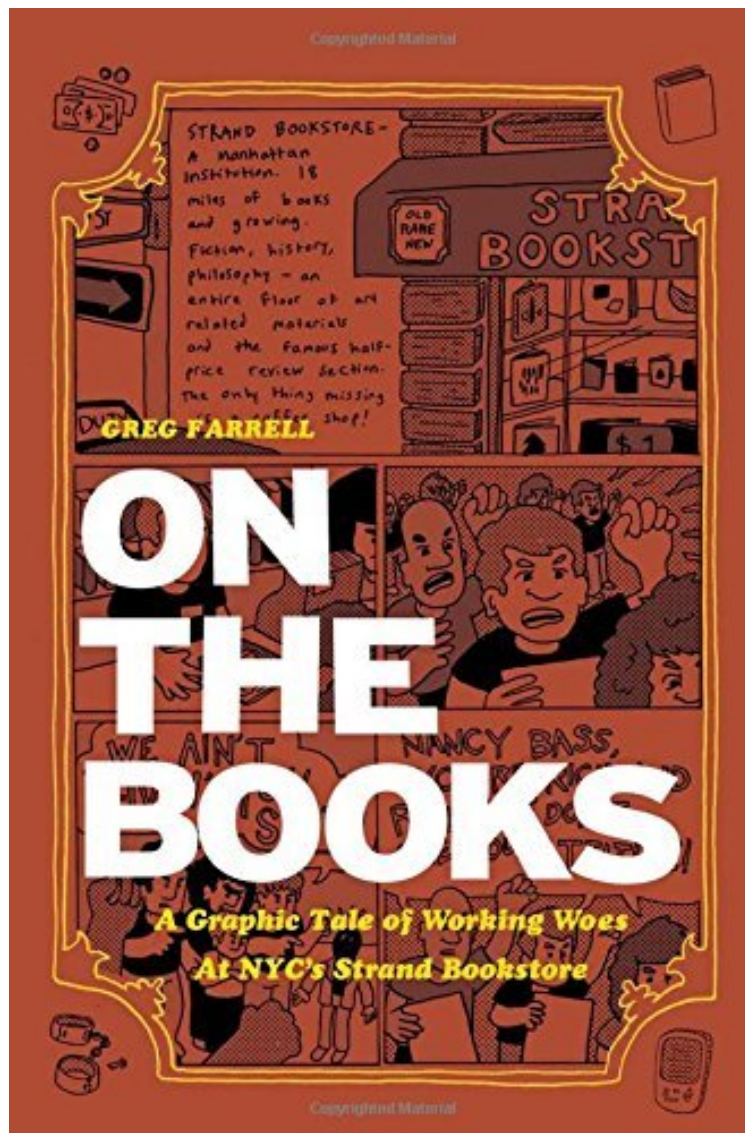


[DOWNLOAD] On The Books: A Graphic Tale of Working Woes at NYC's Strand Bookstore (Comix Journalism)

## On The Books: A Graphic Tale of Working Woes at NYC's Strand Bookstore (Comix Journalism)

Greg Farrell

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**Greg Farrell : On The Books: A Graphic Tale of Working Woes at NYC's Strand Bookstore (Comix Journalism)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised On The Books: A Graphic Tale of Working Woes at NYC's Strand Bookstore (Comix Journalism):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I'm a fan.By P. KayRead everything this guy makes. His GOING RATE is amazing. I enjoyed that better but this is still well worth it.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Must read for low wage workers  
By Christopher Haggqvist  
Being a long time retail employee and specifically a bookstore employee, I found this graphic novel illuminating. I actually had a dream when I was younger of working at The Strand. It was just such a mystical place with its mile high shelves and constant aroma of mustiness. After reading Greg's book though, that illusion is shattered and the place becomes very real: another retail store where employers must fight for the wages and benefits they rightly deserve. Greg takes his real life experience and that of other employees and writes with zest about their struggles past, present and still to come. He does all this so well because it is clear he likes his job and cares about the place he works in. This dichotomy of loving one's job but hating one's treatment at said job is all too common in our country and Greg puts the fight to paper beautifully. Read this now if you are a retail or other low wage worker, or if you just care about the plight of the worker, which you should: we are the backbone of the society we all live in and deserve to be treated with respect.

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful.  
A union struggle at a bookstore is easy to read and thought-provoking  
By Johanna Draper Carlson  
This graphic novel retells, as the back cover has it, "the 2012 labor struggle at NYC's legendary Strand Bookstore". At the time of this telling, the Strand had 152 unionized workers and about 30 non-union managers. Contract renewal negotiations began in September 2011, until the union rejected the business's "final offer" in April 2012. Although reportedly doing well, the store's justification was increased competition and a poor economy. That led to a May Day strike. Author Greg Farrell worked at the store during this time, but he doesn't just rely on his own impressions. The opinions of co-workers—drawn to disguise them, whether as a dolphin, dog, masked wrestler, or taco—are frequently presented between chapters, providing a fuller portrait of the diversity of approaches. There's a brief history of unionization early on, focused on this particular organization, but the union isn't presented as an unvarnished good guy. There's a section on many things they've done wrong. I found the discussion of the problems of a two-tier system particularly informative, where older employees get to keep more benefits but new hires are brought in with a worse deal. The assistance of outside supporters is also shown as a mixed bag, without enough coordination at times. This is my favorite kind of visual reporting, where the author clearly has a point of view, but he's trying to cover all sides as well. There's also an interesting short section on the collectibles business and how it's changed over the years as physical objects became less interesting and online retail grew. I also liked that Farrell takes several pages to explore his concerns about putting out these comics and how they might affect his job and his relationships with his co-workers. Artistically, the presentation is basic and straightforward. Most pages are a six-panel grid, and most panels have an image with narration text running in the top third. That makes it easy to read and understandable to those who may not be as familiar with the comic format. However, instead of relying primarily on the text, Farrell does creative things with the images, often exaggerating metaphors to put across his ideas more memorably. For instance, as he illustrates his time working at the store, a series of figures shows ratty-looking clothes and more aches and pains (shown by tiny stars and body language). This is some subtly talented cartooning. It's a very timely story, given how many young people are currently underemployed in our economy, and these struggles are the kind every intelligent person should be aware of. I was reminded of how important good bookstores are, and that the quality of the store is based on the knowledge of the people that work there. (Review originally posted at ComicsWorthReading.com.)

A David and Goliath story, *On The Books* is the first-hand comic strip account of the labor struggle at NYC's legendary Strand bookstore in the summer of 2012. Told by Greg Farrell—an employee of the store who interviewed numerous other members of the staff—the book examines the motives and actions of those involved, including the store, the staff, the union local, and the people of New York City. Through interstitial comic portraits Farrell gives voice to his comrades, who often share a nuance of the story that would have otherwise gone overlooked and provide a depth of opinion and fairness to accompany Farrell's often very personal interpretation of events. In ten short chapters the book explores at once the inner workings of our national retail environment, the struggle to exist within it as a young working person, the current state of the book trade, and the impact of the economic recession on all of these facets.