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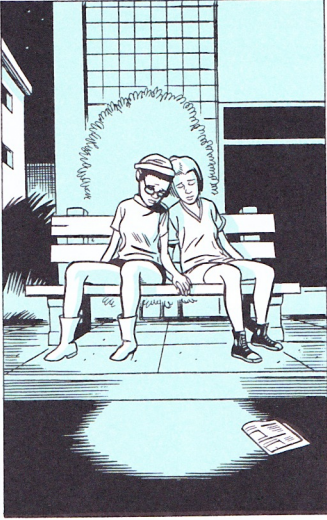
## Indicia

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## “Where Are They Now?”: An Afterlife for Enid and Rebecca . . .



The ending of *Ghost World* has generated considerable speculation, most of which centers on questions about Enid and her future: Where will she go? Will she and Rebecca remain friends? Can she find happiness on her own?<sup>1</sup> Some readers see the comic's conclusion as optimistic: in a new place and away from friends and family, Enid will finally have a chance to recreate herself. But most are less hopeful: wherever the bus goes, the lonely heroine will bring her emotional troubles with her. Aspects of the comic's final panel support this interpretation: the empty bench (which recalls many images of the girls sitting together); Enid's bus, dwarfed by the surroundings and entering a dark, narrow tunnel; and the ominous movie-style “THE END.” At the same time, the ending represents another instance of Clowesian openness.<sup>2</sup>

The panel's emptiness reminds us that a character's future — the story after the story — is an empty space, a blank panel we fill with our own concerns and desires, be they optimistic, pessimistic, or otherwise. What's on the other side of the tunnel, or beyond a book's last page, is unknowable.

A decade after *Ghost World* was published, Clowes speculated about the character's afterlives in “Where Are They Now?,” a part of 2008's *Ghost World: Special Edition*. The strip narrates possible futures for the comic's heroines, yet refuses to answer its own question. If Clowes knows where they are, he's not telling. Their post-adolescence and adulthood will remain a mystery.

1 The ending of the *Ghost World* movie has generated an equal amount of interest; most viewers have seen it as suggesting an unhappy future for Enid.

2 For a discussion of openness, see the “Aesthetic Biography” in the beginning of this volume.

# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

