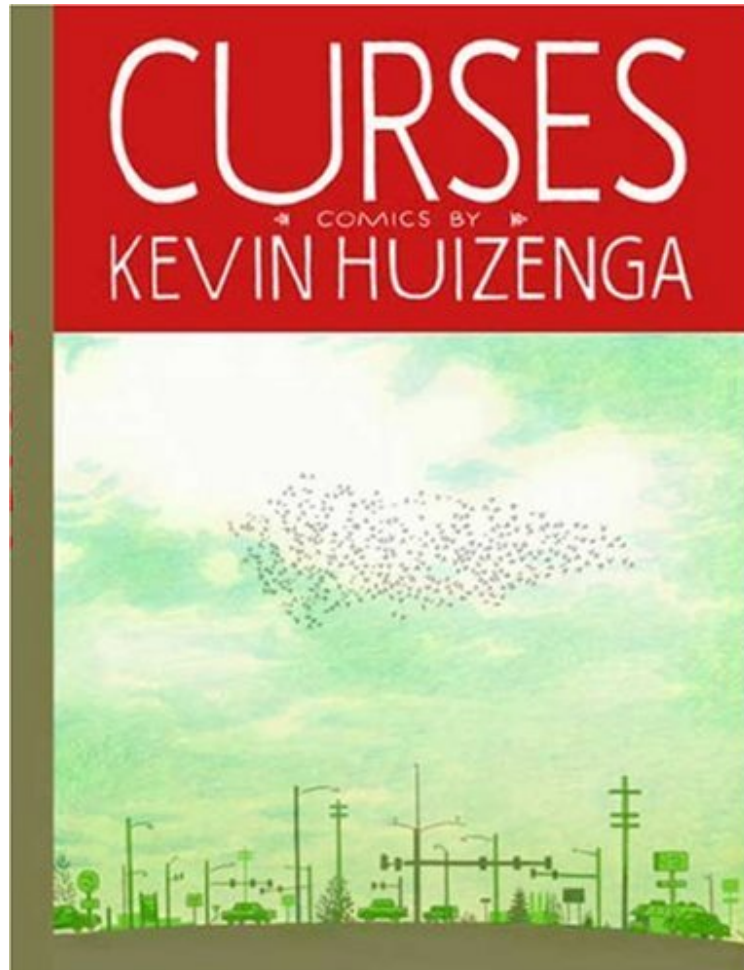


## Curses

*Kevin Huizenga*

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#939726 in Books Drawn and Quarterly 2006-12-12 2006-12-12Ingredients: Example IngredientsOriginal language:EnglishPDF # 1 10.74 x .95 x 7.931, 1.78 #File Name: 1894937864144 pages | File size: 33.Mb

**Kevin Huizenga : Curses** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Curses:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A good one, this.By Robert BeveridgeKevin Huizenga, Curses (Drawn and Quarterly, 2006)I think that, were Glenn Ganges a real person (and I believe that he is, at least partially, Kevin Huizenga himself), that he and I would get along famously. Ganges seems to take an approach to the world very similar to my own, and we have things in common I never expected to find I had in common with, shall we say, an artist's rendition. Thus, I will freely admit to bias in my review of Curses, Huizenga's first book of Glenn Ganges stories. (A second, Ganges, was released the next year by Fantagraphics.)The Ganges stories here vary greatly in length, from a three-page quickie that appeared in Time magazine to a forty-page adaptation of a Sheridan LeFanu story ("Green Tea", for those keeping track). Ganges and his wife are the only solid connectors between the stories, but incidents and characters crop up again and again in different stories, so the volume has more of a feel of coherence

than it otherwise would. Much of it reads rather like a magical-realist memoir; there's a realistic setup (e.g., Glenn and his wife trying to have a kid...) that leads to a thoroughly absurd conclusion (...and the only way to do that is to steal a feather from an ogre who lives somewhere beneath 28th Street), or vice versa. It's a good deal of fun, and Huizenga's somewhat minimal drawing style is adaptable to just about anything (and there's some wonderful versatility to be found between these pages). Definitely worth a look. \*\*\*\*\*9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. An Evening with Glenn GangesBy Brenna CollinsGlenn Ganges sounds just like someone you probably know. He's in his mid-to-late 20s, slim build, slightly balding, and lives with his wife in a smaller American metropolis. They've been trying to have a baby for some time, but without success. He enjoys reading about the unknown, and thinking about the little things in life that most of us bypass with barely a second thought. On the surface, Glenn could be that friend you had from college - the one you used to study with late at night over coffee at an all-night diner (you remember that guy, don't you?).Except for one thing: Glenn Ganges is a fictional character in Kevin Huizenga's comics repertoire. This is a simple, obvious fact which is easily overlooked throughout Mr. Huizenga's latest book, Curses. Glenn's just got that kind of a personality. Bigger than life? No. Stands out in a crowd? Not in the least. But he is charming in ways that don't exact great amounts of understanding from the reader. That is to say, the reader has known Glenn Ganges throughout his or her life, and it is wholly natural to allow him back in. What Mr. Huizenga does with such a regular-guy-type character is amazing, though, and proves to be the strength of Curses. The reader isn't exposed to thinly-veiled autobiography or self-indulgence (as is the case with Bren Collins' 6 Ways from Sunday franchise), but to worldly stories that could come from anywhere. "28th Street," for instance, is a stirring Glenn Ganges story which originated as a folk tale from Italy, and has been filtered through Hometown, America for the reader's consumption ("Hometown, America" in this case happens to be Grand Rapids, MI - perhaps the epitome of any North American city of moderate size). A veritable mythology is acknowledged, formulated, and shared in such a way that we can all get it, not just on a local or regional level. The book has heart, and Mr. Huizenga emphasizes this with his superb selection of non-verbal images. The case which makes itself is within the short story "The Hot New Thing," a satirical view of how people tend to analyze and anticipate those things which we are told by media are The Hot New Thing. Glenn and his wife Wendy are just like us in that respect. They talk about The Hot New Thing for days, follow trade journals and popular magazines featuring the unspecified object, and finally attend the initial unveiling of said item. And here's where the humanity comes into play: On their way into the Expo, Glenn and Wendy become so wrapped up in the anticipatory moments leading up to the pinnacle moment in their lives (The Hot New Thing's revelation!), they actually hold hands as they approach - they've fallen in love all over again. Curses is a book every bit as profound as anything by Chris Ware (Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Boy on Earth) or Jeffrey Brown (Clumsy, and I Am Going To Be Small), and sometimes surpasses them with regards to accessibility to the general readership. Each of the stories can be read independent of the others, but there is a linear feel of coherence to them as they are presented. There truly is a wide range of emotion explored throughout the book (not just the typical "joys and pains" of a human life, but also the irrational fears and the common curiosity between us all). Finding a Glenn Ganges story in another publication (such as the Canadian TIME Magazine) is always a special treat. Finding a collection of them compiled between a hardcover is truly exciting. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Equally cursed and blessedBy Sam QuixoteHuizenga's stories range from Victorian ghost stories, articles on Sudan, folk tales, Christian arguments, and even adoption reports. This can be a good thing if the subjects themselves are interesting though unfortunately most of them are not. The Victorian ghost story is an adaptation of Sheridan Le Fanu's story "Green Tea" about a vicar haunted by a monkey who tells him to kill himself. The story is agonisingly played out with Le Fanu's words telling us about the vicar and his grief, his meeting with a Victorian psychologist, the repeated sightings of the monkey - all very well for a Victorian audience but for contemporary readers it is really slow. Le Fanu wasn't that a writer anyway, only two of his stories really stand out for me; his vampire story "Carmilla" was a precursor and inspiration for Stoker's "Dracula" and "Uncle Silas" inspired the Lemony Snicket books. "Green Tea" is a below average story that Huizenga draws out for the first 38 pages of this 145 page book and man is it dull. The other stories aren't much better. "Lost and Found" is Huizenga copying down the words of an article on Sudanese refugees, while "Case 0003128-24" is a copy of an adoption report. Very dry stuff. The worst of these stories was "Jeepers Jacobs" which tells of a Christian writing about "Hell" and his conception of it through other thinkers who have written about it. This story goes for 25 pages and, as an atheist, I found the various arguments interminable. There are a few interesting tales like the magical realist fable "28th Street" about Glenn Ganges (the main character of each story) and his wife Wendy looking to conceive a child and doing so through plucking a feather off of an ogre. "The Curse" follows the story and is about starlings. Though the stories are mostly tedious retellings of secondary sources Huizenga has picked up on, the drawings are the real treat here. I love Huizenga's style, it's natural, it's different, it's very pleasing to look at, especially in the last 30 pages when colour is introduced. In the adoption story "Case..." Huizenga produces some gorgeous pictures in the Japanese style of the 18th century that made me go back and look at each panel again. Wonderful. Also the production of the book is marvellous. Drawn and Quarterly is a company associated with quality and they come through with this hardback book. Well designed and using high quality paper, the book itself is beautiful to hold. Though I'd say some of the stories left me either bored or barely interested, the artwork really kept

me going. I'd still read stuff by Huizenga in the future I just hope he either starts writing stories himself or uses more interesting material.

"One of the brightest, most interesting new comix authors to appear in the last five years." -Time.com  
Delving into mythology, belief, and spirituality, Kevin Huizenga's short stories are based on the lives of familiar characters confronting the textures of mortality in unique and sometimes peculiar ways. Huizenga fuses the most banal aspects of modern culture with its most looming questions in a consistently genial style. Lighthearted, but with a healthy dose of nineteenth-century spine tingling, the narratives presented in *Curses* are insightful portrayals of reality. Huizenga's central character in his comics is Glenn Ganges, a seemingly middle-class man living in the suburbs whose blank-eyed wonderment at everyday experiences brings together such diverse aspects of our world as golf, theology, late-night diners, parenthood, politics, Sudanese refugees, and hallucinatory vision, into a complete experience as multifaceted as our own lives. Huizenga is regarded by many as one of the most promising young cartoonists of his generation, whose artistic talent, singular writing, and studied substance prove the versatility of his skill. *Curses* collects his work from Kramer's *Ergot* and *The Drawn Quarterly Showcase*, his award-winning and nominated comic-book series *Or Else*, and *Time* magazine; it is the most extensive selection of his comics to date in a single volume.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . Huizenga has created some of the most remarkable comics of recent years, and this volume collects stories published in anthologies and random comic books. Huizenga's work, drawn in a deceptively simple and quietly expressive cartoon line, is marked by a focus on philosophical quandaries. Nearly all of his stories take place in an anonymous suburbia, and his everyman protagonist, Glenn Ganges, is a likable character possessed of a Charlie Brownlike calm. The strongest story in this book, "28th Street," is a fanciful meditation on fertility in which Ganges turns to supernatural solutions for his all too corporeal problems. Another excellent story, "Jeepers Jacobs," explores the nature of heaven and hell through the fictionalized work of a theologian protagonist. Another story, "Green Tea," is an adaptation of a 19th-century thriller. It's quite a range, and Ganges's thoughtful wonderment at all of his experiences opens up the world to the reader. Huizenga is an inclusive, empathic artist who communicates without lectures rather, he simply shows the world as it might be and allows us, through Ganges, to experience it with him. His excellent ear for dialogue and measured prose style accomplish this without flash. These are wonderfully considered, profound comics. (Oct.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.  
From Booklist Glenn Ganges' sober countenance has peered out from Huizenga's philosophical comics tales since his introduction to the graphics universe in the early 1990s. In Huizenga's largest collection featuring the blank-faced protagonist, Ganges is a quizzical mouthpiece for the artist's observations on the startling and surrealistic nature of the modern world. In "Green Tea," Ganges recounts an episode from university days, when a tea-fueled research project on hallucinations triggered his own visionary experience and had him digging through a nineteenth-century psychiatrist's papers for explanations. "The Curse" follows Ganges' mission to steal the plumage of a "feathered ogre" and remove a curse that is keeping him and his wife childless. Other tales disclose hidden connections between missing children and Sudanese lost boys and unearth surprising details about starlings. Huizenga's masterful, multitextured drawing style proves equally suited to depicting rainstorms sweeping through mini-marts and landscapes in the style of classical Japanese paintings. Unlike many graphic artists whose self-written texts suffer in comparison with their higher quality drawings, Huizenga's scripts are consistently crisp, witty, and engaging. Carl Hays Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved.  
About the Author KEVIN HUIZENGA has been nominated for both the Harvey and Eisner Awards and is the winner of the Ignatz Award for his short stories and comic books. This is his first graphic novel. He lives in St. Louis, Missouri.