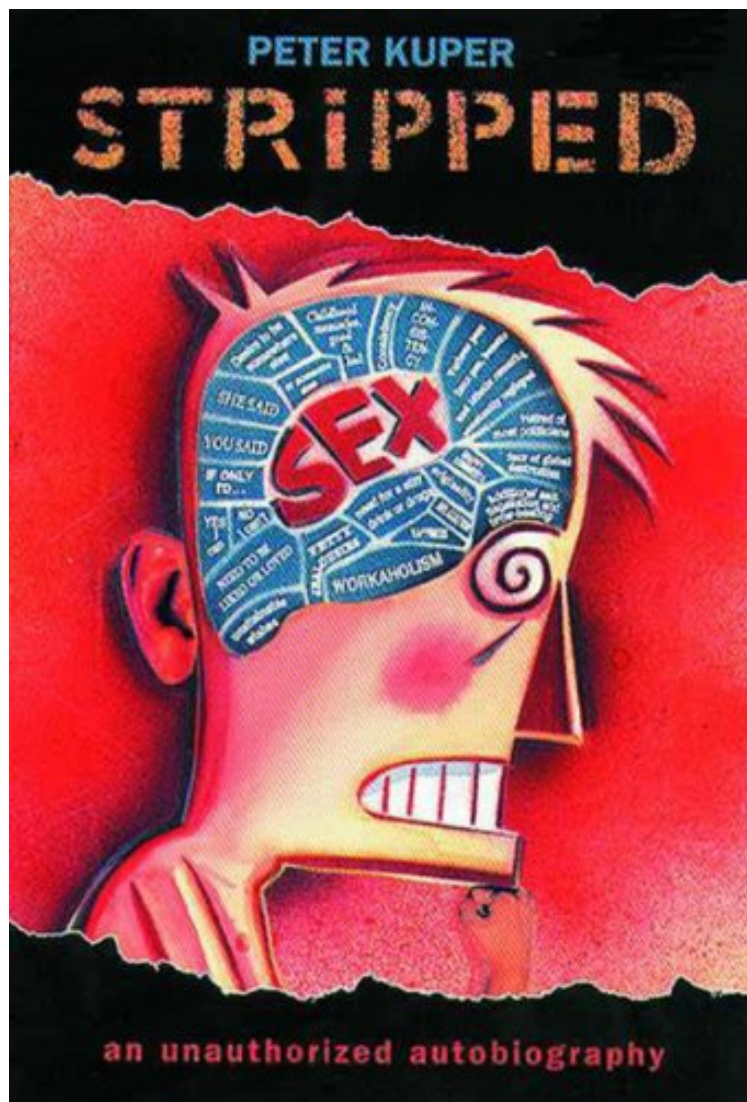


Stripped

Peter Kuper

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Peter Kuper : Stripped before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Stripped:

Book by Kuper, Peter

From Publishers WeeklyNo autobiographical cartoonist can be said to have arrived without the obligatory work

exposing the most hilarious and/or pathetic moments of his or her sexual coming of age. In *Stripped*, Kuper (ComicsTrips) delivers, rendering himself as a Hugh Hefner-like, pipe-smoking, bathrobed narrator, he takes us on a trip back to his high school years. But Kuper was clearly no playboy; he portrays himself as a ridiculously timid "bunny-boy," mortified by his own virginity, hopping away at strategic erotic moments, obsessed with sex but terrified at the prospect. "The fun I could have had if I knew what I know now!" grumbles Kuper/Hefner as he reviews one (bungled) nubile opportunity after another. He was much better at pot and drugs ("I took to dealing pot like a gambler to a craps table"); he recounts his well-researched pot connoisseurship, and there is a wonderfully illustrated reminiscence of his first acid trip: "I never realized I could look into the center of the earth." Kuper rounds out his personal sex-u-mentary with a "girlfriend from hell" story that caps his development from frightened teenage sexual explorer to lovesick doormat. Kuper combines a great talent for comedic writing with an inventively cartoony-and sometimes dazzling-graphic style. Drawings are in bw. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From BooklistIllustrator Kuper's work appears frequently in the New York Times and mass-circulation magazines, but relatively few see his stories in alternative comics publications. Most of his work is political (he copublishes the bitterly savage comic *World War 3 Illustrated*), but *Stripped* collects autobiographical tales. It begins with an account of Kuper's extended efforts to lose his virginity, includes other stories detailing various unhealthy and/or highly confused relationships, and ends, perhaps appropriately, with a paean to masturbation. Other stories relate adolescent pot-smoking exploits and depict some unsettling dreams. Kuper's pseudo-woodcut technique is more stylized than the more naturalistic approaches taken by most autobiographical comics artists, but it perfectly suits his exaggerated, mocking perspective on himself (e.g., when he timidly tries to put the moves on a succession of girlfriends, he draws himself as a scared rabbit). Nearly everybody should be able to relate to Kuper's sagas of insecurity and rejection, so this collection should do well in libraries where adult comics have proven popular. Gordon Flagg