



Ice Haven

Daniel Clowes

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Welcome to Ice Haven! “It’s not as cold here as it sounds,” declares Random Wilder, our reluctant guide to this sleepy Midwestern town. He’s also its would-be poet laureate. Would-be, that is, were it not for the “florid banalities” of his archrival, Ida Wentz, published ad nauseam in the Ice Haven Daily Progress. Among Wilder’s other fellow Ice Havians are the lovelorn Violet Vanderplazt and Vida Wentz; the adorable interracial moppets Carmichael and Paula; the Blue Bunny, newly sprung from prison and the bitterest rabbit in town; and poor little David Goldberg, missing for more than a week now. . . .

The lives of the men and women of Ice Haven are woven into a multilayered tale that, while it owes a debt to Our Town, is ultimately based on and inspired by . . . Leopold and Loeb. No kidding.

Only Daniel Clowes could do it and, luckily for us, he has.

Ice Haven Details

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Author : Daniel Clowes

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From Reader Review Ice Haven for online ebook

Grant says

Quite possibly Daniel Clowes masterpiece.

Liz says

2.5 stars. Not my favorite Clowes, but still entertaining.

Simon Sweetman says

Genius level. As (almost) always.

Brandy says

Co-worker saw me reading this over lunch and commented "oh, some high-level reading, huh?" because it's got, y'know, pictures. Never mind that it's actually written for adults, making it maybe a higher level book than 80% of what I've been reading anyway. Grumble.

Because Dan Clowes is *not* an easy, breezy read. *Ice Haven* has a pretty large cast, all of whom have their own individual dramas going on, and every drama is given the same weight--from the parents whose son has been missing for a week to the boy in love with his new stepsister. It's not as linear a story as *Ghost World*, but it's all interconnected, making this one long comic-strip narrative rather than a bunch of separate stories.

I wouldn't be me if I didn't have one complaint, and that's that Clowes' lettering is so tiny and his comics so wordy that it can sometimes be difficult to decipher. There was one panel I stared at for a long time, trying to figure out why a woman responded to bad news by clutching her husband and crying "oh, my god, tacos!", before realizing that the all-capped "TACOS" was actually "JACOB."

Jeff says

As many others have noted, Clowes enters Sherwood Anderson territory here in this multi-narrative exploration of the woebegone citizens of Ice Haven. While there are some piercing moments here--the last three pages in particular--this is also pretty well-traveled ground--the sad lives of mundane middle-Americans (although the Leopold and Loeb motif is a dark wrinkle). I was most intrigued by the piece's formal elements, the novel told in individual comic strips done in various styles that serve as homages to (pastiche of?) other classic strips, the Peanuts being one obvious example.

Wendy Crittenden says

found this at a thrift store, totally stoked to read it. yeah two dollars fifteen cents!

Malvika says

I don't think I have it in me to review anything by Daniel Clowes. It's always a fabulous, surreal, and every other emotion experience to read his works. The same goes for Ice Haven. I liked it less than I did Ghost World or Death Ray, but it has its distinct charms, each so well put on paper that the reader can't help but be in awe of Clowes' genius.

One question: why is the font so small???

Kim says

Metabunker's review of the work is well written. <http://www.metabunker.dk/?p=2652>

Alexandra says

this was good but unexpectedly dark. I wasn't familiar with Daniel Clowes before I picked this up. mainly I just liked the artwork and the cover caught my attention so I went into it completely blind.

I actually picked up a bunch of his other stuff too which now I'm kind of wondering if it's my cup of tea but I'll probably give it a shot.

what I really do like is the way he weaves together a story involving multiple people and points of view. you get to see things from almost every single character's perspective which makes it very interesting. and what you see isn't always what it appears to be, which keeps you on your toes.

so all in all, love the writing style, multiple points of view, and the artwork was pretty decent. but I wish I had known ahead of time how real this gets.

Adam says

With an almost clinical tone, this comic surveys a small town. Amidst its moderately realist interweaving stories of the town's inhabitants, it contains a multitude of ironic and metatextual elements: shifts into inordinately cartoony art; cartoon gangster bunnies and children speaking of emulating Leopold and Loeb; a focus on writers (of the embittered type) and a snide comic book critic who provides a meta-summation of the comic itself; a tortured, self-aggrandizing-philosopher child who presents a cartoon satire of the tormented existentialist that really just wants the girl, and who ends in truly poignant and even cartoonier despair. With all this, the book provides a portrait of a town, but it realizes that the town, more than just being composed of the characters in it, is a set of concepts and reference, and the story of the town, more

than just detailing the actions of its inhabitants, contains its own telling. The layers of irony and intertextual (and intratextual) references and digressions add to the sense of viewing an entire world; they incorporate the author as well as the reader's sensibilities into the story.

Lauren says

I enjoyed this more than *Ghost World* and *much* more than *Twentieth Century Eightball*. There was more cohesion and meat to this story than the other two of Clowes' that I have read. The reader meets an array of characters from the city of Ice Haven and through their individual yet connected stories, a crime is solved during the course of the book.

Lizzie says

Over a couple weeks in the summer of 2005, I:

- 1) Quit my job
- 2) Bought this book
- 3) Went on vacation to the Jersey Shore with my friend
- 4) Read this book, on the beach (enjoyed it!)
- 5) Came home and returned this book to Barnes & Noble because I was unemployed and needed the money back.

It was kind of a great time.

The B&N Lending Library, I called it. "It's okay because they're hardcover!"

This was not the only time that I did such a thing, and it's not that this is an ethically wonderful idea that I would recommend. But if what you really feel you've got to do is take that brand new book on vacation, and you've got bigger problems with no health insurance or credit card, I would say that, well, have a great time. It's hardcover.

Núria says

Para empezar ya me encanta la forma física que tiene 'Ice Haven', horizontal y apaisado, recordándome una tira cómica de los periódicos, pero por dentro también tiene en cierto modo la forma de una tira cómica, porque son varias historias de varios personajes que se cruzan, dibujadas y presentadas con estilos algo diferentes. Me encanta como Clowes mezcla las historias de varios personajes que viven en un pueblo llamado Ice Haven, como incorpora sueños y flashbacks a la narración. Sí, narrativamente me parece un libro impecable, redondo. Me han encantado (y sorprendido por lo lúcidos y autoirónicos que son) los toques de metaficción que tiene el libro, porque hay un personaje que es experto en cómics que nos regala una disquisición acerca de los cómics en general y de Daniel Clowes en particular.

Pero también me encanta como (otra vez) con un sentido del humor sutil y algo cruel nos relata historias que me parecen tan cercanas y tan reales. Y por supuesto me encanta lo melancólico que es todo el libro, casi rozando la tristeza. Prácticamente todos los personajes resultan igual de verosímiles, todos frustrados y/o

perdidos en mayor o menor grado, pero inevitablemente mis favoritos son Charles y Random Wilder. Charles porque es un niño "raro", bastante solitario que se defiende de la vida como puede con largas pedanterías filosóficas. Y Random Wilder porque es un escritor frustrado envidioso del éxito que tienen los poemas de begonias de su vecina, un amargado que siente que es un fracasado que ha malgastado la vida, un hombre con una vida de lo más monótona que se dice que tiene que ponerse a escribir pero que siempre lo va aplazando.

Jon(athan) Nakapalau says

Think Thornton Wilder's Our Town as a comic.

Jason says

Written as a collection of short comic strips, each with its own title, this odd work from the author of Ghost World tells the story of the residents of the fictional town of Ice Haven and their dysfunctional interaction in the wake of the case of a missing child. Through the point of view of a troubled poet, a young intellectual in love with his miserable step sister, a private investigator neglecting his wife to solve the case and many other townsfolk the story unfolds with various suspects and plenty of allusions to the notorious case of Leopold and Loeb.

Clowes writes graphic novels like high literary fiction full of postmodern flourishes and ambiguity not present in many other artists in the genre. This hasn't found the mass appeal of Ghost World and likely never will, but, in my opinion, it's the better work. I read it twice in the course of two days and have recommended it to all of my friends with an interest in comics or postmodernist metafiction. Genius.

Danger says

Presented as a series of "Sunday comics" style vignettes, this interconnected story of kidnapping, unrequited love, art, and the psycho-sexual drama in Small Town America is WAY more complex and thought-provoking than its short 81 pages would lead you to believe. A dark portrait of suburban ennui that poses more questions than it answers, while still feeling satisfying by the end. It had me enraptured the entire time.

Sooraya Evans says

Yawn :(

DeAnna Knippling says

My first Daniel Clowes. Hm....

At first I was vastly annoyed with the pretension. And then, slowly, it won me over. It's not actually

pretension if you can nail it, I guess.

pierlapo quimby says

Sono d'accordo con Clowes: la poesia non ha speranze se confrontata con le volgarità che grondano dai media e a cui ci si assuefa più facilmente che al più puro degli endecasillabi.

Il mio vicino di casa potrebbe essere il più grande poeta vivente ma quali concrete possibilità ha di dimostrarlo? Dovrebbe rapire un bambino e poi scrivere una lettera di riscatto in versi, nell'auspicio che Federica Sciarelli, Salvo Sottile o Barbara D'Urso la leggano davanti alle telecamere.

L'unica strada è che la poesia si appropri di quel linguaggio, di quei temi, diventi essa stessa volgare, violenta, guardona o anche narcisa, egoriferita, non sia ipocrita e dica in faccia quello che pensa (questo, soprattutto), partecipi a qualche reality, ne sia impietosa commentatrice da studio, apra quindi una pagina su facebook e scriva stronzate su goodreads, discutendo infine se stessa.

Quando il processo di trasformazione sarà completato, non la si distinguerà più dalle penose vicende, cronache, dichiarazioni, interviste che ci assediano ogni giorno.

Tutto sarà poesia.

Anthony Vacca says

Daniel Clowes's version of *Winesburg, Ohio* features the dull Midwestopia Ice Haven, and its many sad, sad citizens. The plot revolves around a kidnapped tyke, a crime which may or may not have been inspired by a child abduction that ended in murder fifty years before. This slice of small-town excitement serves as a shaggy impetus for letting the reader play voyeur in the lives of a lazy and untalented poet, a bitter convenience store clerk, an unhappily married pair of private eyes (i.e. Nick and Nora minus the laughs), a ground-zero pubescent who lusts after his older step-sister with Shakespearian gusto, a droll comic-book critic, an unhappy teen who marries her out-of-town beau in secret and a neurotic twenty-something who has ambitions of being the next big literary-something, just as soon as she can find someone who will actually read any of her self-published zines. Another fine comic from Clowes, featuring his love for utilizing throwback comic techniques of decades before and his understanding of the human condition in all its hopelessness and awkwardness.
