



The Secret Goldfish: Stories

By David Means

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Readers familiar with **David Means'** electrifying work in the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize -- winning Assorted Fire Events will recognize his extraordinary vision in **The Secret Goldfish**. A trio of erotically charged kids goes on a crime spree in Michigan; a goldfish bears witness to the demise of a Connecticut marriage; and an extremely unlucky man is stalked by lightning. This dazzling new collection reveals Means' rare talent for the short story and establishes his place among the American masters.

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The Secret Goldfish: Stories By David Means Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The characters in this imaginative and penetrating story collection—a man hounded by lightning strikes, a driver blown off the Mackinac bridge, a pianist whose fingers stop working, a woman who slaughters her boyfriend after ambiguous consultations with Jesus and the devil, a bog man roused from his shallow grave—are beset by bolts from the blue. Sometimes the victims and sometimes the perpetrators of calamity, they struggle to extract meaning—and the occasional glimpses of grace and beauty—from the chaos and brutality that disrupt their lives. Means, author of the acclaimed story collection *Assorted Fire Events*, probes a broad range of social registers, from junkies and criminals festering in the postindustrial decay of northern Michigan's iron range to the chilly adulteries of the artsy New York haute bourgeoisie, linking them into a bleak, sometimes apocalyptic panorama of the precariousness of life in a country that "could eat anything, absolutely anything, up." His uncompromising vision rarely indulges anything more comforting than harsh poetic epiphanies, inexplicable moments of clarity gleaned from random encounters with destruction; the story "Michigan Death Trip," a litany of demise from nonnatural causes, is emblematic of the book's sensibility. But every so often, as with the titular goldfish who endures, and even prevails, when his tank is neglected by a family in the throes of divorce, a happy ending slips through.

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From [Booklist](#)

Means' new collection of stories reveals a mature vision in its explorations of violence, boredom, and death in a restrained, cautionary tone. In "Lightning Man," the protagonist suffers a series of lightning strikes that disrupt his life and eventually send him drifting to another part of the rural Midwest, among glue-sniffing, disillusioned farm boys, to tell of his eight fantastic recurrences, vaguely prophetic. In "A Visit from Jesus," salvation and revelation are tragic and ironic, exposing a man's dark secret, leading his girlfriend to kill him and eventually leading to her own murder. "Michigan Death Trip" also has multiple fatalities--ski accident, car accident, drug overdose, murder--that result mostly from a desire for excitement or escape. The title story moves us into domestic suburbia as a fish's owner, whose family life is disintegrating, wonders if the fish is "aware of his eternal hell, caught in the tank's glass grip." Escaping that glass grip, these stories suggest, though much wished for, does not hold much promise. *James O'Laughlin*

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Review

Achingly intelligent....[David Means] stands among our most gifted younger writers." (New York Times)

"David Means knows his way around the English language. [The Secret Goldfish] aims toward a mythology of the modern heartland...so lovely I want to quote the whole thing." (Los Angeles Times)

"Vivid...Means's last collection was a finalist for the National Book Award...the stories here are just as unsentimental and tightly wound." (New York Times Book Review)

"A darkly comic cache of stories . . . impressively inventive." (Elle)

"With stunning simplicity, Means offers 15 stirring portraits of tragedy, loss, and love." (Esquire)

"An imaginative and penetrating collection." (Publishers Weekly (starred review))

“Riveting...it is Means’ signature talent to view the lives of his characters, and life itself, from somewhere just beyond...” (Jeffrey Eugenides, author of *The Virgin Suicides* and *Middlesex*)

“Lean, agile...There’s not a cheap emotion or a predictable conclusion to be found...humane [and] unaccountably lovely.” (New York Times Book Review on *Assorted Fire Events*)

“A splendid short story collection...from one of the most original writers of short fiction working today (Esquire on *Assorted Fire Events*)

Crystalline.” (The New Yorker on *Assorted Fire Events*)

“We care for the characters as if we have known and loved and detested them forever...An exceptional book.” (Michael Faber on *Assorted Fire Events*)

“Means is a courageous writer, intelligent and funny and humane...the pleasure in reading *THE SECRET GOLDFISH* is tremendous.” (Donald Antrim)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Luis Martin:

This *The Secret Goldfish: Stories* tend to be reliable for you who want to certainly be a successful person, why. The reason of this *The Secret Goldfish: Stories* can be one of many great books you must have will be giving you more than just simple studying food but feed a person with information that perhaps will shock your preceding knowledge. This book is definitely handy, you can bring it all over the place and whenever your conditions throughout the e-book and printed versions. Beside that this *The Secret Goldfish: Stories* forcing you to have an enormous of experience like rich vocabulary, giving you tryout of critical thinking that we know it useful in your day exercise. So , let's have it and revel in reading.

Micheal McDonough:

This book untitled *The Secret Goldfish: Stories* to be one of several books that best seller in this year, that is because when you read this publication you can get a lot of benefit upon it. You will easily to buy this book in the book retailer or you can order it by means of online. The publisher with this book sells the e-book too. It makes you more readily to read this book, because you can read this book in your Touch screen phone. So there is no reason for you to past this e-book from your list.

Christopher Hill:

The book *The Secret Goldfish: Stories* will bring someone to the new experience of reading some sort of book. The author style to spell out the idea is very unique. In the event you try to find new book to see, this book very ideal to you. The book *The Secret Goldfish: Stories* is much recommended to you to see. You can also get the e-book from official web site, so you can easier to read the book.

Rebecca Beal:

People live in this new day time of lifestyle always try to and must have the extra time or they will get large amount of stress from both day to day life and work. So , if we ask do people have extra time, we will say absolutely without a doubt. People is human not really a robot. Then we consult again, what kind of activity have you got when the spare time coming to you of course your answer will certainly unlimited right. Then do you ever try this one, reading ebooks. It can be your alternative throughout spending your spare time, the particular book you have read is usually The Secret Goldfish: Stories.

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