

A dual coming of age in striking black-and-white style

The Churchgoers

BEN GIJSEMANS

Brothers Harold and Carl spend most of the final weeks of the summer of 1994 with their grandparents, where cycling to see horses in a field counts as an outing and computer games have to be played in secret. On Sundays they go with their parents to church, where eleven-year-old Carl is an altar boy. Harold is fourteen and unlike Carl he refuses to put up with their lethargic life any longer. His friend Peter, foulmouthed and 'a bad influence', takes him in tow and reluctantly accepts that Carl always joins them. So young Carl too discovers the delights of puberty, much to Harold's displeasure.

A book to cherish. A highpoint of the year

ENOLA

Ben Gijsemans has reinvented his style for this moving and sometimes funny dual coming-of-age story. With extraordinary page compositions that contain an echo of Chris Ware, we gain a wonderful insight into the relationship between Harold and Carl. The two brothers want only the best for each other, but burgeoning hormones disturb the harmony between them. 'The Churchgoers' is a magnificent portrayal of the tension between child and adolescent in the 1990s, when nudity was still scarce.

**Beautifully composed pages.
Extremely inventive and clearly
created with pleasure**

9E KUNST



AUTHOR



Ben Gijsemans (b. 1989) studied audiovisual arts and comics in Ghent and Brussels. The first chapter of his debut *Hubert* was his thesis. It was very well received at home and abroad. Gijsemans' drawings are incredibly detailed, and more often than not depict loners who feel out of place among other people. Photo © Ben Gijsemans

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