



# Naughty

*Monte Schulz*

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# Naughty

Monte Schulz

Naughty Monte Schulz

**Based on a true story: Monte Schulz's prose novel fictionalizes the hardboiled exploits of a real-life femme fatale, told from her hapless husband's perspective.**

Veteran Joe Krueger is drifting in 1950s California, looking for work wherever he can find it. Tired after a long drive, he stops at a boardinghouse and meets sweet ? and sexy ? Ida, who rents him a room. That very night, Ida tells him "Mother" and "Father" have run their auto over a cliff, then seduces him in the teary aftermath. Smitten now, Joe starts helping out around the boardinghouse, and the two marry. The honeymoon is over when a shocking series of events force the Kruegers down to San Francisco, where Ida is injured in a bus accident. Soon enough, insurance investigators have chased them out of the city to another town where Ida schemes to swindle a motel owner out of her property. Next, the motel owner and her crippled husband are missing, a water softener salesman is shot, and workmen are digging holes in Joe Krueger's basement. Schulz shifts gears from his recent Jazz Age Trilogy, combining the exquisitely wrought language of those novels and a straight-for-the-throat pulpy narrative. Imagine the pathology laid bare in Don DeLillo's *Libra* fused with the sordid and desperate criminality of Jim Thompson's *The Getaway*, and the black humor of Bruce Jay Friedman. Based on the true story of Iva Kroegeer and her husband Ralph, who were indicted for the murders of Mildred and Jay Arneson in 1962, *Naughty* culminates in a trial: Ida, whose crimes have (only just) begun to catch up to her, is at her zenith, pleading insanity and playing the part to the hilt. The reader learns Joe's and Ida's fates via excerpts from authentic court documents. *Naughty* explores exactly what happens when "a swell-looking babe" is unleashed on real life, leaving marks, patsies, and bodies in her wake.

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