



Graphic Novel Study Group  
Study Guides

## ***Hicksville* by Dylan Horrocks and *The Fall* By Ed Brubaker and Jason Lutes**

Study guide by Sean Ford

1. *Hicksville* was originally published as a serialized story in Dylan Horrocks' mini-comic *Pickle*. Do you think Horrocks was able to tell the story effectively in chapters? Are there any advantages to telling a longer narrative in a serialized format?
2. In many ways, *Hicksville* is a comic about comics. Do you find the work to be too self-referential, or is it a valid exploration of the medium? Does the comic-within-a-comic trick work or not work for you? Pick an example.
3. Horrocks uses a pretty simple drawing style throughout *Hicksville*, though his artwork clearly improves by the latter chapters. Does his style work for you, or is it a hindrance? Is a consistent style necessary to pull off a graphic novel?
4. As much as *Hicksville* is about comics, it is also about New Zealand. Does Horrocks create a convincing version of New Zealand? How does place work in the story in general?
5. At the heart of the story is the mystery of what Dick Burger did to anger the residents of *Hicksville*. Was this mystery compelling to you? Did you feel it was told/set up effectively?
6. Do you feel the love triangle between Grace, Danton and Kupe was a valuable part of the story? Did it feel like more interesting or less interesting mystery than the Burger/comics one?
7. At the end of the story, after the lighthouse is explained, Kupe gives Leonard Batts a copy of the James Cook comic about discovering New Zealand and mapmaking. How do you feel this mapmaking comic relates to the idea of the lighthouse? Are the two related? If yes, how do you feel this works? If no, did you feel this section didn't work for the story?
8. *The Fall* is a very narrative-heavy story told without many explanatory narration boxes. Was it hard to pick up the story mainly through dialogue, character expressions and "silent" panels? Do you feel this is a good/bad technique for involving a reader in a mystery or did you find yourself not noticing?
9. In *The Fall* Jason Lutes uses a lot of panels on each page, working off a four-tier structure, but often adding tiers and panels within that basic structure. How do you think this page layout affects the pacing and the way the story unfolds?
10. Both *The Fall* and *Hicksville* set up mysteries that in many ways are dependent on creating believable characters with believable motivations. Pick one character from either work and explain why you thought that character did or didn't work for the story.
11. BONUS! - The library in the lighthouse in *Hicksville* contains unpublished, undiscovered works by great artists from all of history. What dream work would you look for if you had the chance to search the stacks of Kupe's lighthouse library?