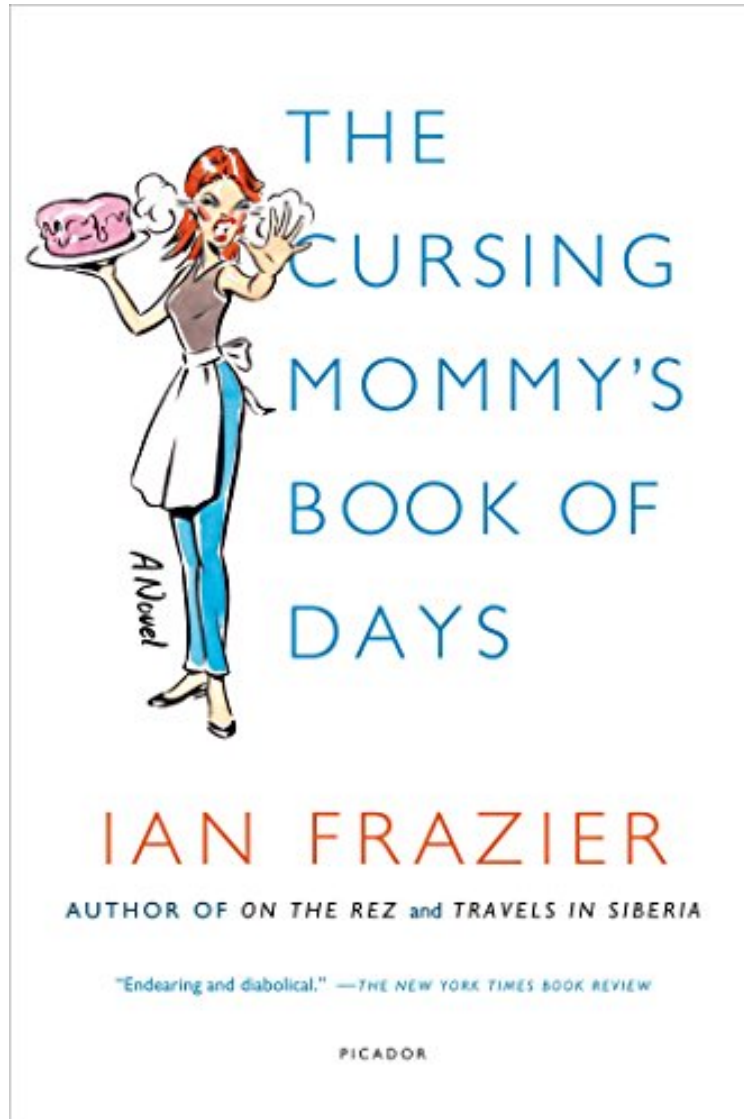


The Cursing Mommy's Book of Days: A Novel

Ian Frazier

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Ian Frazier : The Cursing Mommy's Book of Days: A Novel before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Cursing Mommy's Book of Days: A Novel:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Fun Times With The Cursing MommyBy T. McKearnTwo Thurber awards has Ian Frazier, count 'em: two...more than anybody else on Earth! And sometimes I don't think that's enough. Frazier's prose is a pleasure when he's writing about whatever has taken his interest that particular season: Russia, the Great Plains of America, his family history, angling...I have no interest in fishing, but I had to read The Fish's Eye. His

choice of words and phrasing, his point of view and some intrinsic sense of delicacy makes for an enjoyable read, no matter the topic. But it's the Shouts Murmurs section of The New Yorker Magazine where he shines brightest for me. Keeping in mind that humor is subjective--One Man's Adam Sandler is hilarious, but is Another Man's Egregious Stain on the Contour Sheet of Civilization--Frazier is a master humorist. His stuff builds slowly, lays a meticulous base and from that, the laughables have wide room to maneuver. That being said, 'The Cursing Mommy's Book of Days' begins exquisitely: the title character would like to see herself as a New Age June Cleaver but falls short through dint of a weekly intake of several quarts of booze, a hair-trigger temper that puts her into psychotic rages against Republicans and whatever craftwork she is currently performing, and of course, a vocabulary that would blow the bark off a full grown oak tree. Her family, friends and enemies are also wonderfully delineated, each and every one a morbid wreck. The book's plot is framework is simply her journal entries from January to December. If you like sketch comedy on television with recurring characters a la 'Saturday Night Live', you may well enjoy the reiterations that take place in this novel. The Cursing Mommy attempts to perform a simple homemaker's project, like patching a pair of jeans or baking a chocolate pie, each and every time leading to failure, horrific bouts of swearing, property damage and ending with the Cursing Mommy sprawled out on the ground, pinned down with rubble, often as not. Variations on a comedic theme strike me as antithetical to humor: expected punch lines have no impact. But that's just me. Overall, this is seriously accomplished humor. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. The Cursing Momm's Book of Days: A Novel By Frank@nashville The thoughts expressed by The Cursing Mommy just catch me and elicit a laugh-out-loud reaction before I even think about where I am when reading. The combination of rage at the most common, everyday minor occurrences with the creative cursing and dragging in of the entire Bush administration (except for Condi Rice of course) is nothing short of hilarious - this is a most entertaining read. Plus having it on my Kindle Fire just makes it that much better! I highly recommend this book for the adult that is open minded enough to appreciate the humor. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A great comedy from a very funny writer By T. O'Rourke Ian Frazier is a very clever man and every book I have read of his has made me smile while also learning a lot. The learning on this book is a little more limited than others, but it is funnier than most of the others as well. His "Cursing Mommy" character grew on me over many reads in New Yorkers. I try not to curse myself, at least out loud, and perhaps the Cursing Mommy has that as a goal now and then as she deals with her slightly chaotic life as a stay at home mom in suburbia. One of her boys is in counseling and her weekly visits there (7am Sunday morning!) are always funny, but add on a husband obsessed, nearly tragically, with capacitors, another son with anxiety, near constant troubles with schools, a book club that hates right wing Republicans, and a suitor who always seems to turn up at the wrong times and you have lots of sidelines to enjoy. His columns with the Cursing Mommy usually have her trying to tell us how to do something arts and crafts, often while consuming alcoholic beverages, and, reliably, things go wrong in a terrible way that has her cursing, flogging Bush Administration officials, and falling down. I never got tired of them, though other readers might, because I loved what she said about Cheney, Rumsfeld, and even Ari Fleischer as things got worse. This is not a book for teens or even younger housewives; the mature and wizened, especially those wise enough to have despised the GWB presidency will enjoy it the most.

A hilarious and delightfully profane novel about the daily frustrations of family life Based on his widely read columns for The New Yorker, Ian Frazier's uproarious first novel, The Cursing Mommy's Book of Days, centers on a profoundly memorable character, sprung from an impressively fertile imagination. Structured as a daybook of sorts, the book follows the Cursing Mommy's beleaguered wife of Larry and mother of two young boys as she offers tips on how to do various tasks around the home, only to end up on the ground, cursing, surrounded by broken glass. Her voice is somewhere between Phyllis Diller's and Sylvia Plath's: a hilariously desperate housewife with a taste for swearing and large glasses of red wine, who speaks to the frustrations of everyday life. In The Cursing Mommy's Book of Days, Frazier colors his fiction with grace and aplomb, as well as an extra helping of his trademark wicked wit. The Cursing Mommy's failures and weaknesses are our own and Frazier gives them a loving, satirical spin that is uniquely his own.

"Endearing and diabolical." The New York Times Book "[Ian Frazier] has created a comic-strip heroine for the chattering classes, a creature both endearing and diabolical, especially when disaster looms. Which is pretty much all the time." The New York Times Book "[The Cursing Mommy's Book of Days] is not only very funny but may actually remind you of the occasional frustrations of your own everyday life. Sit down on the floor with a big scotch and read it." The Boston Globe "The Cursing Mommy's Book of Days may begin as a gag but it ends as a meditation on the gag that is midlife.... In this warm and deceptively political book, Ian Frazier gives us a chance to laugh at this dark truth, before we dive back into it." The Cleveland Plain Dealer "Ian Frazier is funny and clever and a wonderful distraction... With the Cursing Mommy, Frazier... has created a comic-strip heroine for the chattering classes, a creature both endearing and diabolical, especially when disaster looms... But here's the great thing about the Cursing Mommy, which perhaps accounts for her popularity--she's a caricature, but she isn't a joke. Thanks to Frazier's generous and gentle spirit, she isn't some suburban hot mess, though she is suburban and hot, and surely some kind of a mess. But

she's also eternally optimistic." ?Judith Newman, The New York Times Book "Ian Frazier is not a mommy, and as his best friend I can swear that he is not a curser in any way, yet this book, The Cursing Mommy's Book of Days, is the funniest book I have ever read on the subject of moms and the crazy bliss that makes up their life. Being and Nothingness? Read this instead, for it is even funnier than Frazier's other book: African-American Women Writers in the Diaspora: A Reconsideration of Morrison, Walker, Dove, and Frazier." ?Jamaica Kincaid About the Author IAN FRAZIER is the author of Great Plains, The Fish's Eye, On the Rez, Family, Nobody Better, Better Than Nobody, Gone to New York, and Travels in Siberia, as well as Coyote v. Acme, Dating Your Mom, and Lamentations of the Father, all published by FSG. A frequent contributor to The New Yorker, he lives in Montclair, New Jersey. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. JANUARY TUESDAY, JANUARY 4 And so, we set out. Ideally, this daybook would have started on Saturday morning, January 1, but Larry and I had to be in Encino. A client of Larry's invites the whole office out there to stay over in his gigantic house for New Year's Eve and New Year's Day every year. This client brings in a huge amount of business and Larry says we might be sleeping in the car if it weren't for him, so of course we have to go. And I do mean we, because the client is a big believer in wives attending, though they don't have much to do. Husbands, on the other hand, the client isn't so crazy about. That's another story. As a result, we weren't here for New Year's Day. We flew back on the second, and on the third I drove to the assisted living to see my fucking father. TUESDAY, JANUARY 4 I feel that I must start this day, month, and year over again. Just thinking about that weekend and then the trip to the goddamn horrible assisted living makes me want to put that nonsense far, far behind. I will clear my head, get a refill on my coffee, and go back to the kitchen table where I began. We must always remember to be grateful for what we have. On this winter morning, with the temperature in the twenties and snow covering the ground outside, I am grateful just to be sitting here sheltered and indoors. My eight-year-old, Kyle, breaks out in hives and faints if you look at him cross-eyed, and he's probably doing exactly that right now in gym class, and any minute the phone will ring and it will be the snotty assistant principal, and I will have to go out and hope the car will start so I can pick up my swooning son. But that hasn't happened yet. Who was it who called worry "negative prayer"? I will keep my hopes and prayers positive on this first day (fourth, technically, as I already explained) of our journey year. The children had such fun in the snow yesterday. I was at the fucking assisted living, Larry was down in the basement doing something or other with his boxes of capacitors, and the kids had an absolute ball outside, he said. God knows he probably wasn't paying much attention. From where I sit in my favorite kitchen chair I can see the snowman they made. I am grateful for my children's happiness and the small monument to it remaining on our front lawn. Actually, as I look more closely at it, it's not so small. Moving to the front window I wonder how they ever built a snowman that high! In fact, it doesn't really resemble a snowman ... The reason it does not resemble a snowman, I now see, is that it is not a snowman, it is a snow penis. A giant snow penis on my front lawn. How could I not have noticed it before? I got back from the fucking assisted living after dark, that's why. They did quite an inventive job of it, with large snow testicles, as well. This must have been Trevor's idea. He is going on twelve, going on whatever age you can be sent to prison. He got poor Kyle to go along. Those of you who keep up with my regular Cursing Mommy columns know that at some point in almost every one of them—okay, every one of them—the Cursing Mommy regrettably becomes frustrated with some aspect of daily life, and she flips out, screams curses, breaks things, gives people the finger, etc. Today, on the first or fourth day of our journey year, the Cursing Mommy is not going to do any of that. Serenity is the new watchword. I am now simply going to pull on Larry's boots, put my coat on over my bathrobe, go out in the front yard, and knock the revolting snow penis down. Now I am in the yard and I smack the snow penis—why did I forget my mittens?—and ouch! Shit! The thing is solid ice! It has frozen solid overnight, I see. So I am giving the snow penis a good swift kick and **GODDAMN FUCKING STUPID SNOW PENIS! FUCKING GODDAMN THING IS LIKE—OUCH!!—FUCKING CEMENT! I'LL KICK YOU DOWN IF IT'S THE FUCKING LAST THING ... AHHH! SHIT! I SLIPPED ON THIS FUCKING SLIPPERY ICE AND I'VE FALLEN IN THE SNOW!! LYING IN MY FUCKING FRONT YARD IN MY FUCKING BATHROBE! FUCKING GODDAMN LARRY! FUCK GEORGE BUSH! FUCKING GODDAMN JOHN BOEHNER, THAT FUCKING ASSHOLE!!...** [pause] In just a minute I will get up and go inside. Let fucking Larry knock the fucking thing down when he gets home. It will melt eventually anyway. Oh, what a fucking horrible day this is going to be. WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5 "Open thou my lips, oh Lord, that my mouth may show forth thy praise." Do we always remember to praise? I'm not talking about praising our spouse or our kids or our coworkers, the "self-esteem routine," though of course that's important, too. I mean praising the power or powers that placed us and everything around us upon this spinning cinder we call our earth—yes, I mean exalting generally the simple beauty of the world. We should devote ourselves to this every instant from the moment we awake. First thing when we open our eyes in the morning we must say, "Open thou our lips, that our mouths may show forth thy praise!" I wish I could always be conscientious about that, but sometimes, unfortunately, I am not. For example, this morning Larry was up, sitting on the edge of the bed and putting salve on his toe fungus, and I woke and looked at the ceiling and sighed, and I forgot to praise. Instead, I said, "Shit." Of course, I am the Cursing Mommy. THURSDAY, JANUARY 6 Hello again, my friends, on another dark winter's morning. My, it is cozy here in the kitchen—and out on the patio, and even in the yard, for that matter, where according to our outdoor thermometer the temperature is a shirtsleeve sixty-eight degrees.

Thank goodness the “snow sculpture” is no more. Yesterday’s torrential rains that also filled part of the basement washed most of it away. Often all we must do in life is wait, and our wishes will be fulfilled. This morning I am counting my blessings. That goddamn snow penis is gone. Water got in some of the boxes of Larry’s capacitors down in the basement, apparently. I suppose that’s not a blessing, technically, but what the hell. Do you sometimes have your first cocktail at 8:15 a.m.?

SATURDAY, JANUARY 8 I meant to write an entry for yesterday, but Kyle stayed home from school. All of Christmas vacation the kid is a picture of health, and then when classes start again, suddenly he feels poorly. The awful assistant principal did, in fact, call. I couldn’t find my cell phone, which I spend my life looking for, and all at once there’s this muffled ring and the cat goes shooting about five feet in the air. He’d been sleeping on it. Molkowski, assistant principal, on the line. Kyle was in a swoon again in gym, no surprise. Molkowski gave me the usual blah-blah-blah and I went and got him. I kept him indoors all of yesterday, but I made him go back this morning. His school now has some goddamn mandatory fucking Clean the Boiler Room Day every Saturday, because they repealed the school levy. Parents are supposed to help, too. I went along and took some rags, and Kyle and I made a morning of it. He managed not to faint from the horror of it all, poor guy.

MONDAY, JANUARY 10 One old tradition I absolutely adore is that of devoting every Monday to the family’s weekly baking. Bright and early every Monday, my grandma Pat used to get up, pack a lunch for Grampa Hub, give him his bicarb, and shoo him out the door. Then she would light a Chesterfield and start to bake. And I do mean bake! Gracious, what that woman couldn’t do. Grandma Pat is long dead of emphysema, but I can still smell the delicious and enticing aroma of her kitchen, mixed with secondhand smoke, as I used to hang on her apron strings and watch her every gesture. Pies, cakes, fruit crumbles, strudels, lebkuchen dusted with powdered sugar and the odd bit of cigarette ash—all appeared effortlessly, as if by magic. She never used a lighter. While she rolled dough with her left hand, she could fold a match from a matchbook and light it with her right! She also did all the family’s bread baking—white and brown bread, both—and would never think of buying store-bought. Can you excuse me for a second? It’s the goddamn phone.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 11 Sabrina from the fucking goddamn assisted living cheerfully ruined yesterday by calling just to let me know that “Dad” had assaulted another patient. I had to drop everything and go over there, natch. Enough said. Let us return to: “The Cursing Mommy’s Baking Day (continued)” God, I hate my fucking father. I’m sorry, that was what the shrinks call an “intrusive thought,” and it has no place in the making of this pie. Excuse me. Today, just because I thought it would be a hoot, I am following a tasty-sounding recipe for chocolate pie that I found printed on a pie pan I bought yesterday at Food Superior. I get a lot of my best recipes from just such unexpected places. I have already melted the semisweet chocolate in the microwave, as instructed, and added a cup of strong coffee, and then combined these with the instant chocolate pie filling, for an extra chocolaty flavor. I then crushed the gingersnaps for the crust, and they are on this wax paper here. I now spread the crushed gingersnaps evenly in the pie pan. After this step, I carefully pour in the filling mixture. Do I now add the extra cookie pieces to the top, or do I do that after baking? And to what temperature do I preheat the oven? And how long do I bake the pie? I will consult the recipe. And now I see there is a problem. The recipe is on the bottom of the pie pan. Which I have just covered with gingersnap crust and a two-inch-deep layer of chocolate filling. Oh, fuck everything. I fucking give up. Why did I not see that the **FUCKING MORONS PUT ...**