

The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum

The Girl Next Door by Jack Ketchum: A Haunting Tale of Horror and Humanity

Every now and then, a book emerges that leaves a lasting imprint on its readers, challenging their perceptions and evoking profound emotions. "The Girl Next Door" by Jack Ketchum is one such novel. Known for its harrowing yet compelling narrative, this book explores the darkest corners of human nature through the lens of a chilling true story adaptation. In this SEO-optimized article, we delve into the essence of Jack Ketchum's masterpiece and why it continues to resonate with horror enthusiasts and literary critics alike.

Background and Inspiration

Published in 1989, "The Girl Next Door" is inspired by the real-life torture and murder of Sylvia Likens, a case that shocked America. Jack Ketchum, the pen name of American author Dallas Mayr, uses this grim historical event as the foundation for his fictional work, amplifying the psychological horror to expose the fragility and cruelty present in everyday environments.

Plot Overview

The novel centers on Meg Loughlin and her sister Susan, orphaned after their parents die in a car accident. They move in with their aunt Ruth, a woman whose kindness masks a sinister capacity for abuse. As the story unfolds, Meg suffers unspeakable horrors at the hands of Ruth and the neighborhood children, who are manipulated into becoming perpetrators. The narrative is intense and unrelenting, confronting readers with the extremes of human cruelty and the endurance of the human spirit.

Thematic Elements and Literary Style

Ketchum's storytelling is direct and visceral, avoiding sensationalism while presenting unvarnished truths. Themes of innocence lost, the corrupting influence of power, and the bystander effect permeate the book. The novel also critiques societal apathy and the failure to protect the vulnerable, prompting readers to reflect on the nature of evil and complicity.

Reception and Impact

While "The Girl Next Door" is often categorized within the horror genre, it transcends typical conventions by grounding its terror in realistic scenarios. The book has attracted both praise for its brave storytelling and controversy for its disturbing content. It has been adapted into a film, further cementing its place in horror culture. Readers often find themselves haunted long after finishing the novel, a testament to Ketchum's skill in crafting emotionally impactful narratives.

Why Read "The Girl Next Door"?

If you seek horror that challenges your moral compass and provokes deep thought, this novel is a compelling choice. It serves as a grim reminder of the darkness lurking behind closed doors and the importance of vigilance and empathy in our communities.

In conclusion, Jack Ketchum's "The Girl Next Door" remains a powerful, unsettling exploration of human depravity and resilience. Its gripping narrative and profound themes make it a significant work in horror literature, worthy of discussion and study.

The Girl Next Door by Jack Ketchum: A Chilling Tale of Horror and Suspense

In the realm of horror literature, few names command as much respect and fear as Jack Ketchum. His ability to weave tales that are both deeply unsettling and profoundly thought-provoking has earned him a dedicated following. Among his most notable works is *The Girl Next Door*, a novel that delves into the darkest corners of human nature and the horrors that can lurk behind the facade of suburban life.

The Plot: A Haunting Exploration of Evil

The Girl Next Door is based on the true story of the torture and murder of Sylvia Likens, a teenager who was entrusted to the care of a family in Indiana in the 1960s. The novel explores the events leading up to and surrounding this tragic event, offering a chilling look at the psychological and social factors that contributed to the crime.

The story is narrated by a neighbor who witnesses the events unfold, providing a firsthand account of the descent into madness and violence. The novel's power lies in its ability to make the reader confront the banality of evil and the ways in which ordinary people can become complicit in extraordinary acts of cruelty.

Themes and Motifs

The Girl Next Door is rich with themes that resonate deeply with readers. One of the most prominent themes is the exploration of evil and its many forms. Ketchum does not portray evil as a supernatural force but rather as something that can emerge from the most ordinary of circumstances and people.

Another significant theme is the role of society and community in perpetuating violence. The novel highlights how a community's silence and complicity can enable and exacerbate acts of cruelty. The neighbors' indifference and the family's abuse of power are stark reminders of the dangers of looking the other way.

Character Development and Psychological Depth

Ketchum's characters are complex and deeply flawed, making them both relatable and terrifying. The protagonist, a neighbor who witnesses the events, is a particularly compelling figure. His struggle to reconcile his moral compass with the horrors he witnesses adds a layer of psychological depth to the story.

The antagonists, the family members who torment Sylvia, are equally complex. Ketchum does not portray them as one-dimensional villains but rather as products of their environment, with their own motivations and

psychological issues. This nuanced portrayal makes the story all the more chilling and thought-provoking.

The Impact and Legacy of *The Girl Next Door*

The Girl Next Door has left a lasting impact on the horror genre and has been praised for its unflinching portrayal of evil and its exploration of the darker aspects of human nature. The novel has been adapted into a film, further cementing its place in popular culture.

Ketchum's work continues to be relevant and thought-provoking, serving as a reminder of the importance of confronting the darker aspects of our society and ourselves. *The Girl Next Door* is a testament to the power of literature to explore the complexities of human nature and the horrors that can emerge from the most ordinary of circumstances.

Analyzing "The Girl Next Door" by Jack Ketchum: A Study of Horror Rooted in Reality

For years, people have debated the meaning and relevance of Jack Ketchum's novel "The Girl Next Door" and the discussion isn't slowing down. As an investigative journalist, this article seeks to unpack the contextual background, causes, and consequences connected to this haunting work, exploring why it remains significant decades after its publication.

Context and Historical Roots

At its core, "The Girl Next Door" is not just a work of horror fiction but a reflection of real-life atrocities. Inspired by the tragic case of Sylvia Likens, the novel draws from one of the most notorious child abuse cases in American history. This grounding in fact provides the book with a disturbing authenticity that challenges readers to confront uncomfortable truths about human behavior and societal failure.

Causes: The Anatomy of Abuse and Complicity

The novel methodically details how abuse can manifest and escalate within seemingly normal social environments. The character of Ruth epitomizes the dangerous power imbalances within families, while the neighborhood children embody the terrifying ease with which cruelty can spread and be normalized. Ketchum exposes the mechanisms of manipulation, peer pressure, and moral disengagement that allow such abuse to persist unchecked. This portrayal raises critical questions about the psychological and social factors that contribute to collective inaction in the face of suffering.

Consequences and Societal Reflection

The consequences of the events depicted in "The Girl Next Door" are twofold—on the individual and societal levels. The novel starkly illustrates the devastating impact of prolonged abuse on victims, while simultaneously serving as a critique of societal negligence. It forces readers and communities to examine their roles in either perpetuating or preventing such tragedies. The enduring cultural impact, including film adaptations and academic discussions, shows how the novel has influenced public discourse on child protection, abuse, and the ethics of representation in horror fiction.

Ethical and Literary Implications

There is ongoing debate about the ethical boundaries in portraying abuse so graphically. Some argue that Ketchum's unflinching depiction serves as a necessary confrontation with reality, while others feel it risks sensationalizing trauma. Additionally, the novel's position within the horror genre blurs lines between entertainment and social commentary, challenging readers to reconcile their consumption of fictional horror with real-world suffering.

Conclusion

"The Girl Next Door" stands as a powerful case study in how fiction can reflect and influence societal understanding of abuse and complicity. Its roots in reality, combined with its literary execution, create a work that demands both emotional and intellectual engagement. For journalists, scholars, and readers alike, it offers a lens through which to examine the complexities of human cruelty and the vital importance of vigilance and empathy in society.

The Girl Next Door by Jack Ketchum: An In-Depth Analysis

Jack Ketchum's *The Girl Next Door* is a novel that transcends the boundaries of traditional horror fiction. Based on the true story of Sylvia Likens, the novel offers a harrowing exploration of evil, society, and the human psyche. This article delves into the themes, characters, and impact of *The Girl Next Door*, providing an in-depth analysis of Ketchum's masterpiece.

The Historical Context and Ketchum's Adaptation

The story of Sylvia Likens is one of the most disturbing true crime cases in American history. In 1965, Sylvia, a 16-year-old girl, was entrusted to the care of the Indiana Bender family. Over the course of several months, she was subjected to unimaginable torture and abuse, ultimately leading to her death. The case shocked the nation and raised questions about the nature of evil and the role of society in perpetuating violence.

Jack Ketchum, a master of horror fiction, adapted this true story into a novel that is both a tribute to Sylvia Likens and a chilling exploration of the events surrounding her death. Ketchum's ability to blend fact with fiction creates a narrative that is both deeply disturbing and profoundly thought-provoking.

Themes of Evil and Complicity

The Girl Next Door explores the theme of evil in a way that is both nuanced and unsettling. Ketchum does not portray evil as a supernatural force but rather as something that can emerge from the most ordinary of circumstances and people. The novel highlights the banality of evil and the ways in which ordinary people can become complicit in extraordinary acts of cruelty.

The role of society and community in perpetuating violence is another significant theme in the novel. The neighbors' indifference and the family's abuse of power are stark reminders of the dangers of looking the other way. Ketchum's exploration of these themes serves as a powerful commentary on the state of society and the importance of confronting the darker aspects of our nature.

Character Analysis: The Protagonist and Antagonists

The protagonist of *The Girl Next Door* is a neighbor who witnesses the events unfold. His struggle to reconcile his moral compass with the horrors he witnesses adds a layer of psychological depth to the story. The protagonist's journey is one of moral awakening and the realization of the complicity of silence.

The antagonists, the family members who torment Sylvia, are equally complex. Ketchum does not portray them as one-dimensional villains but rather as products of their environment, with their own motivations and psychological issues. This nuanced portrayal makes the story all the more chilling and thought-provoking.

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The way people approach learning has changed significantly over the past decade. Information is no longer something that must be carefully planned around time, place, or availability. Instead, knowledge is increasingly woven into everyday life. In this environment, the ability to download *The Girl Next Door* Jack Ketchum has become an important part of how individuals read, study, and grow intellectually.

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Students also experience clear benefits. Academic success often depends on access to reliable study materials. Digital PDFs support offline learning, repeated review, and efficient note-taking. The ability to organize files digitally reduces stress and improves focus, allowing students to manage multiple subjects more effectively.

Digital access supports diverse learning styles. Some readers prefer structured, linear reading, while others focus on specific sections or revisit content selectively. Digital formats accommodate both approaches. Readers can skim, search, annotate, or study deeply depending on their goals and preferences.

Accessibility features further expand the reach of digital books. Adjustable font sizes, screen reader compatibility, night modes, and text-to-speech functions help ensure that *The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum* remains usable for readers with different needs. Inclusive design makes knowledge more equitable and widely available.

Environmental considerations add another perspective. Producing and transporting printed books requires significant resources. While digital technology has its own environmental footprint, distributing books electronically often reduces paper usage and physical transportation. Downloading *The Girl Next Door Jack*

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Organization is another understated advantage of digital libraries. Files can be categorized, labeled, backed up, and retrieved instantly. Readers can build long-term collections without physical clutter. When information is organized effectively, it becomes easier to revisit ideas and build upon previous learning.

Global accessibility is one of the most powerful aspects of digital books. Readers from different countries and backgrounds can access the same material without delay. This shared access fosters dialogue, collaboration, and cultural exchange. Downloading *The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum* connects individuals to a broader global learning community.

Digital literacy naturally develops through regular interaction with digital resources. Learning how to evaluate sources, manage information, and use reading tools responsibly is now a vital skill. Engaging with *The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum* in digital form helps users build these competencies through practical experience.

Perhaps the most meaningful change lies in how digital access influences attitudes toward learning. When information is easy to obtain, curiosity feels encouraged rather than inconvenient. Readers are more willing to explore new topics, revisit familiar ideas, and continue learning over time.

This mindset supports lifelong learning. Education becomes an ongoing process shaped by evolving interests and challenges. Having *The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum* available digitally ensures that learning remains flexible and adaptable throughout different stages of life.

In conclusion, the ability to download *The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum* reflects a broader transformation in how knowledge is shared and experienced. Digital access offers convenience, affordability, functionality, and ethical distribution, making learning more inclusive and practical. When used responsibly, *The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum* becomes more than a digital book—it becomes a trusted resource for reflection, growth, and continuous intellectual development in an ever-changing world.

Questions & Answers About the girl next door jack ketchum

No	Question	Answer
1	What inspired Jack Ketchum to write "The Girl Next Door"?	Jack Ketchum was inspired by the real-life case of Sylvia Likens, a young girl who suffered extreme abuse, which he fictionalized in the novel to explore themes of cruelty and innocence.
2	How does "The Girl Next Door" differ from typical horror novels?	"The Girl Next Door" differs by grounding its horror in realistic and psychological trauma rather than supernatural elements, focusing on human capacity for evil.
3	What are the main themes explored in "The Girl Next Door"?	The novel explores themes such as child abuse, innocence lost, complicity, the bystander effect, and societal failure to protect vulnerable individuals.
4	Has "The Girl Next Door" been adapted into other media?	Yes, the novel has been adapted into a film released in 2007, which brought the story to a wider audience while maintaining its disturbing themes.

5	What ethical questions does "The Girl Next Door" raise regarding horror fiction?	The novel raises questions about the portrayal of real-life abuse in fiction, including concerns about sensationalism versus raising awareness and the impact on survivors.
6	Who is the protagonist of "The Girl Next Door"?	The protagonist is Meg Loughlin, a young girl who, along with her sister, moves in with their abusive aunt, around whom the story's central horrors revolve.
7	What impact did "The Girl Next Door" have on horror literature?	"The Girl Next Door" influenced horror literature by pushing boundaries on realism and psychological depth, inspiring authors to explore more socially relevant and unsettling themes.
8	Is "The Girl Next Door" suitable for all readers?	No, due to its graphic depiction of abuse and disturbing content, it is recommended for mature readers who can handle intense psychological horror.
9	What role do the neighborhood children play in the novel?	The neighborhood children are manipulated into participating in the abuse, illustrating how peer pressure and group dynamics can perpetuate cruelty.
10	How does Jack Ketchum's writing style contribute to the novel's impact?	Ketchum's direct and unflinching writing style creates a visceral experience that confronts readers with harsh realities, enhancing the emotional and psychological impact.
11	What inspired Jack Ketchum to write <i>The Girl Next Door</i> ?	Jack Ketchum was inspired to write <i>The Girl Next Door</i> by the true story of Sylvia Likens, a teenager who was tortured and murdered by the family she was entrusted to in the 1960s. The case shocked the nation and raised questions about the nature of evil and the role of society in perpetuating violence.
12	How does <i>The Girl Next Door</i> explore the theme of evil?	<i>The Girl Next Door</i> explores the theme of evil by portraying it as something that can emerge from the most ordinary of circumstances and people. Ketchum highlights the banality of evil and the ways in which ordinary people can become complicit in extraordinary acts of cruelty.
13	What role does society play in <i>The Girl Next Door</i> ?	Society plays a significant role in <i>The Girl Next Door</i> by enabling and exacerbating acts of cruelty. The neighbors' indifference and the family's abuse of power are stark reminders of the dangers of looking the other way.
14	Who is the protagonist of <i>The Girl Next Door</i> ?	The protagonist of <i>The Girl Next Door</i> is a neighbor who witnesses the events unfold. His struggle to reconcile his moral compass with the horrors he witnesses adds a layer of psychological depth to the story.
15	What is the impact of <i>The Girl Next Door</i> on the horror genre?	<i>The Girl Next Door</i> has left a lasting impact on the horror genre by offering an unflinching portrayal of evil and exploring the darker aspects of human nature. The novel has been praised for its psychological depth and its ability to confront the complexities of human nature.
16	How does Jack Ketchum portray the antagonists in <i>The Girl Next Door</i> ?	Jack Ketchum portrays the antagonists in <i>The Girl Next Door</i> as complex figures who are products of their environment, with their own motivations and psychological issues. This nuanced portrayal makes the story all the more chilling and thought-provoking.

17	What themes does <i>The Girl Next Door</i> explore?	<i>The Girl Next Door</i> explores themes of evil, society, and the human psyche. The novel highlights the banality of evil and the role of society in perpetuating violence, offering a chilling exploration of the darker aspects of human nature.
18	How does <i>The Girl Next Door</i> compare to other works by Jack Ketchum?	<i>The Girl Next Door</i> is considered one of Jack Ketchum's most powerful and thought-provoking works. While it shares themes of horror and psychological depth with his other novels, its exploration of true crime and the complexities of human nature sets it apart.
19	What is the significance of the title <i>The Girl Next Door</i> ?	The title <i>The Girl Next Door</i> signifies the banality of evil and the ways in which horrors can emerge from the most ordinary of circumstances. It highlights the idea that evil can lurk behind the facade of suburban life and that ordinary people can become complicit in extraordinary acts of cruelty.
20	How has <i>The Girl Next Door</i> been received by critics and readers?	<i>The Girl Next Door</i> has been praised by critics and readers for its unflinching portrayal of evil and its exploration of the darker aspects of human nature. The novel has been described as a masterpiece of horror fiction and a powerful commentary on the state of society.

american horror authors, banality of evil, books like the girl next door, child abuse in literature, dark fiction, gritty horror fiction, horror fiction, horror novels based on true stories, jack ketchum, jack ketchum novels, psychological horror, psychological horror books, suburban horror, sylvia likens, sylvia likens case, the girl next door book, the girl next door movie, the girl next door novel, true crime horror

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The digital format of The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum eBooks allows rapid revision, correction, and content expansion.

The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum eBooks function as stable knowledge repositories.

Readers often experience higher consistency when learning with The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum eBooks compared to traditional formats, as digital access removes common barriers such as location and time constraints.

The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum eBooks make complex subjects approachable through clear organization.

Readers often return to The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum eBooks as reference tools.

Structured chapters guide readers through logical progression.

The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum eBooks are widely used in professional development programs.

From an educational standpoint, The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum eBooks encourage active reading through annotation, highlighting, and structured navigation tools.

Tips for reading The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum

Reading The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum in digital format can be a highly effective and enjoyable experience when done with the right approach. Unlike traditional printed books, digital reading offers flexibility, customization, and powerful tools that can improve comprehension and retention. However, without proper habits, digital reading can also lead to fatigue or reduced focus. Applying practical reading strategies helps you get the most value from The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum.

One of the most important tips is to break your reading into manageable sessions. Long, uninterrupted reading on a screen can strain the eyes and reduce concentration. Instead of reading for several hours at once, divide your time into shorter sessions with regular breaks. This approach helps maintain focus, improves understanding, and prevents mental exhaustion. Using techniques such as the Pomodoro method—reading for 25–30 minutes followed by a short break—can be particularly effective.

Using bookmarks is another simple yet powerful habit. Most digital reading platforms allow you to bookmark chapters, sections, or specific pages. Bookmarks make it easy to return to important parts of The Girl Next Door

Jack Ketchum without scrolling or searching manually. This is especially useful for long documents, study materials, or reference-based reading where you may need to revisit certain sections frequently.

Highlighting key points and adding annotations can significantly improve comprehension. Digital highlights allow you to visually mark important ideas, definitions, or summaries. Adding notes in your own words helps reinforce understanding and creates a personalized study guide. Over time, these highlights and annotations turn *The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum* into an interactive learning resource rather than passive reading material.

Adjusting screen settings plays a crucial role in reading comfort. Most reading apps allow you to customize font size, font style, line spacing, and background color. Increasing font size and line spacing can reduce eye strain, while using dark mode or sepia backgrounds may improve readability in low-light environments. Adjusting screen brightness to match ambient lighting further enhances comfort and protects eye health during long reading sessions.

Creating a focused reading environment

A distraction-free environment improves reading efficiency and enjoyment. When reading *The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum*, try to minimize notifications from messaging apps or social media. Many devices offer “focus mode” or “do not disturb” settings that help maintain concentration. Choosing a quiet, comfortable location with proper lighting also contributes to a better reading experience.

For study or professional reading, setting clear goals before starting can be beneficial. Decide whether you are reading for general understanding, detailed analysis, or quick reference. Clear objectives help guide how deeply you engage with the content and which sections deserve closer attention.

Access Formats

The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum is often available in multiple formats, each offering unique advantages. Understanding these formats helps you choose the one that best matches your preferences, devices, and reading habits.

PDF format:

PDF is one of the most common formats for *The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum*. It preserves the original layout, fonts, and images, ensuring consistency across devices. PDFs are ideal for documents with structured layouts, charts, or academic formatting. They work well on computers and tablets but may require zooming on smaller screens. Annotation and highlighting tools are widely supported in PDF readers, making this format suitable for study and professional use.

ePub format:

ePub is a flexible and reflowable format designed for eReaders and mobile devices. Text automatically adjusts to different screen sizes, allowing comfortable reading on smartphones and dedicated eReaders. If you prioritize readability and customization, ePub is often the best choice for reading *The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum* on the go. However, complex layouts may not always appear exactly as intended.

Audiobook format:

Audiobooks offer an alternative way to experience *The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum* content. Instead of reading

text, users listen to narrated versions. Audiobooks are ideal for multitasking, commuting, or users who prefer auditory learning. While they do not allow highlighting or visual reference, they provide accessibility and convenience for busy lifestyles.

Selecting the right format depends on your device, reading goals, and personal preferences. Many readers combine multiple formats—for example, reading the PDF for detailed study and listening to the audiobook for review or reinforcement.

Benefits of Digital Copies

Digital copies of *The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum* offer several advantages over traditional printed books, making them increasingly popular among modern readers. One of the most significant benefits is portability. Hundreds or even thousands of digital books can be stored on a single device, eliminating the need for physical storage space and making it easy to carry an entire library anywhere.

Searchable text is another major advantage. Instead of flipping through pages, digital readers can instantly search for keywords, phrases, or topics within *The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum*. This feature is invaluable for research, study, and professional reference, saving time and improving efficiency.

Offline access enhances flexibility. Once downloaded, digital copies of *The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum* can be accessed without an internet connection. This is especially useful for travel, remote study, or areas with limited connectivity. Offline access ensures uninterrupted reading regardless of location.

Annotation tools add further value. Highlights, notes, and bookmarks transform digital reading into an interactive experience. These tools help readers organize information, revisit important sections, and personalize their learning process. Notes can often be exported or synced across devices, providing continuity and convenience.

Cost and sustainability advantages

Digital copies are often more affordable than printed books. Many platforms offer discounts, subscription models, or free access to public domain works. Over time, digital reading can significantly reduce costs for students, professionals, and avid readers.

From an environmental perspective, digital books reduce paper consumption, printing, and transportation. Choosing digital versions of *The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum* contributes to more sustainable reading habits and a smaller environmental footprint.

Accessibility and inclusivity

Digital reading platforms often include accessibility features that benefit a wide range of users. Adjustable fonts, text-to-speech options, screen reader compatibility, and contrast settings make *The Girl Next Door Jack Ketchum* more accessible to readers with visual impairments or learning differences. These features help ensure that knowledge is available to a broader audience.

Balancing digital and traditional reading

While digital copies offer many benefits, balancing them with healthy reading habits is important. Taking regular breaks, maintaining good posture, and limiting screen exposure before bedtime help prevent fatigue and eye

strain. Some readers choose to alternate between digital and printed formats depending on the context and purpose of reading.

Building a long-term reading habit

Consistency is key to getting the most value from *The Girl Next Door* Jack Ketchum. Setting a regular reading schedule, even for a short daily session, helps build a sustainable habit. Tracking progress using reading apps or journals can increase motivation and provide a sense of achievement.

Final thoughts on reading *The Girl Next Door* Jack Ketchum

Reading *The Girl Next Door* Jack Ketchum digitally offers flexibility, efficiency, and powerful tools that enhance understanding and engagement. By applying effective reading strategies, choosing the right format, and taking advantage of digital features, readers can create a comfortable and productive reading experience. Whether for learning, professional growth, or personal enjoyment, digital copies of *The Girl Next Door* Jack Ketchum provide a modern and accessible way to consume structured knowledge anytime and anywhere.