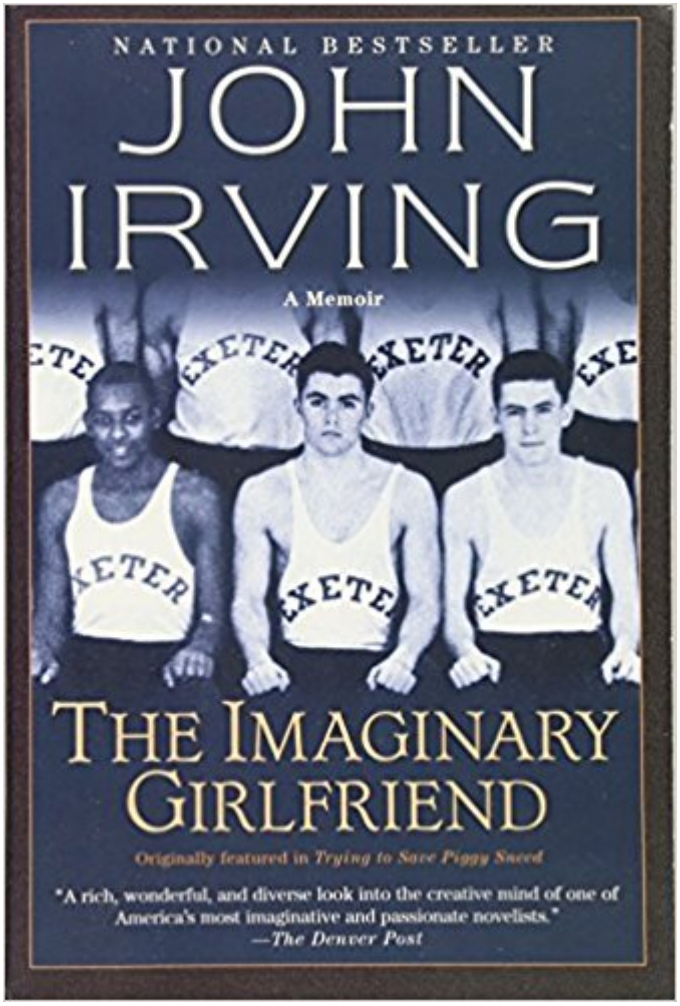
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The Imaginary Girlfriend: A Memoir



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Synopsis

Ã¢â ¬Å“The Imaginary Girlfriend is a miniature autobiography detailing IrvingÃ¢â ¬â„¢s parallel careers of writing and wrestling. . . . Tales of encounters with writers (John Cheever, Nelson Algren, Kurt Vonnegut) are intertwined with those about his wrestling teammates and coaches. With humor and compassion, [Irving] details the few truly important lessons he learned about writing. . . . And in beefing up his narrative with anecdotes that are every bit as hilarious as the antics in his novels, Irving combines the lessons of both obsessions (wrestling and writing) . . . into a somber reflection on the importance of living well.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â œThe Denver Post

Book Information

Paperback: 180 pages

Publisher: Ballantine Books; 1St Edition edition (December 3, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0345458265

ISBN-13: 978-0345458261

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.5 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.6 out of 5 stars 53 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #641,390 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #154 inÃ Â Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Sports & Outdoors > Boxing, Wrestling & MMA > Wrestling #298 inÃ Â Books > Sports & Outdoors > Individual Sports > Wrestling #3722 inÃ Â Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature > Authors

Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“THE NEAREST THING TO AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY IRVING HAS WRITTEN . . . WORTH SAVING AND SAVORING.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â œThe Seattle TimesÃ¢â ¬Å“IRVINGÃ¢â ¬â„¢S WRESTLING COACHES, HIS WRITING MENTORS, AND HIS FAMILY ARE VIVID, INVITING READERS INTO A COLORFUL WORLD.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â œUSA TodayÃ¢â ¬Å“A MASTERPIECE . . . THE GENEROSITY OF SPIRIT THAT MARKS HIS FICTION LEAKS INTO HIS MEMOIR IN TENDER AND SURPRISING WAYS.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â œEdmonton Journal

""The Imaginary Girlfriend is a miniature autobiography detailing Irving’s parallel careers of writing and wrestling. . . . Tales of encounters with writers (John Cheever, Nelson Algren, Kurt Vonnegut) are intertwined with those about his wrestling teammates and coaches. With humor and

compassion, [Irving] details the few truly important lessons he learned about writing. . . . And in beefing up his narrative with anecdotes that are every bit as hilarious as the antics in his novels, Irving combines the lessons of both obsessions (wrestling and writing) . . . into a somber reflection on the importance of living well."-"The "Denver Post

John Irvine is without doubt one of my favorite authors and and I have laughed, loved, cried and occasionally endured reading his work. I did none of those things with this book. I bought it without reading the reviews because.... well it is John Irving and I could not imagine that it would be awful. Unfortunately it was and I could not finish it. I often re-read his work and a couple of weeks prior to getting this book I had read A Prayer for Owen Meaney. Maybe this was the problem because Owen is my favorite character ever, and so it could be that the comparison was just too great.It was depressing because it was so off and so not what I had become used to. Am reading his autobiography now and enjoying it so much more.

This time a memoir. As always John Irving writes a wonderful novel! He takes you through his journey to becoming an award winning author. The influence of his love for wrestling plays a big part on his drive to write and write. Once he realizes that his passion is to write but passion alone cannot support a family he works many jobs until finally writing becomes his full-time job...his career. I loved this book and finding so much more about him. He gives writers great advice about how to step out of "first person" writing and using experiences and making them have their own life.

John Irving is arguably the best writer-wrestler on the planet. Well, there might be a Russian writer who wrestled but...anyway, I have enjoyed a few of Irving’s books which are very entertaining. I mean, I like Irving but he is not in a class with Lessing, Sebald, Mutis, Marquez or Oz or even Roth, which is asking a lot of course, but if we are going to rate people (which is a stupid thing to do) there you have it. Notwithstanding my modest assessment of Irving’s writing, the fact remains that he is a serious writer, a serious artist and this book is a wonderful, intimate look at the relationship between a man and his work. Jeanette Winterton et. al. can pretend that autobiography plays no role in art (or whatever cockamamie stuff the deconstructionist, post-modernists blather about) but here is Irving, a serious wrestler writing about his life and the melding of his two loves. My girlfriend (aitanadelajara.com) who reads Proust in French and Cervantes in Spanish loved this book too. You will not regret the evening you spend reading this book. Arthur Bacon

I am an avid John Irving fan in fact, I hold him second to only Kurt Vonnegut, but I couldn't get through the first couple of chapters of this book, It contains all his usual icons, wrestling, a young man trying to fit in at an East Coast private school, but so far none of the humor and a lot of dreadfully boring details. He even tells us it is filled with the boring part of wrestling. I am giving up on this one.

I am so smitten with John Irving's writing (the last one I read was "In One Person" which, along w/ 158 Pound Marriage, has a heavy emphasis on the spiritual impact of the art of wrestling) that I loaded up my Kindle on Irvings books before a recent trip. This is the first book I have found disappointing. Sweet and sometimes humorous reflections of a wannabe great wrestler and the passage into adulthood. But apparently autobiography is not his genre.

I'll start by saying I'm a big fan of John Irving. Did not love this book. The title made me expectsomething far different from the ruminations about wrestling that I got. Way too much about thefiner points of wrestling and very little else except that everything John Irving writes he writes well.

Irving, though in many ways narcissistic, elucidates a central theme of life and understanding. Life is a series of moments and events all wielded into one another and reliant on each other with meaning only given to them by their actors and participants.

The only reason i would not give this book five stars is because i have to save that rating for his novels and this is a memoir. It would be easy for me to love everything he had to say about his development as a writer - which I did. But why did i hang on every word he had to say about the role of wrestling in his life? Because he is so damned interesting!

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