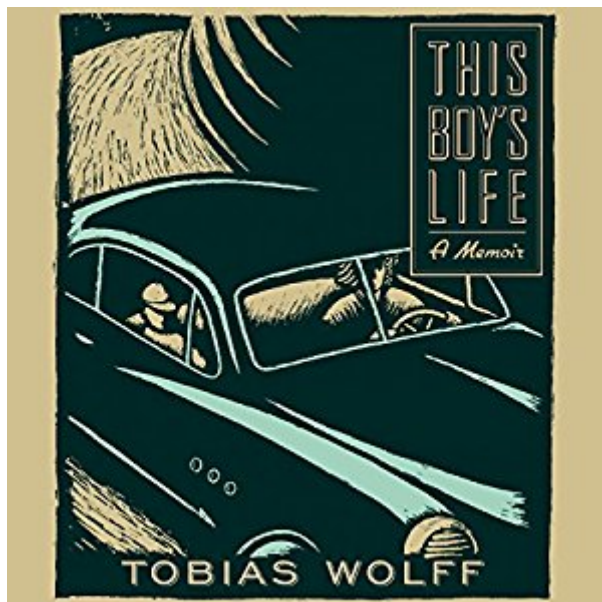


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This Boy's Life



Synopsis

The winner of the PEN/Faulkner Award for fiction writes a memoir that brings to life the stuff of boyhood--from paper routes to whiskey, fistfights to friendship and betrayal--and captures as well America in the fifties. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Tobias Wolff is sure that "everything was going to change when we got out West." And so the boy tags along on the peregrinations of his adventuresome mother. Her intention is to find peace within herself, and a place for herself and her son within a wider world equally intent on allowing them anything but that. Autobiographical, gritty realism, and wonderful story-telling. Lacks the bravado, the self-importance, and the claustrophobia of the usual coming-of-age novel. Spare, naive, irreverent, haunting: the devastatingly lonely, yet hopeful, journey of a boy on the road to becoming a man, even if accidentally. This was my first book by Wolff. He now has five on my shelf.

Wolff seemed to have so little going for him: no real home life, no guidance or stability, no strong foundation for a sense of self. Yet, he ultimately gained well-earned recognition as a great writer. I suspect the act of writing -- the desire to make sense of a chaotic world through honest analysis of emotion-- served to save and sustain him in life. This is a tough, well-written memoir.

I love memoirs, but this one was kind of hard for me to get through. I didn't find Tobias to be very likable as a youth. He seemed to be a liar and a trouble maker. I do feel for him because he was

definitely mistreated by his step father, and maybe he acted out because of that. But overall, I didn't find myself cheering for the writer as I normally do with memoirs. I liked the writing style but the story itself was hard for me.

This book provides a wealth of information about the early life of the author. He is open, honest and straightforward about his struggles and his achievements, as well as the actions for which he has remorse. The only reason I gave 4 instead of 5 stars, is that although he does an exemplary job of fleshing out a portrait of his younger self, he leaves the other characters in his life story lacking depth and nuance. All in all, I enjoyed this book and would say that it is well worth the read.

Tobias Wolff's memoir is about a boy's search for his true identity by trying on a number of personae. The reader also gets some interesting insights to his divorced mother and her complex personality. Tobias starts his journey to self-discovery by demanding that he be called "Jack", not Toby, because Jack sounds more macho, more like a guy, or even a dangerous rake. His mother Rosemary seldom forbids Jack anything; and when she tries to put her foot down, she's overruled by the loser men in her life, most notably and comically pathetic: Dwight. Jack tries every role from juvenile delinquent to cigarette-smoking, gambling Boy Scout. No kidding! The book is a page-turner without the cheap thrills, unless you count his sneaking home from school at around age 11 to "play" with the .22 one of Rosemary's boyfriends gave him. He aims at people on the street with the empty rifle. The game is no fun with an unloaded rifle, so he gets his ammo and is back to the apartment window aiming at people below. This is my second read of the book which I selected for an American Lit student studying memoirs. I'm sure this one has very high interest for all ages.

Not often I read a book in one sitting but this one did it for me. My type of book indeed.

Great memoir by a fine writer

This book was a fantastic read! I own and have seen the movie based on this memoir more times than I can count. The movie is one of my all time favorites, so when I saw this recommendation I thought I'd give it a try. It was great reading what really happened in Toby's life. It does differ quite a bit from the movie, but that happens most of the time. The book was written in a way that is easy to follow and understand, and it is just such a great story of trials and tribulations someone can go through and overcome. I recommend this book to anyone who enjoys autobiography's or even just

the movie!

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