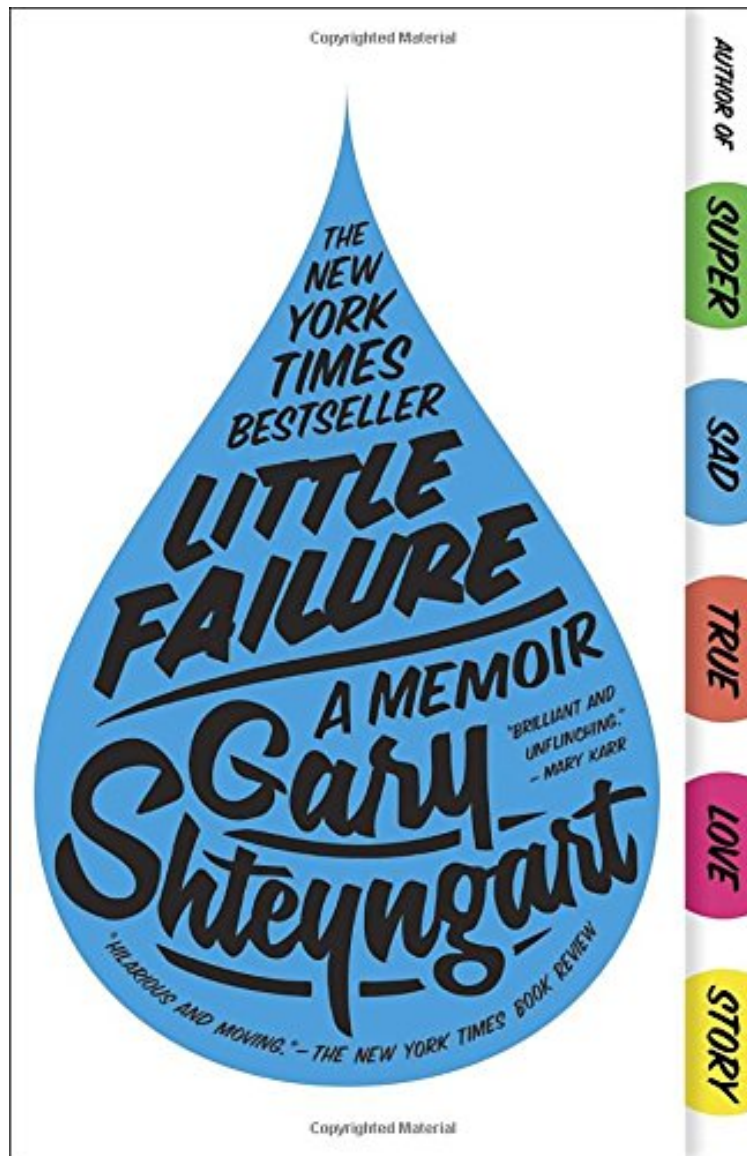


Little Failure: A Memoir

Gary Shteyngart

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#60371 in Books Gary Shteyngart 2014-10-07 2014-10-07 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.96 x .77 x 5.181, .81 #File Name: 0812982495384 pages Little Failure | File size: 44.Mb

Gary Shteyngart : Little Failure: A Memoir before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Little Failure: A Memoir:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Quite a trip worth taking By Pendell am biased. Having made the same basic journey as the author out of the Soviet Union to the West, at about the same time, I have found the story resonating with my memories on many levels. The metamorphosis of a child invested in the communist narrative into a young man partaking with some abandon in the gen-X culture of the 21-st century USA, followed by an attempt of

reconciling the two realities as the author reaches maturity, would be interesting enough to a wide audience seeking to learn about "the other cultures next door", but when it is layered with the nuances and trauma of a family's immigration experience, with different generations following their own disparate assimilation trajectories, yet all forever bound together by a loss of the birthplace (which despite its casual commonplace cruelty and hatred always exerts the eternal pull of a corrupted memory of belonging), the story gains another psychological dimension. Add to the mix the author's struggle to reconcile the harsh Soviet Jewish paternal love (infused with that subconscious need to foster, by any means necessary, the strength and the "fistiness" essential for navigating the notoriously anti-semitic society), with the pampering given to the often soft and "spoiled" American Jewish youth which surrounds the author in his teenage years, and the memoir gains again as it touches on the universal complexities of familial love, and all of its sharp and jagged edges. As he has already demonstrated in his previous works, Shteyngart has a wonderful ability to use humor and wit to address unabashedly even the most complex issues, without overburdening or trivializing them, as he lays them unpretentiously bare yet still fully potent. This particular work has that same appeal and a potential to be many things to many people. I recommend you give it a read and see for yourself. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. He seemed to have had a good handle on what happened to him as a child. By Linda H. I thought the book was cleverly written and insightful-to a point. He seemed to have had a good handle on what happened to him as a child. This was interesting and funny/sad. About halfway through the high school experience and most of the college years, at a time when one would expect to at least start growing up, the writer gave up long boring descriptions of lost attempts at love (boo-hoo) and equally boring accounts of drinking and drug use, not unlike hundreds of other kids really too immature to deal with living away from home. The final chapters in which he visits Russia with his parents, finally shows some maturity. I realize the author is not that old, and while he seems very talented and funny, a "memoir" seems premature. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Personal and powerful. By Sandra Lentz. One of the delights of reading is when a random selection becomes a treasure. This book is among that list. It is an honest and open book that gives insight into the world of a new young citizen here in the US. He is a good character actor and makes work throughout his education, loves and writing. But finally, someone calls his bluff and he struggles through the 'valley of the shadow of death' to build the person in him that he had not face. His story is everyone's story but I put my Kindle down with a new understanding of myself.

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE AWARD FINALIST NAMED ONE OF THE TEN BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY MICHIKO KAKUTANI, THE NEW YORK TIMES NAMED ONE OF THE TEN BEST NONFICTION BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY TIME NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY MORE THAN 45 PUBLICATIONS, INCLUDING The New York Times Book Review The Washington Post NPR The New Yorker San Francisco Chronicle The Economist The Atlantic Newsday Salon St. Louis Post-Dispatch The Guardian Esquire (UK) GQ (UK) Little Failure is the all too true story of an immigrant family betting its future on America, as told by a lifelong misfit who finally finds a place for himself in the world through books and words. In 1979, a little boy dragging a ginormous fur hat and an overcoat made from the skin of some Soviet woodland creature steps off the plane at New York's JFK International Airport and into his new American life. His troubles are just beginning. For the former Igor Shteyngart, coming to the United States from the Soviet Union is like stumbling off a monochromatic cliff and landing in a pool of Technicolor. Careening between his Soviet home life and his American aspirations, he finds himself living in two contradictory worlds, wishing for a real home in one. He becomes so strange to his parents that his mother stops bickering with his father long enough to coin the phrase failurchka little failure which she applies to her once-promising son. With affection. Mostly. From the terrors of Hebrew School to a crash course in first love to a return visit to the homeland that is no longer home, Gary Shteyngart has crafted a ruthlessly brave and funny memoir of searching for every kind of love family, romantic, and of the self. Praise for Little Failure Hilarious and moving . . . The army of readers who love Gary Shteyngart is about to get bigger. The New York Times Book Review A memoir for the ages . . . brilliant and unflinching. Mary Karr Dazzling . . . a rich, nuanced memoir . . . Its an immigrant story, a coming-of-age story, a becoming-a-writer story, and a becoming-a-mensch story, and in all these ways it is, unambivalently, a success. Meg Wolitzer, NPR Literary gold . . . [a] bruisingly funny memoir. Vogue A giant success. Entertainment Weekly [Little Failure] finds the delicate balance between sidesplitting and heartbreaking. O: The Oprah Magazine Should become a classic of the immigrant narrative genre. The Miami Herald As vivid, original and funny as any that contemporary U.S. literature has to offer. Los Angeles Times The very best memoirs perfectly toe the line between heartbreak and humor, and Shteyngart does just that. Esquire Touching, insightful . . . [Shteyngart] nimbly achieves the noble Nabokovian goal of letting sentiment in without ever becoming sentimental. The Washington Post [Shteyngart is] a successor to no less than Saul Bellow and Philip Roth. The Christian Science Monitor

From Booklist *Starred* Novelist Shteyngart (Super Sad True Love Story, 2010) looks back at his tug-of-war life in this caustic, funny, brash, and self-immolating memoir. Born in Leningrad, in 1972, the only child of a kindergarten piano teacher and a mechanical engineer, Shteyngart was a small, anxious, severely asthmatic boy stretched on the

rack of his warring parents needs and worries and subjected to downright medieval treatments for his ailment. While gasping for breath and paralyzed with fear, including a terror of the Soviets notorious exploding televisions, Shteyngartnicknamed Little Failure became a pathological reader. Encouraged to write by his indomitable grandmother, who paid him for his efforts in cheese, he composed his first novel at age five: *Lenin and His Magical Goose*. Veering between flaying candor and chagrined adoration in his vivid depictions of his family, Shteyngart is also diabolically droll in his accounts of social absurdities, including what he basically describes as the grain-for-Jews agreement reached between Jimmy Carter and the USSR that freed Soviet Jewry, including the battling Shteyngarts. He then experienced a second life-changing liberation when he received his first inhaler. Finally able to breathe, the Little Failure figures out that writing is his only defense against being a hated freak in a Hebrew school in Queens. Shteyngarts penetrating attentiveness, outlandish precision, abrading and embracing humor, and ability to extrapolate larger truths about inheritance, immigration, assimilation, and creativity from his own epic floundering and yearning make for a memoir of exceptional dimension, provocation, and pleasure. --Donna Seaman From Bookforum Honest, poignant, hilarious [...] Shteyngart's stalwart refusal to cast himself as a victim sets this book apart from the majority of American memoirs, whose authors seem hell-bent on passing judgement on the people who raised them. [] Shteyngart seems to have made a deal with some minor devil (a daredevil?) stipulating that if he exposed every crack and fissure in himself, laid bare every misstep, fuckup, and psychic flaw, his memoir would be a deep and original book. If so, the payoff here was absolutely worth it. Kate Christensen Hilarious and moving . . . The army of readers who love Gary Shteyngart is about to get bigger. The New York Times Book A memoir for the ages . . . brilliant and unflinching. Mary Karr Dazzling . . . a rich, nuanced memoir . . . Its an immigrant story, a coming-of-age story, a becoming-a-writer story, and a becoming-a-mensch story, and in all these ways it is, unambivalently, a success. Meg Wolitzer, NPR Literary gold . . . [a] bruisingly funny memoir. Vogue Funny, unflinching, and, title notwithstanding, a giant success . . . The innate humor of Shteyngarts storytelling is dotted with touching sadness, all of it amounting to an engrossing look at his distinct, multilayered Gary-ness. Entertainment Weekly [Little Failure] finds the delicate balance between sidesplitting and heartbreaking. O: The Oprah Magazine An ecstatic depiction of survival, guilt and perseverance. . . Russia gave birth to that master of English-language prose named Vladimir Nabokov. Half a century later, another writer who grew up with Cyrillic characters is gleefully writing American English as vivid, original and funny as any that contemporary U.S. literature has to offer. Los Angeles Times The very best memoirs perfectly toe the line between heartbreak and humor, and Shteyngart does just that. Esquire Touching, insightful . . . [Shteyngart] nimbly achieves the noble Nabokovian goal of letting sentiment in without ever becoming sentimental. The Washington Post [Shteyngart is] a successor to no less than Saul Bellow and Philip Roth. The Christian Science Monitor Moving . . . and laugh-out-loud funny. USA Today Might just be the funniest, most unflinching memoir ever about coming to America. W Magazine Hilarious . . . an affectionate take on growing up in gray Leningrad and Technicolor Queens. People [Little Failure] feels essential, as the document of a way of life thats less and less accessible in our parenting-manual era. Shteyngart was the child of Russian immigrants whose overzealous attention shaped him, for better and worse. Little Failure helps us understand Shteyngart better, but you dont need to have read any of his novels to appreciate his frankness and insight. Time A deeply moving love letter to Mr. Shteyngarts life and everything in it: America, Russia, literature, women and his parents. The Economist Little Failure is terrific the authors funniest, saddest and most honest work to date. [Its] a powerful and often moving portrait of a troubled mans creative origins, comparable in intent (and sometimes in quality) to some of the genres high-water marks, and owing particular debts to W. G. Sebald, Thomas Bernhard and, most significantly, Vladimir Nabokov, whose name Shteyngart often invokes. The Guardian (UK) [A] keenly observed tale of exile, coming-of-age and family love: Its raw, comic and deeply affecting, a testament to Mr. Shteyngarts abilities to write with both self-mocking humor and introspective wisdom, sharp-edged sarcasm and aching and yes, Chekhovian tenderness. Michiko Kakutani, The New York Times What a beautiful mess! . . . [Shteyngart has] not just his own distinct identity, but all the loose ends and unresolved contradictions out of which great literature is made. Charles Simic, The New York of Books Shteyngart is a great writer theres no arguing his literary merit but hes also very, very funny, which is a rare quality in literature these days. GQ Shteyngarts achingly honest, bittersweet comic memoir is a winner. Vanity Fair Little Failure . . . puts the lure in failure. The Wall Street Journal A near-perfect account of the churning state of one mans inner life. The Sunday Times (London) [Shteyngart is] the Chekhov-Roth-Apatow of Queens. The Millions Surely some enterprising scholar is already gnawing at the question of why two of the brilliant outliers of American writing were Russian immigrants. One, of course, was the great Vladimir Nabokov. The other is the youngish Shteyngart. They both have the qualities of sly humor, secret griefs. San Francisco Chronicle Funny, heartbreaking and soul-baring . . . [Shteyngart is] one of his generations most original and exhilarating writers. The Seattle Times [A] stellar memoir. Parade [Shteyngart] has dismantled the armor of his humor to give readers his most tender and affecting gift yet: himself. The Boston Globe [Shteyngarts] irrepressible humor disguises a Nabokovian love of the English language and an astute grasp of human psychology. Newsweek Shteyngart uses his immigrant experience, together with some of the wisdom of Russias cultural past, to capture a generation of middle-class Americans . . . and give us a beautifully rendered world of orange-coloured cheese puffs and Cold War menace. The Times Literary Supplement If you thought his fiction was funny, read

Shteyngarts memoir, *Little Failure*. As you might expect, he's no less neurotic than his characters. *New York Frenetically* funny, even overwhelmingly enjoyable. *Financial Times* [*Little Failure*] should become a classic of the immigrant narrative genre. *The Miami Herald* There is no better comic writer alive than Mr. Shteyngart. . . . And yet its [his] past, and the tension it creates with the cushy interior life that America affords, that makes him a much more interesting novelist than his American peers. *The New York Observer* Ever wonder how a Russian migr with a wicked sense of humor becomes a great American novelist? In his new memoir, Gary Shteyngart tells his craziest, funniest, super-saddest tale yet: his own. *Francine Prose, Interview* [Shteyngarts] best work to date. *The Moscow Times* Shteyngart seems to have made a deal with some minor devil (a daredevil?) stipulating that if he exposed every crack and fissure in himself, laid bare every misstep, f***up, and psychic flaw, his memoir would be a deep and original book. If so, the payoff here was absolutely worth it. *Kate Christensen, Bookforum* By turns naive and cynical, hyper-intelligent and comically immature, empathetic on the page and unfeeling off it, his self-portrait of a Soviet Jew transplanted aged seven from Leningrad to Eighties America is a masterpiece of comic deprecation. *The Telegraph (UK)* This Shteyngart, sad and longing and desperate for connection (with his parents, with his readers), seems the most fully human person this author has ever created. *The Jewish Daily Forward* The best memoirs are ones that are perfectly individuated, particular and yet somehow speak to every reader's life, every reader's family. This is one of those rare books. *New Statesman* Many, many people in this world have received blurbs from Gary Shteyngart, but I happen not to be one of them. So you can trust me when I say: *Little Failure* is a delight. *Zadie Smith, New York Times* bestselling author of *NW* and *White Teeth* *Little Failure* is told with fearlessness, wisdom and the wit that you'd expect from one of America's funniest novelists. *Carl Hiaasen, New York Times* bestselling author of *Bad Monkey* Portnoy meets Chekhov meets Shteyngart! What could be better? *Adam Gopnik, New York Times* bestselling author of *The Table Comes First* and *Paris to the Moon* If you, like me, have often wondered, How did Gary Shteyngart get like that?, *Little Failure* is the heartfelt, moving, and truly engaging memoir that explains it all. Dr. Freud would be proud. *Nathan Englander, author of What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank*