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The Reenactments: A Memoir



Synopsis

A literary tour de force about the making of a film and representation from a master of the memoir form. For Nick Flynn, that game we all play—the who-would-play-you-in-the-movie-of-your-life game—has been resolved. *The Reenactments* chronicles the surreal experience of being on set during the making of the film *Being Flynn*, from his best-selling memoir *Another Bullshit Night in Suck City*, and watching the central events of his life reenacted: his father's long run of homelessness and his mother's suicide. Flynn tells the story of Robert De Niro's first meeting with his real father in Boston and of watching Julianne Moore attempt to throw herself into the sea. The result is a mesmerizingly sharp-edged and kaleidoscopic literary tour de force as well as a compelling argument about consciousness, representation, and grief.

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Customer Reviews

In "The Reenactments", Flynn recounts the making of the film based on his autobiographical "Another Bullshit Night in Suck City". He is deeply engaged in the film, "Being Flynn", and he describes the uncanny experience of having his memories being portrayed by actors on sets designed to fit his own past. Along the way, he cites a number of theories on the process of consciousness and of memory. As one would expect, Nick is deeply shaken by the experience of watching Paul Dano act out his days working in a homeless shelter only to encounter his own father walk through the door. De Niro plays his father, and Flynn finds himself coaching him on the props and mannerisms that his father had used. Even more startling is watching Julianne Moore portray his mother's suicide. Flynn's observations are wry, and self deprecating. He successfully endeavors

to share the regrets and the emotions he experiences in this almost surreal experience. This book snuck on me sneakily and steadily. I started reading this book at a remove, but became more ensnared little by little each page. The neurological and philosophical asides are well chosen and add to our understanding of Flynn's experience. The language is beautifully considered and discreetly spiced with irreverence. After all, who has not played that game, who would play me in a movie? Flynn has found out.

Profound, brave and poetic, *The Reenactments* takes the reader on a unique journey-- that of a bird's eye view of the making of the film based on the best-selling memoir "Another Bull**** Night in Suck City." Having seen the film, I was riveted by Flynn's stunning, spare telling of an enormously heart breaking experience--watching his mother's suicide reenacted. While "Being Flynn" focuses on Flynn's relationship to his father, I felt that *The Reenactments* was really a book about coming to terms, or trying to, with the loss of his mother. *The Reenactments* is both haunting, and haunted--a must read for anyone who has seen the film or read any of Mr. Flynn's work. It's a must read for fans of poetic, honest (though not necessarily linear) storytelling.

Flynn's work continues to astonish. Life -how he's lived it- does keep giving him fascinating material to draw on (how many writers consult on set to DeNiro and Julianne Moore on the portrayals of their own family members? Watch their wife interact on set with Paul Dano playing their younger self?) What Flynn does with this material is weave straw into gold. What a master weaver he has become. Flynn's philosophical and sociological musings are astute, not over-reaching. The lens of his narrative is continually refocusing, from the most microscopically personal to the widest angle macro view, and back again. Flynn explores the remarkable reenactments within and beyond his life with humility. His reflections are deep, and his identification with (and respect for) down -on -their -luck -folks is genuine. He doesn't romanticize their (or his own) struggles, or the pain their (or his own) shortcomings may have caused others. There's a sense of bemusement about his life, and of gratitude, which softens the impact of the ugliness he doesn't shy from confronting, in himself and in the world. The captain calls for a show of applause - bravo, Mr. Flynn!

Nick Flynn has long been one of my favorite poets, and this intense book reads like a series of prose poems. It moves back and forth in time, as current events evoke past experiences, allowing the reader to follow Nick's brave journey as he watches and participates in the reenactment of his difficult past. Even those familiar with the stories of Nick's father's homelessness and his mother's

suicide will gain new perspectives. They will also have the opportunity to celebrate the craftsmanship of a powerful writer.

I received a free copy of this book through Goodreads First Reads. Having not read the original memoir I was unsure what to expect. This is a delightful series of short entries of the author on set of the making of the movie of his previous memoir! It is an engaging read with quick passages. It almost feels you are a part of the process. Now that I finished the book I think I need to check out the movie...and his first memoir!

Nick Flynn brings it to a whole new level with this dreamy but solid finale to his memoir trilogy about his parents. The poet is in full roar with explorations of reproduction as theme weaving through the ever-heartbreaking tale of his indigent father and suicidal mother. I would buy and read a grocery list if Nick Flynn wrote it. As always, cannot wait for his future work: I'm a hardcore Flynnstonian.

In typical Nick Flynn style, this book delves into his life and the way he understands it.

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