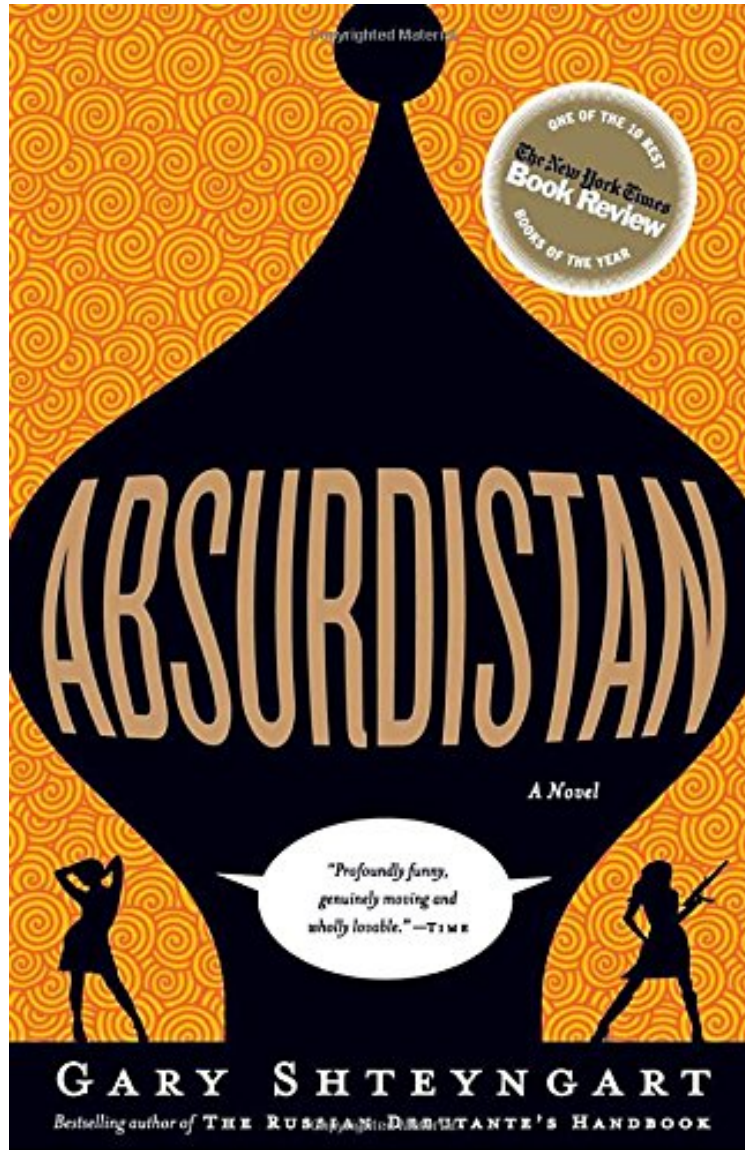


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Absurdistan: A Novel

Gary Shteyngart

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#112989 in Books Gary Shteyngart 2007-04-03 2007-04-03 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .68 x 5.18l, .58 #File Name: 0812971671352 pages Absurdistan | File size: 74.Mb

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

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Absolutely incredible. By Elspeth Funny, unapologetic, painfully awkward at times, and indeed, absurd, Shteyngart offers up a contemporary assessment of the reach and fumbles of modern America through the eyes of Misha, a wealthy-by-inheritance Russian who wants nothing more than to return

to his true homeland... The United States of America. Misha is obscenely obese, uncontrollably and unabashedly gluttonous, an alcoholic with a cringe-worthy lack of self-control, slightly-criminal, a student of the Marie-Antoinette School of Rich and Ignorant, and a curious, well-meaning, often-loveably oaf. In short, Misha is America. Unfortunately, Misha wasn't born in America, and he finds himself struggling to get back to New York after his wealthy gangster father kills an Oklahoma businessman and the entire Vainberg family is barred re-entry from his beloved New York, and from his actual beloved, a round-bottomed, foul-mouthed stripper with a heart-after-gold, Rouenna. His adventures take him to Absurdistan, an ex-soviet state fractured by religious sectarian issues borne from laughable theological debate, overrun with Halliburton contractors, and absolutely lacking in that promised international currency, oil. Misha stumbles into the nascent civil war, and becoming enmeshed with the most corrupt characters by means of his honourable - if misplaced - intentions and his easily-swayed sex-drive. Will Misha manage to detach himself from elite Absurdistan pinching his every roll of lard? Will he manage to steal back his Rouenna from that god-awful, classless professor Jerry Shteynfarb? Those questions drive this contemporary reflection on the true absurdity of war, love, and INS. My favourite book of 2012. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The most pleasurable book I've read this millenium. By Eva This sassy modern, little odyssey is full of memorable quips that you want to memorize to recite to your friends. It jumps at the throat of all the sacred cows, including some not so sacred -- depending on how you rate such controversial authors as Nabokov or Frank McCourt. The self-deprecating character has a voice, and that voice is both credible and endearing, so it helps digest all the unpalatable truths about the world we live in and its most repellent denizens. On serious issues, it castigates with an iconoclastic laughter. Where Finkelstein's diatribe raised a tsunami of indignation, our hero's tongue in cheek modest proposal finally says what has to be said about the memorization of genocide for ulterior motives: for this alone, this humorous tale, half-Candid, half Elephant-man, is quite an achievement, although none of the critics mention it. Parodic in the extreme, this book still constitutes a model worth dissecting for all the literary devices it contains for all budding exponents of 'immigrant memoir'. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Satire that is timeless and well developed. By studentreview Gary Shteyngart is one of few authors that is able to write a book that can make you taste and smell the subject! I cannot overemphasize enough how much of a fan I am of all his writing. His satirical humor should be considered timeless. I highly recommend any of his books including Absurdistan. Not a professional reviewer, just a lay person that has read many of his books.

"Absurdistan is not just a hilarious novel, but a record of a particular peak in the history of human folly. No one is more capable of dealing with the transition from the hell of socialism to the hell of capitalism in Eastern Europe than Shteyngart, the great-great grandson of one Nikolai Gogol and the funniest foreigner alive."—Aleksandar Hemon From the critically acclaimed, bestselling author of *The Russian Debutante's Handbook* comes the uproarious and poignant story of one very fat man and one very small country. Meet Misha Vainberg, aka Snack Daddy, a 325-pound disaster of a human being, son of the 1,238th-richest man in Russia, proud holder of a degree in multicultural studies from Accidental College, USA (don't even ask), and patriot of no country save the great City of New York. Poor Misha just wants to live in the South Bronx with his hot Latina girlfriend, but after his gangster father murders an Oklahoma businessman in Russia, all hopes of a U.S. visa are lost. Salvation lies in the tiny, oil-rich nation of Absurdistan, where a crooked consular officer will sell Misha a Belgian passport. But after a civil war breaks out between two competing ethnic groups and a local warlord installs hapless Misha as minister of multicultural affairs, our hero soon finds himself covered in oil, fighting for his life, falling in love, and trying to figure out if a normal life is still possible in the twenty-first century. With the enormous success of *The Russian Debutante's Handbook*, Gary Shteyngart established himself as a central figure in today's literary world—"one of the most talented and entertaining writers of his generation," according to *The New York Observer*. In Absurdistan, he delivers an even funnier and wiser literary performance. Misha Vainberg is a hero for the new century, a glimmer of humanity in a world of dashed hopes.

From Publishers Weekly At the center of Shteyngart's rollicking tale of the ridiculousness of life in post-Soviet Central Asia is Misha Vainberg, an obese, extremely wealthy young Russian man stuck in Absurdistan, an imaginary republic that mirrors the striving but backward real "stans" of the world. Unable to get a visa back to the U.S., where he went to college and has an ex-girlfriend from the Bronx ghetto, Misha instead must fend for his life as a civil war erupts in the tiny country, to the concern of almost no one else in the world. Arte Johnson gamely tackles multiple accents, but the brilliant free-for-all of Shteyngart's wordplay, which tumbles out with delightful ease on the page, sometimes trips him up. The stumbles disrupt the engrossing tale of the failures, frustrations and hilarity that result from Absurdistan's ardent pursuit of a Western-style modernity for which it is ill-prepared. Listeners will still be swept up in Misha's neurotic, self-centered but endearing narration and pleasantly startled by his spot-on observations of 21st century life in both Central Asia and America, but they will wish this production did better justice to Shteyngart's facility with language and the novel's crazy antics. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Bookmarks Magazine In his rambunctious follow-up to *The Russian Debutante's Handbook* (2002), Shteyngart explores the disillusionment surrounding the creation of sudden democracy. Despite its historical

bent, Absurdistan is more a cultural and political satire than a work of geopolitical fiction. Critics agree that Shteyngart is an inventive, witty writer, whose self-defeating hero and dark humor tempered with pessimistic social realism rarely fail to entertain. Shteyngart's humor may have been more effective in smaller doses; the plot falls apart in the last third of the novel; and the sheer number of names and references can overwhelm. If Absurdistan sometimes goes too far over the top, it masks its painful global issues not far beneath its surface. Copyright © 2004 Phillips Nelson Media, Inc. From Booklist Shteyngart's second novel (*The Russian Debutante's Handbook*, 2002, was the first) is a wild ride that follows its protagonist and narrator, Misha Vainburg, from St. Petersburg (or St. Leninsburg as he prefers to call it) to a tiny country in the Caucasus called Absurdsvani, with occasional detours via flashbacks to New York City and Misha's midwestern alma mater, Accidental College. Misha, whose life seems to be a series of outlandish adventures, continues in that manner after the murder of his wealthy gangster father. Denied a visa to return to the U.S. or even the European Union, he instead heads for Absurdsvani--Absurdistan in his eyes--to purchase a Belgian visa. There he becomes embroiled in the tiny country's volatile politics fueled by the dark forces of Halliburton, or "Golly Burton" as the Absurdistanis call it. Shteyngart's satire takes no prisoners, including himself. Who else could tie together nineteenth-century Russian literature, hip-hop, and twenty-first-century oil politics and strife? But then Misha, as he often describes himself in this very funny, very pointed book, is a multiculturalist. Frank Caso Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved