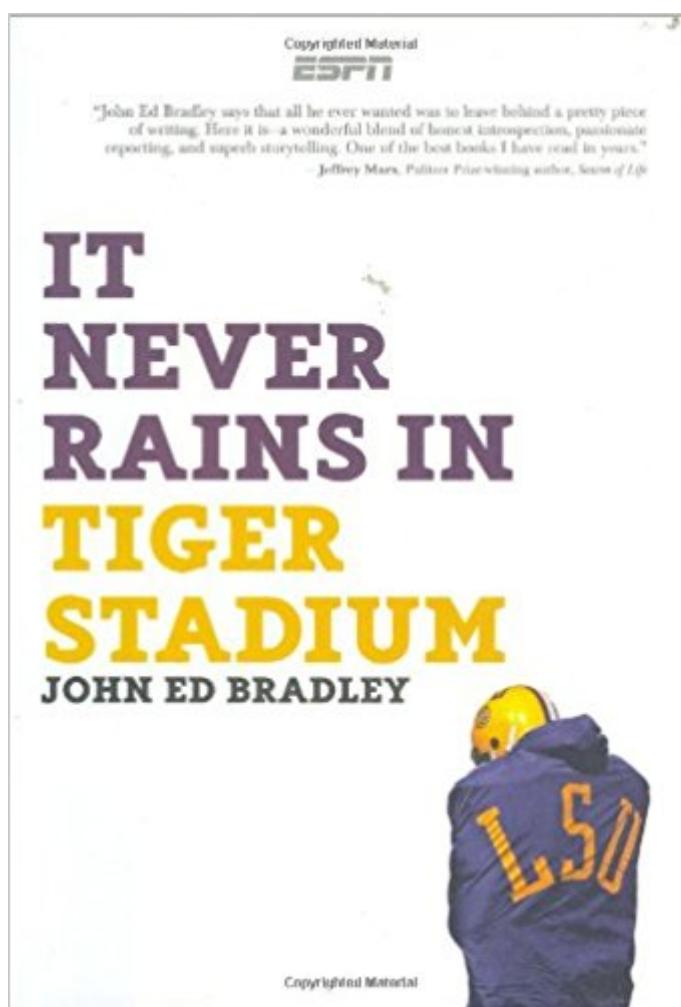


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It Never Rains In Tiger Stadium: Football And The Game Of Life



Synopsis

"The best sports book of the year." - Sports Illustrated"John Ed Bradley says that all he ever wanted to do was to leave behind a pretty piece of writing. Here it is-a wonderful blend of honest introspection, passionate reporting, and superb storytelling. One of the best books I have read in years."- Jeffrey Marx, Pulitzer Prize-winning author, *Season of Life*Inspired by a classic essay about a visit to a dying coach, *It Never Rains in Tiger Stadium* explores in gorgeous detail the inescapable pull of college football-the cocky smiles behind the face masks, the two-a-day drills, the emotionally charged bus rides to the stadium, the curfew checks, the film-study sessions, the locker room antics, and the yawning void left in one's soul the moment the final whistle sounds. To understand why it's so painful to give up the game, you must first understand the intimacy of the huddle. "It ends for everybody," writes John Ed Bradley, "and then it starts all over again, in ways you never anticipated. Marty Dufresne sits in his wheelchair listening to the Tiger fight song...Ramsey Darder endures prison by playing the games over in his head...Big Ed Stanton never took up the game of golf, and yet he rides the streets of Bayou Vista in a cart nearly identical to Coach Mac's, recalling the one time the old man invited him for a ride." Far more than a memoir, *It Never Rains in Tiger Stadium* is a brutally honest, profoundly moving look at what it means to surrender something you love. An Editors' Best Book of 2007"John Ed Bradley is a rare gem, a gifted writer trapped in the body of a football player. *It Never Rains in Tiger Stadium* will send chills down the back of anyone who loves the game and will echo in the minds of former players long after they've put it down."- Tim Green, best-selling author and member of the College Football Hall of Fame"A mesmerizing read...achingly sentimental in some parts, brutally truthful in others..."- Chicago Tribune"The best memoir I have ever read on how a particular game, win or lose, can linger with us."- Josh Levin, *Slate*"An unsparing and often beautiful chronicle of [Bradley's] attempt to join polite society."- *Play Magazine*"A lyrical memoir...about his teammates, his coaches, his parents and the magnetic power of football in Louisiana." - National Public Radio"Heart-wrenching, honest, insightful and hard to put down." - The Franklin SunFrom the Trade Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

is the author of several highly praised novels, including *Tupelo Nights* and *My Juliet*. A former staffwriter for the *Washington Post*, Bradley has contributed feature stories to *Sports Illustrated*, *Esquire*, and *GQ*. He lives at historic Coliseum Square in New Orleans' Lower Garden District.

I liked the writing style and particularly the insights into the world of linemen in College football. Sometimes it seemed a bit repetitive without a clear focus or theme, but all in all a good read for those interested in college sports and the level of commitment required to compete in the room the top level programs. The adjustments required for those who do not go on to the NFL or other professional teams is interesting and makes one wonder about whether the price one pays, physically and mentally is worth the rewards. This, in itself, is an important question that Bradley explores, but does not directly answer.

John Ed Bradley has a gift. The man can write. But, he also can be so full of himself that when his longtime girlfriend tells him that he makes her sick with his lies and false promises, you're thankful that someone has said what you've been thinking for a hundred pages. The question, however, is whether its true as he is the narrator of the story. Is his self-absorption this great or is it art, the creating of narrative tension. The answer is probably a little of both. Still, reading this book was both enjoyable and painful with every page turned. Bradley captures the essence of what it means to play for love and honor and team. In his case, its a life long love affair with the LSU Tigers, a team that he had the privilege to captain in 1979. He thinks of his teammates daily although he avoids seeing them for years that turns into decades. But, a visit to his dying Coach Mac makes him reconsider seeing the men who meant so much to his life. The visits are all bittersweet, but yet cleaning for Bradley's guilt. A quiet resolution is seen in the face that when he has the opportunity later in life, he returns to his home town of Opelousas, itself a major character in the book. Very

endearing, somewhat exasperating, this is a memorable book.

This is one of the best books I have ever read! John Ed Bradley has an introspective view of life after football that some of us need to heal our "leaving wounds" as former players. I played in college and professionally as well, and can highly recommend this book...especially to former players.

This is the autobiography of a young man named John Ed Bradley who lettered in football for four years at Louisiana State University. (LSU) Despite the fact that the only position more impressive in Louisiana than playing football for LSU would be Governor, this is oh so much more than a sports story! John Ed's football career at LSU culminated on December 22, 1979 with a 34-10 victory over Wake Forest in the Tangerine Bowl. At that point John Ed decided to put his entire lifetime football experience behind him, including any contact with any of his teammates or coaches. Though at first blush, the reader might feel, like John Ed did, that this was just a step in the maturation of a child putting aside childhood toys, but twenty-seven years later, John Ed agonizingly realized with excruciating sadness, that his choice reverberated with echoing emptiness in the deepest chambers of his heart and soul. The writing style of John Ed is akin to romantic poetry, instead of the "click-click-click" staccato you would expect from your everyday sports section in your local newspaper. The reader, with just a little imagination can become ensconced, as if you're involved in a youthful breakup with a lover, that you walked away from a quarter of a century ago, and though you've refused to look back on whether you did the right thing or not so many years ago, an alignment of your life's planets has forced you to re-examine with fresh eyes and heart, the scene you left frozen in another time. John Ed was asked by teachers, "What was it like?".... He was asked by bankers, "What was it like?"... He was asked by women, "What was it like?" He was asked by students, "What was it like?" **"TO PLAY FOOTBALL AT LSU!?" HE SAID: "WE WALKED BETWEEN THE RAINDROPS. THAT PRETTY WELL DESCRIBES HOW WE THOUGHT ABOUT OURSELVES. NOTHING COULD TOUCH US, INCLUDING THE RAIN. AND OF COURSE IT WAS AMAZING HOW PEOPLE TREATED YOU OUT IN PUBLIC!"** And then twenty-seven years later, it hit John Ed like a million tons of raindrops, and he poetically wrote: "I miss football so much. I miss it like you can't believe. I miss the things I didn't value or pay much attention to when I had them. I don't miss the games so much, the people in the stadium. I miss being a part of something. I only have myself to worry about now, and it's about worn me out. The weird thing is I've even started to miss the guys I didn't much care for when I was playing. And I miss August and the way the grass

used to smell when we went out to start two-a-days." "I guess I never saw my time running out. I thought I'd have it forever. And now if I could have anything back, it would be that-the feeling that came around every August when everything was new and anything could happen because the season was about to start."As I said; this exquisitely written book, isn't really about sports. It's about the parent you stopped talking to years ago, and now it's too late. It's about the lover you walked away from and never looked back. It's about the best friend whose friendship ended so long ago, and only now in hindsight do you look back. The author uses words like Picasso used colors!

Went to Tulane 1970-1974 and remember well the LSU Tigers of the early to mid 70's. Very formidable teams to say the least, headed by almost mythic type players like Tommy Casanova, Brad Davis, Warren Capone, Bert Jones, 'Miracle' Mike Miley, etc. If you were ever an athlete who hit the "ceiling" of your ability at some point, you always wondered what it would be like to have achieved success at an elite level. This book provides the best insight I've ever read of that situation, as well as the darker side when the author reached his personal "ceiling" as an athlete (albeit a very high ceiling) and how he dealt with it going forward. Just long enough to make the point without belaboring anything. Well done.

Disclaimer: I was born and raised in southern Louisiana and attended LSU in the late 90's. That being said, it's safe to say that I possess a certain hometown bias when reading and reviewing this book. For those looking for a story strictly about football, you should probably look elsewhere. It Never Rains in Tiger Stadium is a compelling story about a man and his struggles to move on after his college football career. The book follows him along his path from high school standout to struggling writer. My favorite parts were the bits where John Ed Bradley reminisces of his days as a LSU Tiger. He does a wonderful job of painting vivid pictures of the locker room, practice field, and the ultimate - a Saturday night in Baton Rouge. A must read for any college football fan and for those who enjoy a good story that is genuine and sincere.

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