



It's Been a Good Life

By Isaac Asimov

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It's Been a Good Life By Isaac Asimov

New one-volume autobiography spans Asimov's life for the first time! As one of the most gifted and prolific writers of the twentieth century, Isaac Asimov became legendary for his inexhaustible creativity, wide-ranging intellectual curiosity, and talent for explaining complex subjects in clear, concise prose. While regaling his readers with an incredible opus of almost five hundred entertaining and illuminating science fiction and nonfiction books, he also found time to write a three-volume autobiography. Now these volumes have been condensed into one by Asimov's wife, Janet, who also shares excerpts from letters he wrote to her. Together these writings provide an intimate portrait of a creative genius whose love of learning and playing with ideas is evident on every page.

Reading this autobiography is like sitting down with Isaac Asimov and experiencing his witty, engaging, and brilliant personality firsthand. We are treated to many marvelous stories about his upbringing in Depression-era Brooklyn, his early fascination with the new science fiction pulp magazines, the thrill of his first published story, the creation of his well-known story "Nightfall," the genesis of the Foundation series, and the evolution of his creative life as a writer.

He also reveals his inner thoughts about and experiences with various luminaries in science and science fiction. Above all, Asimov's autobiography conveys unbounded enthusiasm for his craft, the infectious joy of learning and creating, complete intellectual honesty, his strong humanist convictions, and his infinite fund of good humor and optimism even at the end of his life - all told in the lively clear writing style that was his trademark.

Although Janet Jeppson Asimov concludes this work with a shocking revelation about her husband's death, the volume is clearly intended as a celebration - as the title suggests - of a wonderful, creative life. As a poignant coda to this work, Janet has appended one short story that was Isaac's favorite, and his 400th essay on his thoughts about science.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Condensed by Asimov's widow from the remarkably prolific author's three-volume autobiography, this fascinating but somewhat disjointed collection of excerpts conveys the exuberant spirit of one of the most celebrated founding fathers and eighth Grand Master of American science fiction, who died in 1992. As a child of Russian Jewish immigrants, Asimov gazed longingly at encyclopedias in more affluent friends' homes, and grew up to be a walking encyclopedia himself: a self-educated polymath and humanist, he earned a Ph.D. in chemistry and later received over a dozen honorary doctorates. Asimov's widow presents chronologically his thoughts on his writing in the context of his life and his lifelong secular humanism; she connects them with a minimum of editorial comment and occasionally adds illuminating passages from their previously unpublished private correspondence. Also included are a brief chronology of Asimov's life; his posthumous 400th essay "A Way of Thinking," which his wife assembled from their discussions and letters defending "Reason against Chaos"; Asimov's favorite among his multitudinous short stories, "The Last Question," which is quintessential Asimov in its spare, conversational style simmering with optimistic cosmic humor; and the surprising revelation that Asimov's 1992 death was caused by complications from AIDS, which he had contracted through blood transfusions during his 1983 bypass surgery. Generously exposing both Asimov's immense talents as a science fiction author and his ruefully amusing self-deprecating punctures of his own early inflated self-image, this readable and idiosyncratic self-portrait should attract a whole new generation of readers to Asimov's fine creative works. Photos.

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From Library Journal

Isaac Asimov the author of hundreds of books, both fiction and nonfiction, including the "Foundation" series was a rationalist, convinced that the act of writing was Heaven for him. That rationalism is evident in his three-volume autobiography, which has been condensed into this single-volume work, accompanied by some personal letters compiled by his second wife, Janet Jeppison Asimov. Asimov's know-how, opinions, joys, and successes as a writer, educator, soldier, husband, father, and general intellectual show-off are detailed to varying degrees, but so are his booby prizes. He readily admits to being very self-involved, a necessity for a writer of his output, but such self-centeredness did not work well for his first marriage. It is, however, impossible not to like Asimov and his enthusiasm, even glee, for life as it comes. Asimov was often ill later in life, but his optimism and love of learning remained. Janet Asimov presents a "revelation" in the epilog of this book, but the impression that will last is of Isaac Asimov, the humanist. Recommended for all libraries.

Robert L. Kelly, Ft. Wayne Community Schs., IN

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From [Booklist](#)

Asimov's widow has ably condensed his three-volume autobiography into one handy book covering his life from birth in Russia and immigration with his parents and through careers as a scientist, an sf writer, and a science popularizer, and touching on matters of his humanist faith and his numerous works on the way to his final illness. That, an afterword imparts, was the result of HIV infection from contaminated blood transfusions during bypass surgery in 1983. The reader also learns enough about Janet Jeppson Asimov through her editing, letters, and comments to make her seem more than worthy of an autobiography herself. This is a good introduction to one of the most prolific and distinguished careers in twentieth-century American letters, especially for those unready to immerse themselves in the complete Asimov self-life. It

may, however, generate demand among serious sf students for its three-tome source. *Roland Green*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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