



I Swear I'll Make It Up to You

Mishka Shubaly

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I Swear I'll Make It Up to You is Mishka Shubaly's apology for choices he wasn't sure he'd live long enough to regret. It is a story of drinking, women, punk rock, and a journey so far down the low road that it took Shubaly years of running to come back.

A misfit kid in the best of times, Shubaly had his world shattered when, in a 24-hour span in 1992, he survived a mass shooting on his school's campus, then learned that his parents were getting divorced. After the departure of his father, a decorated rocket scientist, his remaining family soon lost their house. In his first act to avenge the wrongs against his mother, Shubaly plunged into a 17-year love affair with alcohol.

In this fiercely honest, emotional, and darkly witty book, Shubaly relives the best and worst of these adventures: the disastrous events that fractured his life; his imaginatively destructive romances; his hot-and-cold career as a rock musician; his travels across the country in search of meaning, drugs, and his family; and the time he met his newborn nephew while tripping on cough syrup.

I Swear I'll Make It Up to You is a memoir of a precocious young man trying to be good and failing (and failing, and failing)—until, one day, he succeeds. Taking a cab home one night after a bar fight, Shubaly decides to run five miles the next morning to retrieve his bike. Thus begins a new, much healthier love affair with running, and eventually a new life. And when Shubaly finally reunites with his distant father, he discovers the story of his childhood was radically different from what he'd imagined. Shubaly's muscular prose, big heart, and sharp humor inflect this grand story of mistakes, their consequences, and eventual redemption.

I Swear I'll Make It Up to You Details

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From Reader Review I Swear I'll Make It Up to You for online ebook

Kris Irvin says

Shubaly has lead a wild life. This book was really well written, but it just didn't click with me very well. It was an interesting memoir but it was hard to relate to, I guess.

billy says

There is often so much narcissism involved in the recovery process. And this book is definitely self-aware of that. But it also so often just bathes in it. Yet I feel like we end up on the right side together, being able to turn outward and see that there are people and sights around your view that are just as notable than another round of me vs. my self-pity. Also, describing the uglier elements of life and your low moments in the nastiest of details is not the same as keeping it real. Sometimes it just started to feel like a pissing contest. And yet I feel like I came out of it with a stronger grasp of addiction and a reaffirmation of my will to deal with my own demons, both substances and otherwise. So yeah, this one was a battle, definitely feel better for having read it.

Kristen says

Running part got boring quick

Penny Schmuecker says

I Swear I'll Make It Up To You is the story of Mishka Shubaly's 18 year battle with addiction and his ultimate triumph over the demons that should have killed him. This book reminded me of James Frey's A Million Little Pieces, a book that I actually liked in spite of the controversy surrounding his once-memoir, but later reclassified as a semi-fictional novel, that also dealt with addiction.

For 18 years, Shubaly drank everything he could get his hands on and took every drug he could find. Like Frey's book, I found it difficult to believe that he could accurately remember his accounts of what he drank and when he drank it; in general, it's hard enough to remember what you might have done and what you might have drunk even a year ago, but when you add the fog that comes with addiction, the descriptive recollection about which he writes makes it just as questionable as Frey's detailed account of his own addiction. It's not that I don't believe Shubaly's account but I question how some details can be reported so accurately when certainly he would have experienced blackouts.

The book is a train wreck that I could not turn away from but my patience wore thin after 300 plus pages of his drug-riddled escapades. Some incidents he remembered very vividly, while others, like the year that he travelled in his minivan, is given a single sentence in this book. Since Shubaly has published several well-received Kindle singles, it makes me wonder whether he excluded that "lost year" in hopes of having material for his next book.

Still, I can't say that I hated this book. It was very readable watching him self-destruct from my easy chair. However, it is extremely sad that an intelligent young man with a degree from Columbia University had to sink to such depths in the first place. What makes Shubaly's story different than most books written by addicts is that he is the survivor of a school shooting that took place at Simon's Rock College in western Massachusetts in 1992. The fact that he survived the shooting only to wander for the remainder of adolescence and into early adulthood just compounds the sadness of his story.

Eventually, Shubaly has an epiphany and realizes, as he says, that he was a self-hating crybaby and that despite "the hopelessness of my adolescence--the shooting, the divorce, losing the house--it had warped me...but I had been a prick all along." Along with this realization, he finds the cure, or at least the substitute, for his addiction: He becomes an ultrarunner. Eschewing the traditional twelve step program, he quits drinking and laces up worn tennis shoes and literally runs through his addictions. By this time, I felt like we'd practically grown up together and I was cheering on a childhood friend who'd finally kicked his habits.

If it weren't for the fact that he'd survived a school shooting or that he'd become an ultrarunner after a life of addiction, this book would be like most of the others that deal with addiction. It's readable but not a standout. On a personal note, best wishes to the author for maintaining a sober life. He certainly has worked for it.

Thanks to NetGalley and to the publisher for allowing to read an advance copy of this book.

Alison Simpson says

I wanted to hug the author after reading this. He's been through hell and put himself through hell. It was very tough to read and I'm stoked that he found a higher place to stand. He is inspiring in his recovery journey, his running, and his straightforward and compassionate outlook on life.

Ashley Pipkin says

Slow start (I started a few times and didn't make it far) with a great finish. Had me close to tears a couple times near the end.

Leanne Hengesbach says

Initially I thought I would really like this book, but it was so repetitious--the same childhood stuff repeated over and over, the drinking and drugging years, the same stuff over and over. I'm surprised he could remember all this in such great detail. It felt like being on a long bender.

As others have said, the character development of the many characters was really thin. His friends and family (except his father) (and especially the women) were like paper dolls.

It sounds to me as though the ultra-marathon running replaces the substance abuse--it's so similar, an obsession, an exercise addiction. I was exhausted at the end of this book. I did enjoy his reading of it. He has a good reading voice.

Susan says

Gritty putrid and hopeless Mishka manages to first almost destroy himself then miraculously save himself. From alcoholic addict to sober ultra runner. The raw honesty of this story is courageous and scary.

Gillian Eyre says

Addiction biographies can be hit & miss, or completely made up. This one feels honest, including not prettifying destructive behaviour, or over dramatising it. It could have been boring for showing *just* ordinary addiction, but it's a better book for it. We could all easily be at this level, and find a healthier addiction. He's neither a good or bad guy in his own story, and writes in a style that is quick to read. If you can be said to enjoy a book about drug & alcohol abuse, I did. I'd like to read more from him.

Serena says

Shubaly reflects on how he fell into, then dug himself out of a deep group of addictions with candor and humor....wonderful, dark, self-loathing humor.

Thru a series of misadventures, we learn what it feels like to be your own worst enemy. How bad does it have to get before we attempt change? The answer if you're a stubborn punk is pretty bad.

Circumventing the whole AA/NA route, he races out demons with a fairly brutal regimen. By the end of reading this, you'll be ready to get off your own lazy rumpus.

Sara Martin says

Excellent. Absolutely loved it.

Allison says

4-1/2! A tad too long, but very good.

AmyLTK says

THIS BOOK..... shot me straight in the heart in one of those ways that you aren't sure whether it is best to leave the dart, or pull it out. Beautifully and tragically honest, an ironic feast for those starving to hear the truths of life with addiction and then savoring the poison. My veins soaked up every word and they are still living with the effects.

Bridget Quinn says

If there's two things I'm a sucker for it's sports memoirs and addiction memoirs. Done & done in this one fabulous, rock n' roll, ultra-running, headlong sprint toward badass sobriety. What's there not to like?

Crystal West says

This was so raw and honest and human and vulnerable. It reminds me of that Hemingway quote "There is nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and bleed" I really enjoyed "The Long Run" because I like to run, but this surpasses that book by far.

Mishka - thank you for sharing your trust and perfectly imperfect life with the world.
