



# Little Failure: A Memoir

*Gary Shteyngart*

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**NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE AWARD FINALIST**

**NAMED ONE OF THE TEN BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY MICHIKO KAKUTANI, *THE NEW YORK TIMES* • NAMED ONE OF THE TEN BEST NONFICTION BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY *TIME***

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***The New York Times Book Review* • *The Washington Post* • NPR • *The New Yorker* • *San Francisco Chronicle* • *The Economist* • *The Atlantic* • *Newsday* • *Salon* • *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* • *The Guardian* • *Esquire* (UK) • *GQ* (UK)**

*Little Failure* is the all too true story of an immigrant family betting its future on America, as told by a lifelong misfit who finally finds a place for himself in the world through books and words. In 1979, a little boy dragging a ginormous fur hat and an overcoat made from the skin of some Soviet woodland creature steps off the plane at New York's JFK International Airport and into his new American life. His troubles are just beginning. For the former Igor Shteyngart, coming to the United States from the Soviet Union is like stumbling off a monochromatic cliff and landing in a pool of Technicolor. Careening between his Soviet home life and his American aspirations, he finds himself living in two contradictory worlds, wishing for a real home in one. He becomes so strange to his parents that his mother stops bickering with his father long enough to coin the phrase *failurchka*—"little failure"—which she applies to her once-promising son. With affection. Mostly. From the terrors of Hebrew School to a crash course in first love to a return visit to the homeland that is no longer home, Gary Shteyngart has crafted a ruthlessly brave and funny memoir of searching for every kind of love—family, romantic, and of the self.

## **Praise for *Little Failure***

"Hilarious and moving . . . The army of readers who love Gary Shteyngart is about to get bigger."—***The New York Times Book Review***

"A memoir for the ages . . . brilliant and unflinching."—**Mary Karr**

"Dazzling . . . a rich, nuanced memoir . . . It's an immigrant story, a coming-of-age story, a becoming-a-writer story, and a becoming-a-mensch story, and in all these ways it is, unambivalently, a success."—**Meg Wolitzer, NPR**

"Literary gold . . . [a] bruisingly funny memoir."—***Vogue***

"A giant success."—***Entertainment Weekly***

"[*Little Failure*] finds the delicate balance between sidesplitting and heartbreaking."—***O: The Oprah Magazine***

“Should become a classic of the immigrant narrative genre.”—*The Miami Herald*

“As vivid, original and funny as any that contemporary U.S. literature has to offer.”—*Los Angeles Times*

“The very best memoirs perfectly toe the line between heartbreak and humor, and Shteyngart does just that.”—*Esquire*

“Touching, insightful . . . [Shteyngart] nimbly achieves the noble Nabokovian goal of letting sentiment in without ever becoming sentimental.”—*The Washington Post*

“[Shteyngart is] a successor to no less than Saul Bellow and Philip Roth.”—*The Christian Science Monitor*

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