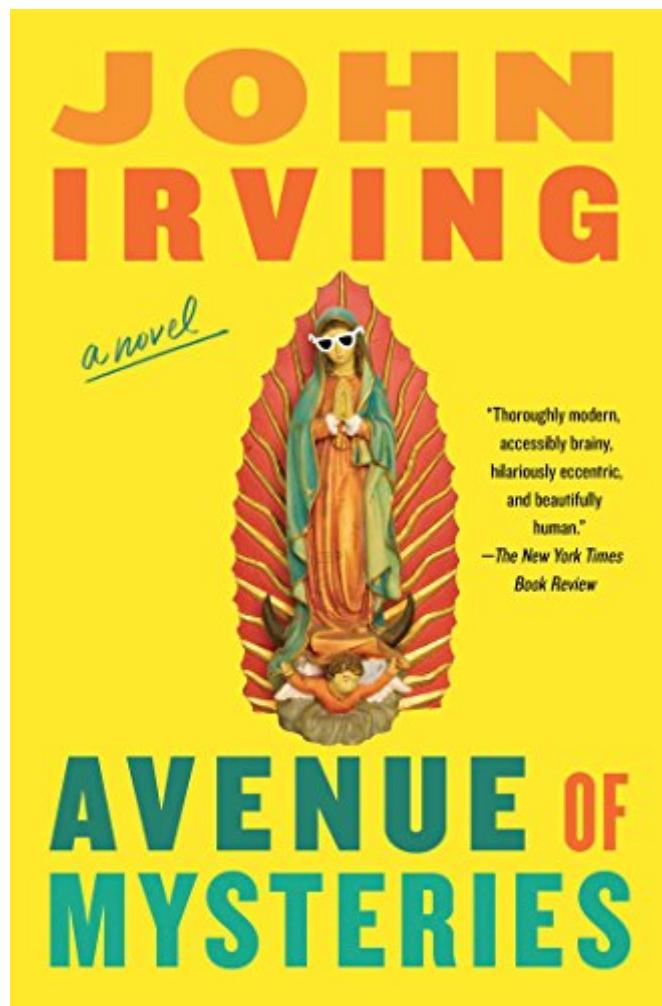


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Avenue Of Mysteries



Synopsis

John Irving returns to the themes that established him as one of our most admired and beloved authors in this absorbing novel of fate and memory. In *Avenue of Mysteries*, Juan Diego, a fourteen-year-old boy, who was born and grew up in Mexico, has a thirteen-year-old sister. Her name is Lupe, and she thinks she sees what's coming, specifically, her own future and her brother's. Lupe is a mind reader; she doesn't know what everyone is thinking, but she knows what most people are thinking. Regarding what has happened, as opposed to what will, Lupe is usually right about the past; without your telling her, she knows all the worst things that have happened to you. Lupe doesn't know the future as accurately. But consider what a terrible burden it is, if you believe you know the future, especially your own future, or, even worse, the future of someone you love. What might a thirteen-year-old girl be driven to do, if she thought she could change the future? As an older man, Juan Diego will take a trip to the Philippines, but what travels with him are his dreams and memories; he is most alive in his childhood and early adolescence in Mexico. As we grow older, most of all, in what we remember and what we dream, we live in the past. Sometimes, we live more vividly in the past than in the present. *Avenue of Mysteries* is the story of what happens to Juan Diego in the Philippines, where what happened to him in the past, in Mexico, collides with his future.

Book Information

File Size: 2294 KB

Print Length: 770 pages

Page Numbers Source ISBN: 0552778656

Publisher: Simon & Schuster; Reprint edition (November 3, 2015)

Publication Date: November 3, 2015

Language: English

ASIN: B00UDCNMRS

Text-to-Speech: Not enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #20,377 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #7 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > United States > Hispanic American #18 in Books >

Customer Reviews

Given his penchant for blending comical farce with genuinely moving scenes of sorrow and loss -- accidents and murders and sexual assaults in THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GARP; serial killers and crazed men club members in A SON OF THE CIRCUS; the loss of a hand to a lion (not a spoiler) and a dog-poop flinging doctor in THE FOURTH HAND; not to mention dwarves, bears and transsexuals galore -- John Irving has always been a second (more northern) cousin to the magic realism movement embodied by the likes of Gabriel Garcia Marquez or Isabel Allende. But with AVENUE OF MYSTERIES (a novel set in Mexico, the Philippines and, briefly, Iowa) he enters the waters with both feet -- actually, he immerses himself, AND his characters. Like a strand of DNA, there are two intertwined, inseparable stories being told from the start: the first is that of the older (over 50) Juan Diego Guerrero -- successful, somewhat famous, writer (and sometime teacher at the Writers workshops in Iowa) -- who is travelling to the Philippines to fulfil a promise made to a kind, American (draft-dodging) stranger he met as an orphan in Mexico. His American doctor has recently prescribed both beta blockers (Lopressor) and sexual stimulants (Viagra), because the beta blockers make him tired. The combination of the two drugs interfere with Juan Diego's often vivid dreams, an essential tool for a writer of fiction. So he tends to NOT follow the prescribed dosage everyday. Thus, the weary writer -- a flight to the Philippines is a looong flight, not to mention the short jaunts when he arrives -- is prone to nod off, and dream of his past. Which brings us to the second, but inter-twined, strand of narrative. As a boy in Mexico, Juan Diego grew up as an orphan who worked in the dumps of Oaxaca.

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