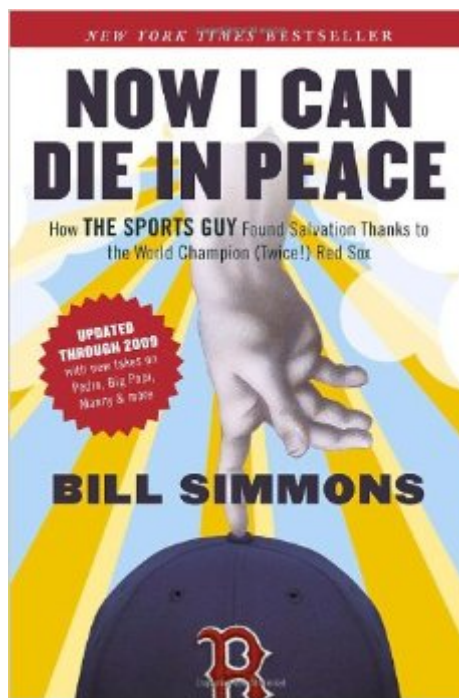


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Now I Can Die In Peace: How The Sports Guy Found Salvation Thanks To The World Champion (Twice!) Red Sox



Synopsis

ESPN's beloved Sports Guy replays the years leading up to the Boston Red Sox historic championship season and says goodbye to a lifetime of suffering. At least for now. "The Red Sox won the World Series." To Citizen No. 1 of Red Sox Nation, those seven words meant "No more 1918 chants. No more smug glances from Yankee fans. No more worrying about living an entire life -- that's 80 years, followed by death without seeing the Red Sox win a Series." But once he was able to type those life-changing words, Bill Simmons decided to look back at his Sports Guy columns for the last five years to find out how the miracle came to pass. And that's where the trouble began. Why didn't he see it coming? Why didn't it happen sooner? What was the key deal, the lucky move, the funny bounce, the sign from above that he failed to spot? Pretty soon, The Sports Guy was second-guessing himself, rewriting history, sniping at his own past predictions, pounding the table -- that's what sports guys do, right And doing so, he let himself get sidetracked by the suffering of the Boston Bruins, frustrated by the false promise of the Celtics -- and driven into a state of ecstasy by the dynastic New England Patriots. The result is Now I Can Die in Peace, a hilarious and fresh new look at some of the best sportswriting in America, with sharp critical commentary (and fresh insights) from the guy who wrote it in the first place.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Following the 2004 season, The Sports Guy wrote the best of the many books about the Red Sox championship run. In preparation for opening day of 2009, he has revised it to include 100 pages of updated columns. Simmons starts the new section with an analysis of how Sox fans confronted a

new and uncursed existence. He asks "What happens when your identity gets stripped away, when you get the chance to start from scratch?" He follows this with: a comparison of Larry Bird and Big Papi, coverage of the Dice-K acquisition, the 2007 championship, the Rocket and the Roids, a defense of Manny being Manny and the 2008 loss to the Rays. Through it all, Simmons writing is more about what it is to be a fan than it is about the team or the game. If you strip away the occasionally on target pop culture references and the more accurately directed humor, this book is the story of the love affair of Simmons, his family and his city for a team. (Part of that sentence is stolen from Ken Coleman's 1967 Impossible Dream narration.) The Sports Guy proudly wears his passion on his sleeve: "I think like a fan, write like a fan and try like hell to keep it that way." It is a lifelong relationship: "You love sports most when you are 16, then you love it a little less every year." Reading these columns, another diehard instinctively feels an affinity for Simmons and appreciates his commitment, knowledge and intermittent suffering. This is made easier because the author often recognizes when he has stepped across the line that separates the healthfully obsessed from the not quite well (One of his footnotes points out, "This paragraph made me sound like an a**hole).

I've read Bill Simmons' ESPN.com columns since they began in 2001. His ability to combine sports with pop culture references made him a unique writer and one who can be wildly fun to read as you never knew what he could come up with. One column may be a running diary of his fantasy league basketball draft while another may deal with using "The Godfather" quotes to summarize the baseball season. Bill's new book contains columns that he wrote for ESPN.com as well as those written before that time dealing with his obsession with the Boston Red Sox and their attempt to win their first World Series since 1918. If you started reading Simmons on ESPN.com, you'll get about 100 or so pages of columns you've never read before (written prior to mid-2001). The remaining 250 pages will probably seem familiar to you as they all appeared on ESPN.com, but Bill has added footnotes along the edges with additional observations, witty comments and thoughts on how he feels about what he wrote at this point in time. He also has appeared to rework his columns, with the most notable change being that he has added considerable profanity to his ESPN.com columns (which was not there when originally published). I thought that was an interesting twist to his reworking of the material. The ups and downs of the Red Sox, with the gut-wrenching loss in Game 7 of the ALCS against the Yankees in 2003 chronicled as well as the joy he experienced from his team finally winning it all in 2004. He covers all the emotions well. When his 2004 season columns were originally written, I was genuinely happy for him and the other Red Sox fans, as they had gone

through a lot over the years.

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