

It's What He Would've Wanted: A Novel

Sean Hughes



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Sean Hughes is an award-winning Irish comic turned bestselling writer whom the British "Independent" has compared to the likes of Irvine Welsh, James Kelman, and Will Self. Now, the popular comedian delivers "It's What He Would've Wanted, " a brutally funny, highly charged, and moving novel about a directionless thirty-year-old man's belated transition into adulthood. Our narrator and protagonist is Shea Hickson, a commitment-phobic just-turned-thirty-year-old with somewhat adolescent leanings. Shea lives off lottery winnings and spends his time blindly serving a secret organization whose stated duty is to "seek truth," which, though Shea doesn't quite realize it, turns out to be a small-time terrorist gig. Shea's parents appear to be a quintessentially comfortable, suburban middle-class couple, and when sons Shea and Orwell (named after Che Guevara and George, their father having been something of a nostalgic radical) arrive for Christmas Eve, all seems as it should be. But when Shea turns a corner to find his father, a BBC weatherman, hanging from the light fixture, the son's disaffected existence is turned upside down. Worse, Shea's discovery of an encoded journal his father had been keeping uncovers shocking revelations about his father's disappointed life as a parent, husband, and disillusioned minor celebrity. Jolted from his emotional ennui, Shea determines to figure out what drove his father to his death and, in the process of unraveling the Hickson family's increasingly distasteful secrets, comes to better understand himself. With wry humor and savage undercurrents, the story winds through the seamier side of London life -- skirting the worlds of television, newspapers, and small-scale urban terrorism. Buoyed by Hughes's edgy humor and Seinfeldian observations about modern life, "It's What He Would've Wanted" dissects and mutilates traditional family values as it maps one son's attempt to piece together a world fractured by alienation, paranoia, and conflict.

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