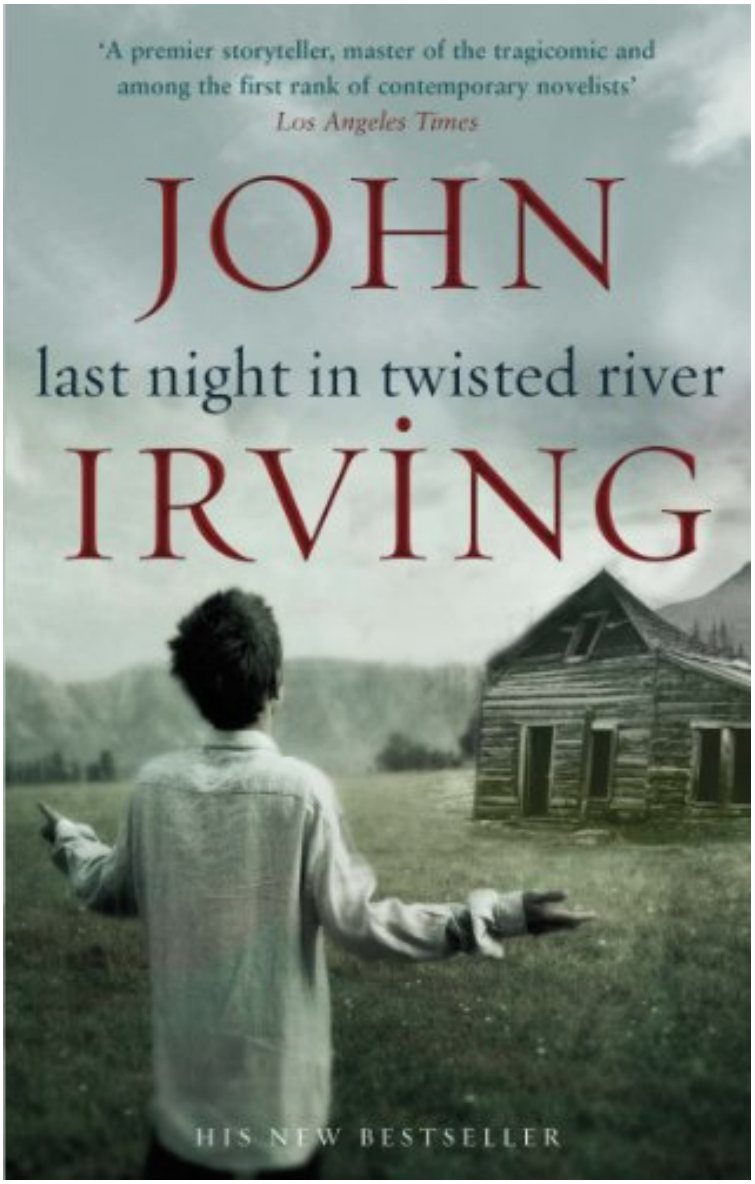
Last Night in Twisted River



Par John Irving
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(Read now) Last Night in Twisted River

Par John Irving : Last Night in Twisted River before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Last Night in Twisted River:

Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurIn 1954, in the cookhouse of a logging and sawmill settlement in northern New Hampshire, a twelve-year-old boy mistakes the local constable's girlfriend for a bear. Both the twelve-year-old and his father become fugitives, pursued by the constable. Their lone protector is a fiercely libertarian logger, once a river driver, who befriends them. In a story spanning five decades, Last Night in Twisted River - John Irving's twelfth novel - depicts the recent half-century in the United States as a world 'where lethal hatreds were generally permitted to run their course.' From the novel's taut opening sentence to its elegiac final chapter, what distinguishes Last Night in Twisted River is the author's unmistakable voice, the inimitable voice of an accomplished storyteller.ExtraitCHAPTER 1UNDER THE LOGSThe young

canadian, who could not have been more than fifteen, had hesitated too long. For a frozen moment, his feet had stopped moving on the floating logs in the basin above the river bend; he'd slipped entirely underwater before anyone could grab his outstretched hand. One of the loggers had reached for the youth's long hair the older man's fingers groped around in the frigid water, which was thick, almost soupy, with sloughed-off slabs of bark. Then two logs collided hard on the would-be rescuer's arm, breaking his wrist. The carpet of moving logs had completely closed over the young Canadian, who never surfaced; not even a hand or one of his boots broke out of the brown water.Out on a logjam, once the key log was pried loose, the river drivers had to move quickly and continually; if they paused for even a second or two, they would be pitched into the torrent. In a river drive, death among moving logs could occur from a crushing injury, before you had a chance to drown but drowning was more common.From the riverbank, where the cook and his twelve-year-old son could hear the cursing of the logger whose wrist had been broken, it was immediately apparent that someone was in more serious trouble than the would-be rescuer, who'd freed his injured arm and had managed to regain his footing on the flowing logs. His fellow river drivers ignored him; they moved with small, rapid steps toward shore, calling out the lost boy's name. The loggers ceaselessly prodded with their pike poles, directing the floating logs ahead of them. The rivermen were, for the most part, picking the safest way ashore, but to the cook's hopeful son it seemed that they might have been trying to create a gap of sufficient width for the young Canadian to emerge. In truth, there were now only intermittent gaps between the logs. The boy who'd told them his name was "Angel Pope, from Toronto," was that quickly gone."Is it Angel ?" the twelve-year-old asked his father. This boy, with his dark-brown eyes and intensely serious expression, could have been mistaken for Angel's younger brother, but there was no mistaking the family resemblance that the twelve-year-old bore to his ever-watchful father. The cook had an aura of controlled apprehension about him, as if he routinely anticipated the most unforeseen disasters, and there was something about his son's seriousness that reflected this; in fact, the boy looked so much like his father that several of the woodsmen had expressed their surprise that the son didn't also walk with his dad's pronounced limp.The cook knew too well that indeed it was the young Canadian who had fallen under the logs. It was the cook who'd warned the loggers that Angel was too green for the river drivers' work; the youth should not have been trying to free a logjam. But probably the boy had been eager to please, and maybe the rivermen hadn't noticed him at first.In the cook's opinion, Angel Pope had also been too green (and too clumsy) to be working in the vicinity of the main blade in a sawmill. That was strictly the sawyer's territory a highly skilled position in the mills. The planer operator was a relatively skilled position, too, though not particularly dangerous.The more dangerous and less skilled positions included working on the log deck, where logs were rolled into the mill and onto the saw carriage, or unloading logs from the trucks. Before the advent of mechanical loaders, the logs were unloaded by releasing trip bunks on the sides of the trucks this allowed an entire load to roll off a truck at once. But the trip bunks sometimes failed to release; the men were occasionally caught under a cascade of logs while they were trying to free a bunk.As far as the cook was concerned, Angel shouldn't have been in any position that put the boy in close proximity to moving logs. But the lumberjacks had been as fond of the young Canadian as the cook and his son had been, and Angel had said he was bored working in the kitchen. The youth had wanted more physical labor, and he liked the outdoors.The repeated thunk-thunk of the pike poles, poking the logs, was briefly interrupted by the shouts of the rivermen who had spotted Angel's pike pole more than fifty yards from where the boy had vanished. The fifteen-foot pole was floating free of the log drive, out where the river currents had carried it away from the logs.The cook could see that the river driver with the broken wrist had come ashore, carrying his pike pole in his good hand. First by the familiarity of his cursing, and only secondarily by the logger's matted hair and tangled beard, did the cook realize that the injured man was Ketchum no neophyte to the treachery of a log drive.It was April not long after the last snowmelt and the start of mud season but the ice had only recently broken up in the river basin, the first logs falling through the ice upstream of the basin, on the Dummer ponds. The river was ice-cold and swollen, and many of the lumberjacks had heavy beards and long hair, which would afford them some scant protection from the blackflies in mid-May.Ketchum lay on his back on the riverbank like a beached bear. The moving mass of logs flowed past him. It appeared as if the log drive were a life raft, and the loggers who were still out on the river seemed like castaways at sea except that the sea, from one moment to the next, turned from greenish brown to bluish black. The water in Twisted River was richly dyed with tannins."Shit, Angel!" Ketchum shouted from his back. "I said, 'Move your feet, Angel. You have to keep moving your feet !' Oh, shit."The vast expanse of logs had been no life raft for Angel, who'd surely drowned or been crushed to death in the basin above the river bend, although the

lumberjacks (Ketchum among them) would follow the log drive at least to where Twisted River poured into the Pontook Reservoir at Dead Woman Dam. The Pontook Dam on the Androscoggin River had created the reservoir; once the logs were let loose in the Androscoggin, they would next encounter the sorting gaps outside Milan. In Berlin, the Androscoggin dropped two hundred feet in three miles; two paper mills appeared to divide the river at the sorting gaps in Berlin. It was not inconceivable to imagine that young Angel Pope, from Toronto, was on his way there.Come nightfall, the cook and his son were still attempting to salvage leftovers, for tomorrow's meals, from the scores of untouched dinners in the small settlement's dining lodge the cookhouse in the so-called town of Twisted River, which was barely larger and only a little less transient than a logging camp. Not long ago, the only dining lodge on a river drive hadn't been a lodge at all. There once was a traveling kitchen that had been permanently built onto a truck body, and an adjacent truck on which a modular dining hall could be taken down and reassembled this was when the trucks used to perpetually move camp to another site on Twisted River, wherever the loggers were working next.In those days, except on the weekends, the rivermen rarely went back to the town of Twisted River to eat or sleep. The camp cook had often cooked in a tent. Everything had to be completely portable; even the sleeping shelters were built onto truck bodies.Now nobody knew what would become of the less-than-thriving town of Twisted River, which was situated partway between the river basin and the Dummer ponds. The sawmill workers and their families lived there, and the logging company maintained bunkhouses for the more transient woodsmen, who included not only the French Canadian itinerants but most of the river drivers and the other loggers. The company also maintained a better equipped kitchen, an actual dining lodge the aforementioned cookhouse for the cook and his son. But for how much longer? Not even the owner of the logging company knew.The lumber industry was in transition; it would one day be possible for every worker in the logging business to work from home. The logging camps (and even the slightly less marginal settlements like Twisted River) were dying. The wanigans themselves were disappearing; those curious shelters for sleeping and eating and storing equipment had not only been mounted on trucks, on wheels, or on crawler tracks, but they were often attached to rafts or boats.The Indian dishwasher she worked for the cook had long ago told the cook's young son that wanigan was from an Abenaki word, leading the boy to wonder if the dishwasher herself was from the Abenaki tribe. Perhaps she just happened to know the origin of the word, or she'd merely claimed to know it. (The cook's son went to school with an Indian boy who'd told him that wanigan was of Algonquian origin.)While it lasted, the work during a river drive was from dawn till dark. It was the protocol in a logging operation to feed the men four times a day. In the past, when the wanigans couldn't get close to a river site, the two midday meals had been trekked to the drivers. The first and last meal were served in the base camp nowadays, in the dining lodge. But out of their affection for Angel, tonight many of the loggers had missed their last meal in the cookhouse. They'd spent the evening following the log drive, until the darkness had driven them away not only the darkness, but also the men's growing awareness that none of them knew if Dead Woman Dam was open. From the basin below the town of Twisted River, the logs probably with Angel among them might already have flowed into the Pontook Reservoir, but not if Dead Woman Dam was closed. And if the Pontook Dam and Dead Woman were open, the body of the young Canadian would be headed pell-mell down the Androscoggin. No one kn...Revue de presse"Last Night in Twisted River is a novel of excellence. This big-hearted, brilliantly written and superbly realised inter-generational tale of a father and son on the lam, and their flawed protector, stands comparison with the very best of Irving's previous work. It is absolutely unmissable." Irvine Welsh, Financial Times"Last Night in Twisted River mulls the crises that steep Irving's finest work, from Garp to Owen Meany to Widow. Yet the scale here is more human, and his approach more humane, than anything that's come before." Los Angeles Times"One of Mr. Irving's more powerful works." The New York Times"Irving both tickles the narrative palate of saga and suspense lovers, and guides us gently down the paths of unaccustomed thought on civility, politics and art. . . . Irving always keeps one foot in the fairy-tale forest. Fate and kinship by blood or choice entwine as intimately in his books as they ever did in Dickens." The IndependentFrom the Hardcover edition.