



## Family Life: A Novel

By Akhil Sharma

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Winner of the 2016 International Dublin Literary Award

"Gorgeously tender at its core...beautiful, heartstopping...*Family Life* really blazes." —Sonali Deraniyagala, *New York Times Book Review*

Hailed as a "supreme storyteller" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*) for his "cunning, dismaying and beautifully conceived" fiction (*New York Times*), Akhil Sharma is possessed of a narrative voice "as hypnotic as those found in the pages of Dostoyevsky" (*The Nation*). In his highly anticipated second novel, *Family Life*, he delivers a story of astonishing intensity and emotional precision.

We meet the Mishra family in Delhi in 1978, where eight-year-old Ajay and his older brother Birju play cricket in the streets, waiting for the day when their plane tickets will arrive and they and their mother can fly across the world and join their father in America. America to the Mishras is, indeed, everything they could have imagined and more: when automatic glass doors open before them, they feel that surely they must have been mistaken for somebody important. Pressing an elevator button and the elevator closing its doors and rising, they have a feeling of power at the fact that the elevator is obeying them. Life is extraordinary until tragedy strikes, leaving one brother severely brain-damaged and the other lost and virtually orphaned in a strange land. Ajay, the family's younger son, prays to a God he envisions as Superman, longing to find his place amid the ruins of his family's new life.

Heart-wrenching and darkly funny, *Family Life* is a universal story of a boy torn between duty and his own survival.

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## Family Life: A Novel By Akhil Sharma Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

**\*Starred Review\*** If the first rule of strong writing is, show, don't tell (and it is), Sharma is a grand master, a black belt, an Olympic champion. Via the spare, guileless voice of protagonist Ajay Mishra, we travel the entire 7,000-mile journey from New Delhi to New York in his shoes as his family—father, mother, brother Birju, and he—arrives and settles in America. There is the joyous, even hopeful dispensing of household goods and favorite toys that can't make the plane trip. The surprised delight of reading the exotic ingredients on the labels of canned goods in American supermarkets. The breathless anticipation of Birju's acceptance into a prestigious prep school. Then, after Birju suffers a tragic accident, the suctioning from their lives of all that hope, joy, delight, and anticipation. This is not just the double-whammy smack of reality á la strangers in a strange land. It is a multiple-whammy, full-body smackdown that ramps up the bizarreness of their new world by adding tragic, harrowing circumstances. As extreme as the family's misfortunes become, Sharma's seemingly effortless prose transcends any disbelief, and his characters and their experiences will linger in the mind's recesses long after the last page is read. --Donna Chavez

Review

"Outstanding...Every page is alive and surprising, proof of [Sharma's] huge, unique talent." (David Sedaris)

"Riveting... Sharma is compassionate but unflinching." (Sonali Deraniyagala - The New York Times Book Review)

"Dark humor twines through Sharma's unforgettable story of survival and its costs." (Mary Pols - People)

"Surface simplicity and detachment are the hallmarks of this novel, but hidden within its small, unembellished container are great torrents of pity and grief. Sedulously scaled and crafted, it transforms the chaos of trauma into a glowing work of art." (The Wall Street Journal)

"I lost all track of time while I was reading it, and felt by the end that I'd returned from a great and often harrowing journey... To my own surprise, I found myself renewed after reading it, and imbued with a feeling of hope." (John Wray - Salon)

"Sharma spent 13 years writing this slim novel, and the effort shows in each lucid sentence and heartbreaking detail." (Stephen Lee - Entertainment Weekly)

"A heartbreaking novel-from-life... [Sharma] takes after Hemingway, as each word of his brilliant novel feels deliberate, and each line is quietly moving." (Maddie Crum - Huffington Post)

"There's nothing like the pleasure of being devastated by a short novel. Like Jhumpa Lahiri, Akhil Sharma writes of the Indian immigrant experience with great empathy and a complete lack of sentimentality. *Family Life* is a dark and thrilling accomplishment by a wildly gifted writer." (Ann Packer)

"*Family Life* is a terse, devastating account of growing up as a brilliant outsider in American culture. It is a nearly perfect novel." (Edmund White)

"Sharma is a rare master at charting the frailties and failures, the cruelties and rages, the altering moods and contradictions, whims and perversities of a tragic cast of characters. But this most unsentimental writer

leaves the reader, finally and surprisingly, moved.” (Kiran Desai)

“An immigrant story like no other: funny and dark, unrelenting and above all, true.” (Nell Freudenberger)

#### About the Author

Akhil Sharma is the author of *Family Life*, a New York Times Best Book of the Year and the winner of the International DUBLIN Literary Award and the Folio Prize. His writing has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *Best American Short Stories*, and *O. Henry Award Stories*. A native of Delhi, he lives in New York City and teaches English at Rutgers University–Newark.

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Reading a reserve tends to be new life style in this era globalization. With reading you can get a lot of information that can give you benefit in your life. Along with book everyone in this world may share their idea. Books can also inspire a lot of people. Many author can inspire their own reader with their story or their experience. Not only the storyline that share in the ebooks. But also they write about the ability about something that you need instance. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your kids, there are many kinds of book that you can get now. The authors in this world always try to improve their expertise in writing, they also doing some research before they write to their book. One of them is this *Family Life: A Novel*.

**Jill Lee:**

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