



Love You to Bits and Pieces: Life with David Helfgott

Gillian Helfgott , Gillian Helgott

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Here is the real story of Australian pianist David Helfgott, by the person who knows him best. The highly acclaimed movie Shine tells David's extraordinary story from child musical prodigy, through tormenting mental breakdown, to triumphant recovery. This book, written by David's wife, Gillian, is the equally extraordinary story of their lives since the couple's fateful meeting in 1983, and David's own account and analysis of his life prior to that meeting. The book charts David's struggles to escape the legacy of his troubled childhood and how, with the help of his wife and friends, he forms a new sense of self without losing his magical quirkiness and childlike sense of wonder. When David achieves his dream of once again performing Rakhmaninov's Third Concerto in 1995, it is a moment of overwhelming personal affirmation, and the culmination of Gillian's unswerving belief in his brilliance.

Love You to Bits and Pieces: Life with David Helfgott Details

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Lynne says

Having originally watched the film of David's life - 'SHINE'- and then bought some of his music, I was thrilled to find this book, written by his wife. David's story has had a profound impact on me and his music reaches right to the very heart of my soul. Such an inspirational, gentle guy full of humility and love. A genuine treasure and pure genius.

Lamec Mariita says

I recommend the book for anyone who liked the movie "Shine". It's the true story that inspired the movie. It's a genuine story of triumph over adversity. The strength and courage of these two extraordinary people was impressing. The book was written with honesty and passion. You'll definitely love the book.

Lee Yahnker says

True story of pianist, David Helfgott, written by his wife Gillian. Way too many references to pieces he played. To me the story dragged on because of this. Also, I couldn't decide if Gillian was using him to gain access to free holidays.

Bethany says

Love You to Bits and Pieces is the true story on which the movie *Shine* is based: the life of pianist David Helfgott. His wife, Gillian, discusses David's mental illnesses, childhood, adult life, and work.

This is a fascinating story, but is completely exhausting to read. It only has a few hundred pages - and large print; still, David's endless capacity for energy and manic episodes leaves the reader sleepy at the end of every chapter. I worked on it for two weeks before finishing it today. My suggestion - and I **never** say this - is to watch the movie instead.

Heather says

great story on the life of David Helfgott.

K M says

Sometimes quite interesting and engaging, sometimes a bit tedious.

Ros says

I enjoyed this book. It is a sincere and loving tribute to the remarkable character and musicianship of David Helfgott, from David's partner, Gillian. As a follow-up to the movie Shine, it was interesting and, at times, moving. Since reading it, I have seen Helfgott perform in concert, and been inspired not only by his playing but by the warmth and generosity that radiated throughout the concert hall.

Sapna Shah says

The emotions come alive in this tear jerker. It is an amazing journey of brilliance, hope and love. It reminded me of how little we control in life and yet how much difference one individual can make.

Niki says

A simple but beautiful little book about Australia pianist David Helfgott, written by his extremely patient wife Gillian. David is a brilliant musician who became erratic and obsessive as he aged due to a very abusive father. When he met Gillian he created floods everywhere he went due to his fascination with water, he holds you so close to talk gently in your ear at a mile a minute, and so much more... and despite his eccentricities she fell for him and wrote about their life together. Just lovely.

Beth Peninger says

It's hard, I think, to rate someones true life story. So my rating has more to do with the way in which it was written (i.e. did it captivate me, keep me interested, etc?). Perhaps my "problem" with this particular one is that I just wasn't that interested from the get go. I've never heard of David Helfgott nor the movie "Shine" so I didn't really care about this brilliant piano player. I might have gotten interested if the book was written, in my opinion, to interest me. But as it was, David's wife Gillian didn't write it to interest me. I'm not a fan of simply retelling the details. Make them interesting! I didn't feel Gillian did this. And it is assumed that even if you aren't deeply interested in the musical world that you know who David Helfgott is and you are so enamored by him. I think this is a wrong assumption to make. I would guess that most fall into the category I do, having never heard of him before. And if that is the case the writing needs to be really good in order to get the reader really interested. This book just didn't do it for me. I kinda felt like I was trudging through it and honestly the last 100 or so pages I skimmed. It was a retelling after retelling of concerts and David's mannerisms - the prior pages had already recounted similar stories multiple times. So the book wasn't a win for me but I am curious to hear David play so I'll head over to YouTube and see if I can find him there so I can at least hear his brilliant playing.

Mae says

read the book and watched the film...both were brilliant. i loved the self-affirmation and the selfless love in this story

Sandie Buto says

Too much name dropping and descriptions of musical halls/associations which meant nothing to me and distracted from the story. This book wasn't really accessible to me as a member of the general public and not a musician.

Cindy says

I don't say this very often (in fact I don't think I've ever said it before), but I liked the movie better than the book. Of course I usually read the book before the movie so that may have made the difference but I don't think so. While the story itself is fascinating I just didn't like the approach to writing it down. However, it was good to know that both David Helfgott and Gillian Helfgott were involved in the making of the movie and both were touched by their viewing of it because it so truly captured who they are. So, for once, a movie truly is "based on a true story", maybe even more than 50%.

Tiffany says

The film SHINE really had a profound effect on me, so much so that I went out and bought David Helfgott's CDs and three books based on his life, one being this one, the other two being the screenplay to SHINE and the book written by Beverley Eley.

I don't know how I would deal with a man like David. I am inspired by him. He amazes me. His incredible insight into people and yet his completely lacking social skills intrigue and bewilder me. His love and devotion to his music and his wife and friends cause me great comfort. His wonderful, quick mind and plays on words make me laugh. His story makes me weep, first with sadness, and then with joy. To have great music, great art, we must have people like David Helfgott.

This book would be the one to read if you wanted a view on the kindness and the being. If you wanted a clear view of the artist and the man, then I would recommend Eley's book. If you want to just understand as much as you can, well, like myself, you can read them both, and throw the screenplay in for good measure...

Chana says

This is the amazing story of musical prodigy David Helfgott; his talent, his childhood, his mental illness, his incredible wife, his recovery and musical come-back. Once I opened this book I just could not stop reading it, it really is unbelievable. Part of my amazement is not just for David Helfgott, but for his wife Gillian, the

chances that she takes and her ability to make things happen. The two of them, Wow, I am ever so impressed. I would be interested to hear some of David Helfgott's recordings.
