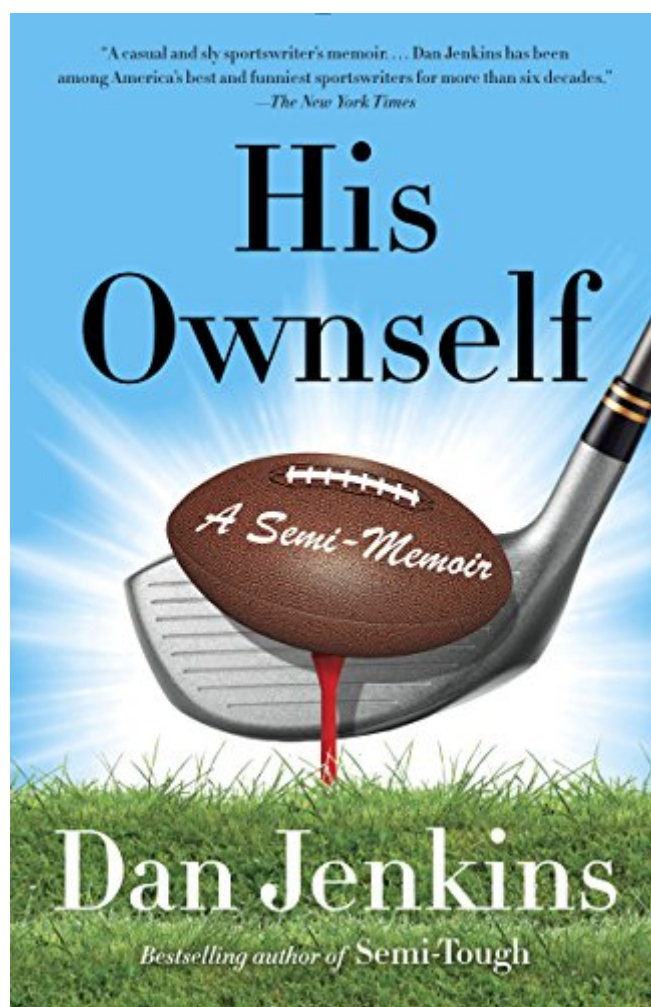


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His Ownself: A Semi-Memoir



Synopsis

In *His Ownself*, Dan Jenkins takes us on a tour of his legendary career as a sportswriter and novelist. Here we see Dan's hone his craft, from his high school paper through to his first job at the Fort Worth Press and on to the glory days of *Sports Illustrated*. Whether in Texas, New York, or anywhere for that matter, Dan was always at the center of it all—hanging out at Elaine's while swapping stories with politicians and movie stars, covering every Masters and U.S. Open and British Open for over four decades. The result is a knee-slapping, star-studded, once-in-a-lifetime memoir from one of the most important, hilarious, and semi-cantankerous sportswriters ever.

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Customer Reviews

The closing lines of Dan Jenkins's memoir say it all: "True friends are a priceless commodity in this world, and I've been blessed with many. And there are other things intended: a vitality of existence, a hopeful view of life, and a tender attitude about love. After all, Billy Clyde won the game and got the girl—and so did I." This conclusion summarizes the gist of *His Ownself*. Dan's memoir is a story of friends, of family life, of journalism, novelistic fiction and romance, but principally it is a story about the vitality of existence. It is a story about Paschal High School in Fort

Worth and TCU, a story about golf and football and those who write about it for a living. Dan Jenkins has written about all of that, both as a journalist and novelist (and now as a memoirist) and readers of his novelistic writing will already know how his personal background and journalistic career intersect and intertwine with his fiction. There is such a thing as a "Dan Jenkins book" and whether it be fiction or non-fiction, it is always delightful. Add *His Ownself* to the list. It is, indeed, a memoir rather than an autobiography, but it triumphs as a memoir because DJ knows/knew such interesting people, had such interesting experiences and writes about both in such an engaging way. You will not turn to this book expecting a step by step, monthly account of his life. The overall outlines are clear, but much of the material is conceived thematically and expressed anecdotally. This works because the anecdotes are so interesting and expressed in the pure Jenkins voice. DJ is incapable of being dull, but the stories he tells are enlivened further when they concern such individuals as Ben Hogan, David Merrick, Henry Luce and Agatha Christie.

HIS OWNSELF: A SEMI-MEMOIR owes its title to Dan Jenkins' most well known character, Billy Clyde Puckett, former stud-horse running back featured in *SEMI-TOUGH* and *LIFE ITS OWNSELF*. Jenkins is a treasure, the last of his generation of sportswriters. Sportswriters whose prose sang, who didn't take themselves or the games and contests they covered too serious, who were part of sports milieu devoid of corporations. Jenkins unique spot in this pantheon is that he is funny. Laugh out loud funny. Three buddies of mine and I nearly died while driving up Highway 395 listening to *YOU GOTTA PLAY HURT* [we were laughing so hard we almost drove the car off the road]. *A SEMI-MEMOIR* is also funny. If you are looking for a traditional autobiography you can stop here. It ain't. It is more of a rambling overview. Jenkins wrote for a couple of Texas newspapers before being recruited to *Sports Illustrated* to cover the college football scene. He eventually got the back page. (His protagonist in *YOU GOTTA PLAY HURT* writes the back page for a thinly disguised *SI*.) In covering the great sporting events Jenkins, ever irrepressible, makes no bones about his true loves: college football, especially Texas Christian University, and golf. Jenkins' golf hero is Ben Hogan, another Texas boy. For Jenkins the Golden Age of golf was as the mantle was passed from Hogan to Arnold Palmer to Jack Nicklaus. He does not hide his disdain for one Tiger Woods, going as far as to reproduce his *Golf Digest* column "Nice (Not) Knowing You" in its entirety. "spoiled, pampered, hidden, guarded, orchestrated, and entitled." And that's the nice stuff! One of my favorite anecdotes in the book features Pearl, a waitress in a Texas diner.

Dan Jenkins is somewhat of a polarizing character, seen by some of the more tightly-wound in the world of sports and sportswriting these days as a politically-incorrect dinosaur, but there's no denying his bonafides as a sportswriter. In a career that has spanned 65 years - so far - he has written about golf and college football, mostly, and other sports when called upon to do so, for the Fort Worth Press, Dallas Herald, Sports Illustrated, and Golf Digest, with a few years of providing a sports column to Playboy magazine as well. He has covered more of golf's major tournaments than any writer living, and speaking of that, he is one of only three golf writers to have been inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame (the others being Herbert Warren Wind and Bernard Darwin) and the only one inducted, in his words, "while still vertical". In "His Ownself: A Memoir", Jenkins reaches into his formidable memory and comes back with tales of his early life growing up in a sports-crazy town, Fort Worth, Texas, in a sports-crazy time, the 1930s. College football and golf were the most important sports of his formative years, with the TCU Horned Frogs in town and the SMU Mustangs just down the road in Dallas, not to mention that two of the greatest golfers ever to swing a club, Ben Hogan and Byron Nelson, were also Fort Worth native sons. Jenkins began his career with the Fort Worth Press, starting on the job as an incoming college freshman. Over the years he met and wrote about all the greats - he got to know Ben Hogan while still a college golfer and sportswriter for the Fort Worth Press, and came to know the great man very well over the years.

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