

PRESS RELEASE

Random House releases e-book version of *The Life and Times of the Last Kid Picked*

NEW YORK — Imagine, if you can, a small boy who leaves his house in the morning and disappears for 14 or 15 hours — and does so every day for months — and his parents don't worry, don't wonder where is and don't even care if he comes home for meals.

You don't have to imagine. You can read all about it — because this boy is the hero of *The Life and Times of the Last Kid Picked*, David Benjamin's rollicking reminiscence of a Wisconsin boyhood at mid-century, the last era of "free-lance childhood." *The Last Kid Picked*, praised by reviewers in its original release, has been re-released by Random House (on May 25), in a new e-book version.

Imagine a kid discovering, in a swamp behind the railroad yards, a tiny pond slowly drying up, but teeming with a million trapped tadpoles.

Don't bother to imagine. It's in the book, including the weird thrill of walking barefoot among these wriggling masses. Benjamin describes it thus:

"It was cold, it was warm. It was frenzied and it was soothing. It was a whirlpool of slippery, tickly fingers on our naked skin. The tadpoles swirled and bumped and bubbled and fled, harmless, panicky, sensuous. No experience, in my life, ever compared to the feeling of a thousand frenzied tadpoles trapped in lukewarm water, caressing my ankles and splashing my calves while mud squeeze spermatically between my toes."

Imagine then, if you can, what would happen if this boy somehow managed to bring these tadpoles home (as a science experiment). And imagine how he might finally contrive to dispose of them after — well, long after — they all died.

No need to imagine. It's in the book, in passages that have made grown men weep with laughter.

Imagine, if you can, this boy as a pint-sized hunter prowling the woods with a .22 rifle, hunting the mighty gray squirrel. But what if one misfired round turns hunted into hunter, seeking revenge for all squirrelkind, and our hero into a hapless victim of a rodent run amok?

Imagine this kid pleading, with all the oratorical power of his Catholic education, to forestall expulsion from the greatest movie of all time (“Ben-Hur”), after being caught in the act of tossing Raisinettes by a vicious, pimply movie-house usher.

Imagine the kid playing baseball on a rocky hillside while being watched over homicidally by a handmaiden of Ed Gein, Wisconsin’s grisliest mass murderer.

But imagine not. It’s all *The Life and Times of the Last Kid Picked*.

Imagine, if you can, a boy, small for his age, who’s always picked last for every choose-up game while growing up in a small town, but never backing down, always game for the next game, until he discovers — in the big city — a game at which he not only excels but where he gets picked first. And then, in the last minute of the last game...

Well, it’s in the book.

About the book, Carole Goldberg, books editor of the *Hartford Courant*, wrote that *The Life and Times of the Last Kid Picked* is “loaded with hilarious vignettes” and “full of wonderfully written set pieces.” She concluded, “Benjamin reminds us that there are worst things than being the last kid picked — after all, there are some kids who are never picked at all. He makes us sad to realize that, in the name of safety and scheduling, kids have lost a great deal of the spontaneity and adventurousness of those not-so-long ago but so very, very different days.”

The Life and Times of the Last Kid Picked, in e-book, is compatible with all e-reader technologies. It is available through Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Books-A-Million, BooksOnBoard, Christian Books, eBooks.com, the Google eBookstore, iBookstore, IndieBound, Kobo, Powells, the Reader Store for Sony. Random House’s Facebook page for the book is accessible at <http://www.randomhouse.com/book/11350/the-life-and-times-of-the-last-kid-picked-by-david-benjamin>

The Life and Times of the Last Kid Picked can even be obtained through iTunes at

<http://itunes.apple.com/us/book/the-life-times-last-kid-picked/id434132863?mt=11>