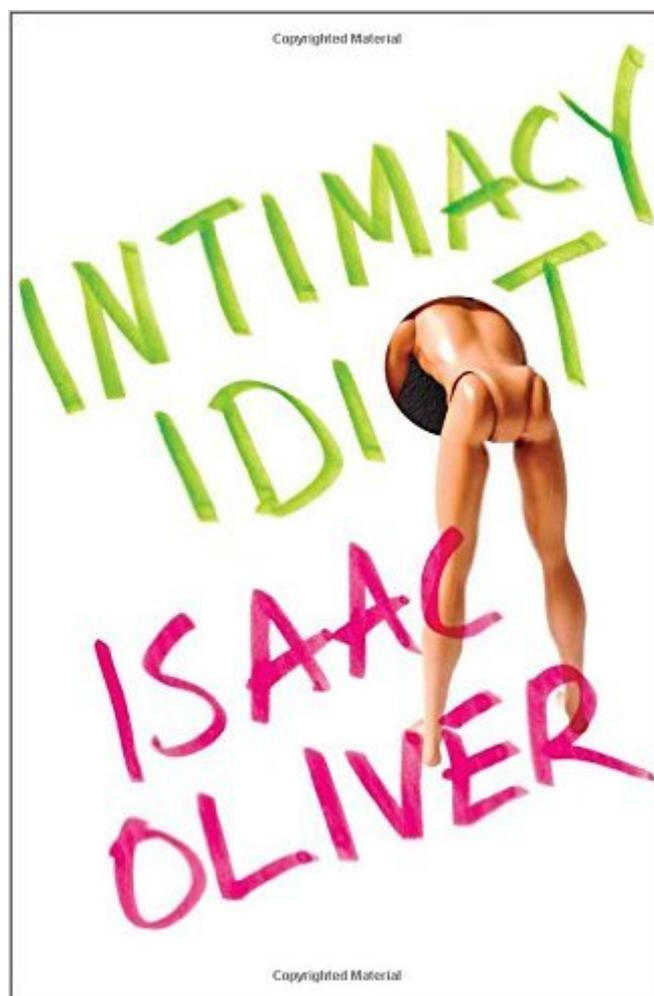


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# Intimacy Idiot



## Synopsis

An NPR Best Book of 2015 This big-hearted, laugh-until-you-can't-breathe collection of personal essays, stories, and riffs on finding love and intimacy in New York City announces the arrival of a sea monstrous new talent • (New York magazine) in the vein of David Sedaris, Augusten Burroughs, and Tina Fey. In this uproariously funny debut collection, award-winning writer and performer Isaac Oliver serves up a comedic cornucopia of sketches, vignettes, lists, and diaries from his life as a young, fanciful, and extremely single gay man in New York City. Whether he's hooking up with a man who dresses as a dolphin, suffering on airplanes and buses next to people with Food From Home, or hovering around an impenetrable circle of attractive people at a cocktail party, Oliver captures the messy, moving, and absurd moments of urban life as we live it today. Since moving to New York a decade ago, Oliver has pined for countless strangers on the subway, slept with half the people in his Washington Heights neighborhood, and observed the best and worst of humanity from behind the glass of a Times Square theater box office. He also rode the subway during Breastfeeding Awareness Week and lived to tell the tale. Culled from years of heartbreak, hook-ups, and more awkwardness than a virgin at prom and a whore in church (and he should know because he's been both), *Intimacy Idiot* chronicles Oliver's encounters with love, infatuation, resilience, and self-acceptance that echo our universal desire for intimacy of all kinds.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (73 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

I saw Oliver perform a reading of pieces from *Intimacy Idiot* and couldn't wait to dive into the rest of his witty, well-observed, amusingly self-deprecating collection of personal essays and vignettes. The book is a very funny and cumulatively poignant look at modern gay life, love and sex in New York City.

An expensive collection of short essays, character studies and poems centered on Oliver's life experience, at points this book made me slightly nauseous. Oliver's a needy little guy who suffers from both the heartbreak of psoriasis and the tragedy of unrequited love. He will put just about anything in his mouth and shares the results of his culinary dissatisfaction with a kind of resigned sigh. "Intimacy Idiot" is a good title. Some of his short subway profiles read like character studies for future stories but I liked his poetry. Most of it anyway. When he's good he's very good. Unlike Nathan Lane, I didn't laugh out loud. I giggled a few times, that's about it. And that's why I'm giving it three stars. For the giggles.

The reviews in other publications led me to order this book as the author is compared to David Sedaris, whose writings I find witty and wonderful. I cannot make the same claim and would imagine the author might find it daunting to be compared to David Sedaris. The author has moments of insight and humor, some fine writing, but the majority is flat and really not very interesting. I'm disappointed given the high ratings I've read elsewhere.

Overhyped collection of supercilious notes, half-baked poems and trivial gay-themed sexual anecdotes delivered smugly (though sometimes with actual humor) -- unaccountably published as an actual book (lots of white space, small page size to make it appear to fill enough pages to try to justify that hilarious \$24 list price). The kind of thing it would take maybe 3 weeks to write. But good for this guy, who certainly found a gimmick.

If you like David Sedaris, you'll probably like Isaac Oliver. Sharply observed characters and situations, and a great sense of humor. Oliver is an out gay man and is not at all shy about detailing his sexual escapades, so if that might offend you, consider this a warning. But it is worth getting past any personal sexual inhibitions to get the delights of his very funny and incredibly well-written essays. His notes about people he encounters on subway rides are priceless--I'd love to read an entire book just with his descriptions of people and situations on the subway. And some of the people he has dated--whether you are gay or straight, you will recognize the personality types and

find yourself laughing along, or grimacing, depending. He also has a terrific ear for dialogue and you feel as if you are listening in--the voices are simply so spot-on and varied that they must be authentic. Additionally, I finished the book feeling as if I really got to know the writer; a person who is trying to figure out life and love, who is as flawed as the rest of us (but not afraid to admit it), and full of heart and soul. He may have had his heart broken a few times, but instead of being bitter about it, he has chosen to turn his pain into humor and life lessons for the rest of us. I look forward to reading more from this writer.

Okay first it should be pointed out that this a blunt graphic explicit look at one gay man's life and adventures in New York City. It is a slice of life book that tackles some rather mature moments in Oliver's life. Issac Oliver is funny, sharply clever at how he looks and addresses things in his life. Self-deprecating and unabashed in sharing the sexual details of his life. For me it often descends into areas that I would cringe if brought up at the dinner table. Or confessed by a tipsy friend over drinks at a party. That is of course my taste level. I never felt it was gratuitous or added for simple shock value though. This is who Isaac Oliver is and what he shares of his life would seem oddly truncated if he shied away from such willingness to be as honest, brutally so at times, as he is in this book. But for anyone who is a bit like me in the "TMI" area or even more prudish, I strongly suggest you grab hold of those pearls, don't let go, no matter how much you are white knuckling it, and keep reading. This is a wonderful book that explores how a gay man tries to be true to who he is even as he finds himself using various social tools that in the end might not serve his goals of finding companionship and even ultimately a relationship. Even my prudish ways can appreciate that Mr. Oliver appreciates sex as just that. As he struggles with how far the unbalance can be in trying to be happy in the moment and being 'happy ever after'. With wit and sharp, sometimes biting self-awareness that can be bitter and sad. But compelling all the same.

I read an article in the New York Times that quoted Nathan Lane as this being the funniest book he's read in a long long time. I read the sample and because it showed promise so I purchased the book. I must say that I am disappointed that, unlike Mr. Lane, I didn't find myself laughing out loud while reading it. Interesting and relatable, yes. Mr. Oliver has a good writing voice. Mr. Lane just set the bar too high.

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