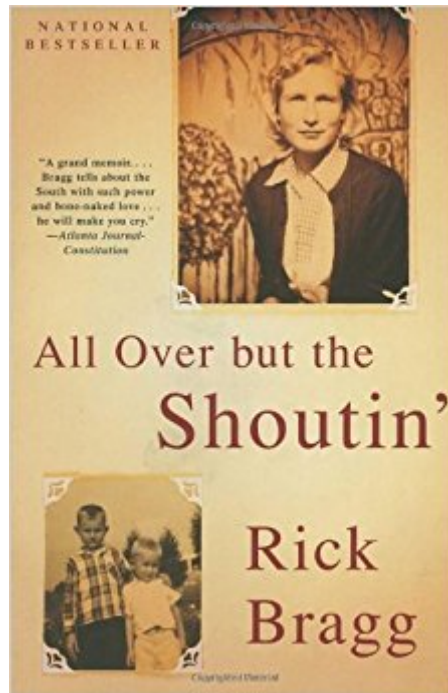




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# All Over But The Shoutin'



## Synopsis

A New York Times Notable Book of the Year This haunting, harrowing, gloriously moving recollection of a life on the American margin is the story of Rick Bragg, who grew up dirt-poor in northeastern Alabama, seemingly destined for either the cotton mills or the penitentiary, and instead became a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter for The New York Times. It is the story of Bragg's father, a hard-drinking man with a murderous temper and the habit of running out on the people who needed him most. But at the center of this soaring memoir is Bragg's mother, who went eighteen years without a new dress so that her sons could have school clothes and picked other people's cotton so that her children wouldn't have to live on welfare alone. Evoking these lives--and the country that shaped and nourished them--with artistry, honesty, and compassion, Rick Bragg brings home the love and suffering that lie at the heart of every family. The result is unforgettable.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (667 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #8,385 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #8 in Â Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Regional U.S. > South #22 in Â Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Journalists #518 in Â Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Memoirs

## Customer Reviews

All Over But The Shoutin' is Rick Bragg's gift to his mother. Bragg, a Pulitzer Prize winning reporter for The New York Times, has written a powerful memoir of growing up poor in the South. At the center of his story is his mother, raising her three sons to manhood. A deep understanding of the South is woven throughout the book, along with an appreciation of this region's poorest people. Rick Bragg was raised in a family led by his mother after she finally broke away from his alcoholic and violent father. Vivid memories crowd the book's pages as Bragg writes of his upbringing: surrounded by an extended family, food, hard work, and racism. There were several different cultures in the South of Bragg's youth. Whites belonged to classes, with corresponding differences in education

and expectations. Bragg got only a few glimpses into the lives of the wealthy South. His upbringing was among the poorest of the poor. In his culture, men were expected to fight hard and dirty when insulted. Drinking and getting drunk was part of male gatherings. Salvation was found in religion, which surrounded people on the radio, in church, and when family got together. Women cooked huge meals that took hours to prepare. They were responsible for doing what needed to be done to hold a family together and raise the children. What Bragg carries from his childhood are a fierce and protective love of the South, an affiliation with those who live in poverty wherever he finds them, and a hatred of those who grew up privileged and feel superior because of it. He also carries into adulthood a fear of fatherhood: a concern that he will become as his father was. This causes the breakup of his marriage and leaves Bragg in mid-life looking for something that he feels is missing.

I am yet another transplanted Alabamian left in awe as I finished this book. I wonder if all the reviews by southerners like me, came from our searching for someone to talk to about this perfect account of a time and place - the 60's and 70's in rural Alabama - that was almost like time had stood still. It was so far removed from the hippies and woodstock, and full of Hank Williams, the Florida Boys, George Wallace, Bear Bryant's football and all of the rest of the very specific terms, brands, species, and local color that Rick Bragg uses in his writing. Like his mother said - "People forgets if it aint wrote down". I feel almost relieved that he has done such an excellent job of bringing that time to life. And since I've read the other reviews I see that I'm not the only one that was moved to tears by the story of the tall blonde woman and all she endured for the benefit of her sons. I wonder if you hadn't actually lived all that is described in the book, if you'd be as impressed with it. I've concluded that yes, you would. You just wouldn't be paralyzed by some memory that flies into your mind every time something like purple hull peas, or spitting on your worm for luck was mentioned. Or Red Eye Gravy and lightning bugs. And the descriptions of the food, whether it's the food on the grounds at the Baptist church, or the Foot Long Hot Dog at PeeWees Dixie Dip, or the Thanksgiving dinner at his momma's new house, they were all incredible! (not the bologna sandwich on the dead mule, though) This book also gives me some new respect for our age (I'm a half-year younger than Bragg) His stories of "the stories" that he's covered made me realize that we've seen some news, too, in our life times, even if there were no wars or giant disasters (Thank God).

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