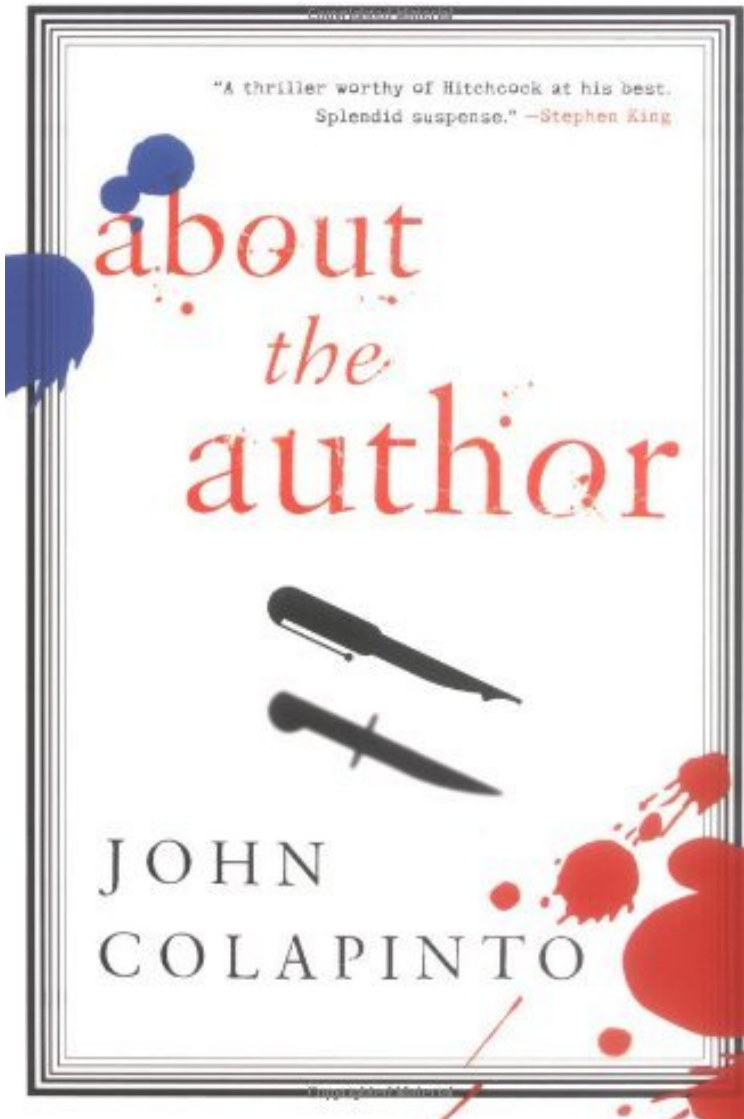


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# About the Author: A Novel



*Par John Colapinto*  
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**Description :** Description du produit Cal Cunningham has always fantasized about being a novelist. But at twenty-five, he's far from realizing his dream. Newly arrived in Manhattan, he toils as a bookstore stockboy, lives in a dire neighborhood, and never seems to write anything. How curious, then, that Cal should shortly publish a rollicking autobiographical novel that shoots to the top of bestseller lists and sells to the movies for a million dollars. About the Author is Cal's first-person account of how he achieved this remarkable feat. A mysterious roommate, a timely bike accident, and the rapacious literary agent Blackie Yaeger all play a role in Cal's success. Deception, blackmail and murder all play a role in Cal's desperate bid to hold onto that success. Reminiscent of Patricia Highsmith's gripping "Ripley" novels, About the Author is a wickedly funny psychological thriller that not only casts a knowing eye on the excesses of the current Manhattan publishing world, but touches on deeper themes of literary envy, identity, guilt, and the fatal difference between reality and imagination.

Prsentation de l'diteur Just how did Cal Cunningham -- a twenty-five-year-old bookstore stockboy who is new to Manhattan and who has never written anything -- publish a bestselling novel that sells to the movies for a million dollars? A mysterious roommate, a timely bike accident, and the rapacious literary agent Blackie Yeager all play a role in Cal's success. Deception, blackmail, and murder all play a role in his desperate bid to hold on to it. And About the Author is his first-person account of how he performed this remarkable feat.

com About the Author's Cal Cunningham calls himself a writer, but he's too busy--or too scared--to sit down and actually write anything. He spends his days working as a bookstore stock boy and his nights chasing tail in the bars of Manhattan. Sunday mornings, he spins tales about his conquests to his roommate, a reclusive, hard-working law student named Stewart Church. When Stewart is killed in auto accident, Cal finds in Stewart's desk a novel--a brilliant novel--based on Cal's own exploits. Cal is appalled, and then inspired. He sends the novel off to New York's leading literary agent, claiming it as his own. The book is a smash hit, and as he claims the rewards of literary lionization, Cal convinces himself that he is, really, at bottom, responsible for the writing of the book, if not exactly its author. Things get a bit more complicated when he hooks up with Stewart's ex-girlfriend Janet, eventually marrying her. The novel convincingly portrays Cal's determined delusion that everything has worked out just as it was meant to be. As he kisses Janet, he thinks how "Stewart's ghost had turned out to be a benevolent specter after all, his spirit helping to shape my destiny, to guide both Janet and me to this moment." Which is all well and good, till Cal discovers that someone else is in possession of a copy of the original manuscript.

Author John Colapinto weaves together a farcical tale of literary ambition and a cat-and-mouse thriller as Cal and his blackmailer pursue each other to the very death. --Claire Dederer From Publishers Weekly

Cal Cunningham, the engaging, "panther-thin" protagonist of Colapinto's intrepid first foray into fiction (after his nonfictional debut *As Nature Made Him*) is an author with writer's block, struggling to acquire the "monastic absorption" needed to pen his autobiography and be freed from a meager existence as a bookstore stock boy. His dreams of success are further dashed when reclusive law student-roommate Stewart presents a brilliant short story he's written, and after some digging on the sly, Cal discovers a scandalous, novel-length manuscript recounting the sordid details of his own womanizing life. When Stewart is killed in a biking accident, a resentful, envious Cal adopts the manuscript, *Almost Like Suicide*, as his own and courts Stewart's old girlfriend Janet, too. Aided by flawlessly rendered literary agent Blackie Yeager, who sells the novel for millions, Cal lands a monetary and media windfall. Eventually moving to New Halcyon, Vt., to marry Janet, his perfect if duplicitous life is interrupted by the arrival of a stranger claiming to have Stewart's laptop computer containing the original manuscript; Cal's messy, disastrous comeuppance, involving blackmail and murder, takes over the second half of the novel. Publishing-savvy readers (and those who enjoyed Donald Westlake's *The Hook*) will find Colapinto's depiction of Cal's book tour and the many "particularly excruciating" television interviews he must undergo hilariously apropos. Cal's surplus of manic rationalizations overwhelm some taut, well-realized suspenseful moments, and Colapinto's feel-good though immensely implausible ending will sweetly satisfy, but not without leaving a bitter aftertaste of injustice.

Still, this is a fine first effort from an emerging voice in fiction. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.