



Idiot: Beating "The Curse" and Enjoying the Game of Life

Johnny Damon , Peter Golenbock

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Dear Baseball Fan:

I know what you're thinking: Couldn't he have come up with a better title?

My mother agrees with you, but unfortunately Genius just doesn't have the same ring.

Let's get something straight right away. I may be an idiot, but I've tried to do more in this book than just revisit the Red Sox's Miracle Season.

I want to give you a sense of what it's like to grow up with baseball dreams, to spend long years climbing the ladder, and then over the course of three years to see the building blocks of those dreams fall into place.

In this book, you'll be reading about the son of an Army staff sergeant—a thrill-seeking Orlando kid who at age thirteen was gifted with a man's body, including rare speed and reflexes. It was some straight talk from my brother that kept me from abandoning that talent, which led to my eventually catching on with the Kansas City Royals and later the Oakland A's.

Starting in 2002 with the Red Sox, I got to see what can happen when a determined front office decides to roll the dice and acquire players who, like me, leave the thinking out of it—who trust their instincts and play team baseball.

Forget what you've read about the posse of long-haired rebels who eventually made up the 2004 Red Sox. I'll give you the straight dope, including who's got the biggest mouth (hint: his first name is Kevin); what Pedro Martinez was doing all those times when you couldn't find him on the bench; what game David Ortiz should never play; and why I sometimes question Curt Schilling's sanity. Memo to Curt: the statue of you is being erected.

What's it like being responsible for the hopes of millions? In the fall of 2004 my teammates and I got to find out. What I've tried to do in these pages is bring you inside, show you the black humor that erupted when it seemed we could do nothing right, and the immense joy that followed when 25 guys took turns picking each other up, and by sheer force of will reached baseball's summit.

Red Sox Nation (both natives and new arrivals), this one's for you.

—Johnny Damon, #18

From the Trade Paperback edition.

Idiot: Beating "The Curse" and Enjoying the Game of Life Details

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Kay says

This is a book I wish I could rate by half stars and give it a 2.5. Most of it was entertaining and I always enjoy reading about the Red Sox. The book was written after the 2004 World Series. Leading us to believe the Red Sox was the very best team to play on, he turns around a year later and goes to the Evil Empire [his words not mine:] for more money. Needless to say I don't find him very sincere in his beliefs.

ashley says

Fuck you, Johnny.

Michelle says

This book SUCKED!!! He is SO full of himself, it's sickening. All he does is relive all his old baseball games play by boring play. WHO THE HELL CARES ALREADY!!! Dude get over yourself!!!! He also says how boring the Boston Red Sox players were UNTIL HE came along. How he showed them ALL how to have a good time. How HE brought excitement to the team and how HE made baseball cool. GIVE ME A BREAK!!!

Well where are you now Johnny???? You're a YANKEE!! Where's your long hair and all that coolness???? Yeah, just keep patting yourself on the back, cuz you're the only one that's doing it.

Myra says

Every Red Sox fan should read this one. Granted, Damon is no longer with the Sox, but he was when he wrote it - and his true fondness for the Red Sox is very apparent in this book.

The book goes beyond the Red Sox, though. It delves into Damon's life and what it was like for him to grow up with "baseball dreams" - and what it was like to realize those dreams, one by one. There is also a pretty good selection of photographs.

The book is written from Damon's own voice, and if you've ever watched an interview with him, you'll know what I mean. For me, when I sat down to read Idiot, it was almost as if Damon was there speaking the words to me - it's that realistic.

Many people have made a big deal over the fact that Damon has a few "skeletons" in his closet, especially when it comes to his first wife, but try not to let that be something that you hold against the book. Idiot is humorous, interesting, and quite captivating. Give it a try. :)

Cam Ryan says

"Idiot", by Johnny Damon, is a nonfiction book that looks back on the career of Johnny Damon, starting from his early years, all the way up to winning the World Series with the 2004 Boston Red Sox. As a kid, Johnny was always bigger than other kids his age, and much more mature. This showed when he was out on the ball field. He was named to numerous all-star teams, as well as a Florida High School All-Star team. He discusses his time in all levels of baseball, from his little league teams, to the minors, to his call up to the big time. He gives many details about his baseball career, but doesn't fail to scatter life lessons into the book.

Johnny Damon's style when writing "Idiot" was very raw and revealing. Not revealing in a mysterious way, just revealing in a way that shows the reader a side of Johnny Damon that most didn't know existed. Each chapter of this book progresses through his life in chronological order (with the exception of the first chapter). I characterized this as having a raw style because Johnny Damon is not a professional author. He is a baseball player. He doesn't use literary devices as a normal author would. He tells a true story from the perspective of someone who lived it. I think that adds to the authenticity of this book, and makes it seem more appealing.

I had a very high opinion of this book. I didn't expect much from it going in, but I was pleasantly surprised. I consider myself a Red Sox fanatic and I figured I knew most of what there is to know about the '04 Sox. But this book enlightened me to much more than I previously knew. Not only did the book teach me a lot about Johnny Damon's baseball career, it also taught me life lessons. Damon always took any opportunity possible to give the reader a lesson they won't forget. Overall, this book is a great fit for baseball fans, and an excellent fit for Red Sox fans. If not, the book may be a little boring.

Dean Fioresi says

Was a huge fan of this until Damon up and left for New York. All feelings and disdain aside, was a good read following the magic season of 2004 in Boston.

Kathy says

Yes, Johnny is an idiot and in love with himself (and his hair), but he's mostly harmless. It was a timely read for me. First of all, I loved reliving the 2004 season and getting the low-down on the mood inside the clubhouse. I loved hearing about how loose the players were and how that contributed to their success. I was also interested in what Johnny had to say about the media. Also timely comments given the last three weeks of Sox bashing we've had to endure. Ironical, though, that the only media member he spoke positively about was Bob Hoehler, the author of the now infamous "Beer and chicken" and "Tito's pills and personal life" article in the Globe. I wonder what Johnny would say about him now. Who knows exactly what is true and what isn't. I'm not sure I care anymore. All I hope for is another team, one day, with this much heart who play as a team, not for themselves. It's fun to watch all the pieces fall into place for good guys (and a good place).

I'm glad Johnny reminded me it happened. Even as an idiot, he made me feel better.

Joe Knutson says

I liked this book by Johnny Damon which is an autobiography of his life and experience in baseball. I would recommend this book to you if you are a baseball fan. It goes into depth on the things him and his teammates do both on and off the field. I found it noteworthy when he talked about Fenway Park during their best season and how you could feel the hype and excitement in the air. I find this particular genre, autobiography interesting in most cases because you get the person who actually did something, tell you about that something that they did. If I find the person interesting then I definitely like to read the autobiography. I would definitely start reading more autobiographies.

Mark Ruzomberka says

Being from Pittsburgh, I don't really have a huge interest in Redsox vs. Yankees. However, being a baseball fan and a stats junkie, I just can't get enough of the 2004 ALCS where the Red Sox came from three games down to beat the Yankees. Just like the 1980 USA Hockey, the story is told about a great rivalry where a team overcame what looked like insurmountable odds and the championship is often an after thought.

Damon does a fantastic job of educating the reader on what it is like to be a lead off hitter and the importance of taking pitches to wear down the opposing pitcher, often to his own Batting Average's detriment. I didn't realize how much emphasis the players put on becoming an all star, and hearing Damon's frustrations about not getting selected as often as he thought he was deserving was interesting. Also getting the back story on Pedro, Shilling, and Manny was always enjoyable to read. Reading Damon's thoughts on living in a hotel and life on the road, especially as a single guy was funny too. I don't want to spoil it but his story of getting propositioned by two girls is funny, but his reaction is priceless. I came into this book expecting something average, and I was pleasantly surprised, kudos to Johnny.

The only thing I didn't like about the book was how hypocritical it made Damon look knowing full well he would eventually go play for the Yankees. But granted the book was written before he jumped ship to the tune of \$52 Million over 4 years in 2006. Damon seems like a level headed guy, and hearing how he treats the game like a business seems very practical. It was awesome getting his first hand account of the 2004 ALCS, and he did a good job keeping his rise to stardom entertaining but saved enough for the bulk of the book to be about those 4 fateful days in October.

Jenny says

Hoo boy. Er ... Damon should stick to baseball. It was fun to see some of the behind-the-scenes moments of the 2004 World Series, but for the most part, I'd skip this one, given the choice again. Damon is just a bit too full of himself for my taste.

Heidi says

Putting the fact that Johnny Damon is a backstabbing traitor aside... the book still sucks. I read this before he moved to the Yankees and was appalled by what he chose to share about his life. I actually told my husband I didn't know how I was going to root for him after reading this book. (Luckily I didn't have to) Damon's pig-headed views on women and his disgusting treatment of women will leave a bad taste in your mouth.

David says

I was a Johnny Damon fan until I read this book. One would think that a gifted ghostwriter like Peter Golenbock (*The Bronx Zoo* with Sparky Lyle; *#1* with Billy Martin) could have come up with a better read, but Damon is such a self-centered jerk, it would have been an Herculean task.

Damon is a spoiled brat on a huge ego trip.

Tom says

Let's just say at the outset that the title "idiot" is about right. Johnny Damon talks in depth about his career up to 2005. Time and time again he exhibits a supreme belief in his own greatness and says things he doesn't seem to realize he should be embarrassed to say. I'm not talking about political correctness but about a certain self centeredness that is truly amazing to read. Despite that this book grew on me as I read it. While it is always fun to read about the 2004 Red Sox that wasn't why it grew on me. Damon may spend a lot of time praising himself, but he also spends equal time praising everyone else around him. Maybe this Johnny Damon guy is on to something. Maybe going through life thinking that you and everyone else around you is completely awesome isn't such a bad idea. As Annie Savoy said in the great movie *Bull Durham*, "The world is made for those not cursed with self-awareness." Enjoy Johnny.

Erin says

So I read Johnny Damon's book.... and like everyone I know that had read it had been telling me, it was horrible. I complained so much to my husband about it before even being half-way through it, he told me to stop reading and put it on ebay.

I finished it, but god it was a struggle. I've never rolled my eyes and literally sighed aloud in so much exasperation at a book before. What a horrible a-hole he is. It was 240 pages too long of patting himself on the back, blaming his ex-wife, TMI moments of him with Michelle (*vomit*) and other women, and just horrid choppy writing.

I really felt the need to pick up something good again to read, after that garbage.

Hope Irvin Marston says

This is a "must read" for older Red Sox fans, or their wives. (I fit into the latter category.)
