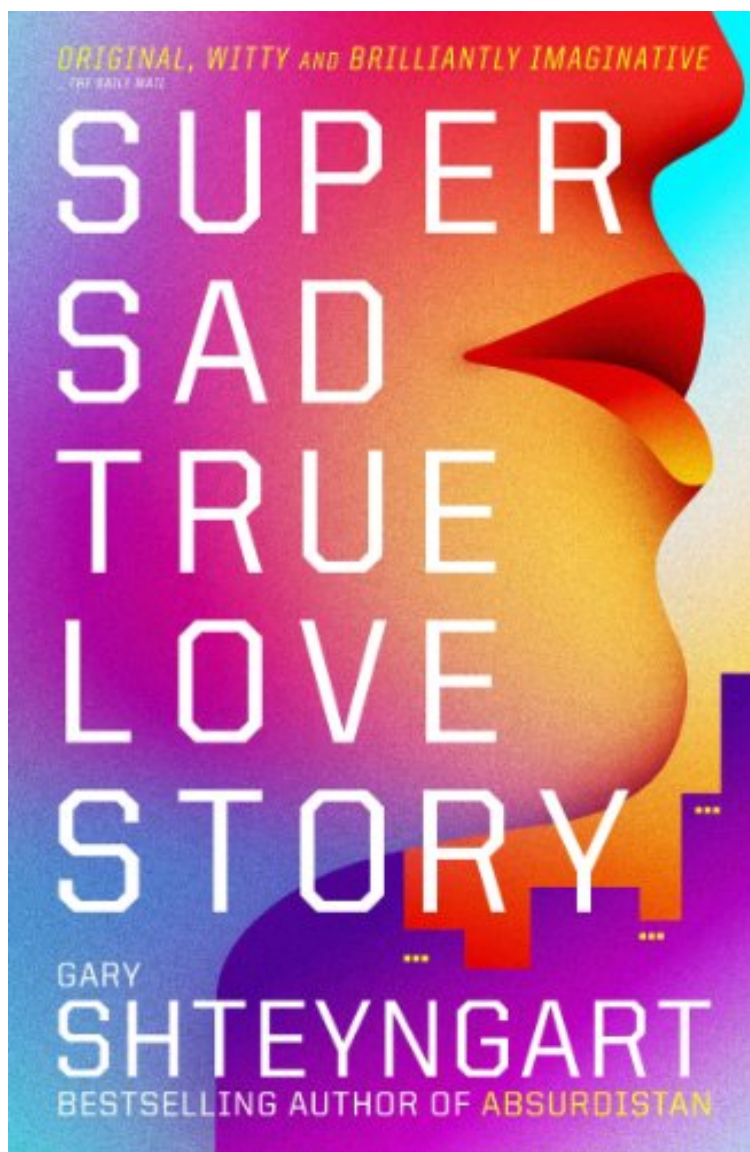


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Super Sad True Love Story



Par Gary Shteyngart
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurIn a very near future, a functionally illiterate America is about to collapse. But don't tell that to poor Lenny Abramov, proud author of what may well be the world's last diary. Despite his job at an outfit called 'Post-Human Services', which attempts to provide immortality for its super-rich clientele, death is clearly stalking this cholesterol-rich morsel of a man. And why shouldn't it? Lenny's from a different century. He **TOTALLY** loves books (or 'printed, bound media artifacts' as they're now known), even though most of his peers find them smelly and annoying. But even more than books, Lenny loves Eunice Park, an impossibly cute and impossibly cruel twenty-four-year-old Korean-American woman who just graduated from Elderbird College with a major in 'Images' and a minor in 'Assertiveness'. When riots break out in New

York's Central Park, the city's streets are lined with National Guard tanks and patient Chinese creditors look ready to foreclose on the whole mess, Lenny vows to convince his fickle new love that in a time without standards or stability, there is still value in being a real human being. Extrait DO NOT GO GENTLE FROM THE DIARIES OF LENNY ABRAMOV June 1 Rome New York Dearest Diary, Today I've made a major decision: I am never going to die. Others will die around me. They will be nullified. Nothing of their personality will remain. The light switch will be turned off. Their lives, their entirety, will be marked by glossy marble headstones bearing false summations (her star shone brightly, never to be forgotten, he liked jazz), and then these too will be lost in a coastal flood or get hacked to pieces by some genetically modified future-turkey. Don't let them tell you life is a journey. A journey is when you end up somewhere. When I take the number 6 train to see my social worker, that's a journey. When I beg the pilot of this rickety United-Continental/Delta/American plane currently trembling its way across the Atlantic to turn around and head straight back to Rome and into Eunice Parks' fickle arms, that's a journey. But wait. There's more, isn't there? There's our legacy. We don't die because our progeny lives on! The ritual passing of the DNA, Mamas corkscrew curls, his granddaddy's lower lip, ah buh- lieve tuh children ah our future. I'm quoting here from The Greatest Love of All, by 1980s pop diva Whitney Houston, track nine of her eponymous first LP. Utter nonsense. The children are our future only in the most narrow, transitive sense. They are our future until they too perish. The song's next line, Teach them well and let them lead the way, encourages an adult's relinquishing of selfhood in favor of future generations. The phrase I live for my kids, for example, is tantamount to admitting that one will be dead shortly and that one's life, for all practical purposes, is already over. I'm gradually dying for my kids would be more accurate. But what ah our children? Lovely and fresh in their youth; blind to mortality; rolling around, Eunice Park-like, in the tall grass with their alabaster legs; fawns, sweet fawns, all of them, gleaming in their dreamy plasticity, at one with the outwardly simple nature of their world. And then, a brief almost-century later: drooling on some poor Mexican nursemaid in an Arizona hospice. Nullified. Did you know that each peaceful, natural death at age eighty-one is a tragedy without compare? Every day people, individuals Americans, if that makes it more urgent for you all facedown on the battlefield, never to get up again. Never to exist again. These are complex personalities, their cerebral cortexes shimmering with floating worlds, universes that would have floored our shepherding, fig-eating, analog ancestors. These folks are minor deities, vessels of love, life-givers, unsung geniuses, gods of the forge getting up at six-fifteen in the morning to fire up the coffeemaker, mouthingsilent prayers that they will live to see the next day and the one after that and then Sarah's graduation and then . . . Nullified. But not me, dear diary. Lucky diary. Undeserving diary. From this day forward you will travel on the greatest adventure yet undertaken by a nervous, average man sixty-nine inches in height, 160 pounds in heft, with a slightly dangerous body mass index of 23.9. Why from this day forward? Because yesterday I met Eunice Park, and she will sustain me through forever. Take a long look at me, diary. What do you see? A slight man with a gray, sunken battleship of a face, curious wet eyes, a giant gleaming forehead on which a dozen cavemen could have painted something nice, a sickle of a nose perched atop a tiny puckered mouth, and from the back, a growing bald spot whose shape perfectly replicates the great state of Ohio, with its capital city, Columbus, marked by a deep-brown mole. Slight. Slightness is my curse in every sense. A so-so body in a world where only an incredible one will do. A body at the chronological age of thirty-nine already racked with too much LDL cholesterol, too much ACTH hormone, too much of everything that dooms the heart, sunders the liver, explodes all hope. A week ago, before Eunice gave me reason to live, you wouldn't have noticed me, diary. A week ago, I did not exist. A week ago, at a restaurant in Turin, I approached a potential client, a classically attractive High Net Worth Individual. He looked up from his wintry bollito misto, looked right past me, looked back down at the boiled lovemaking of his seven meats and seven vegetable sauces, looked back up, looked right past me again it is clear that for a member of upper society to even remotely notice me I must first fire a flaming arrow into a dancing moose or be kicked in the testicles by a head of state. And yet Lenny Abramov, your humble diarist, your small nonentity, will live forever. The technology is almost here. As the LifeLovers Outreach Coordinator (Grade G) of the Post-Human Services division of the Staatling-Wapachung Corporation, I will be the first to partake of it. I just have to be good and I have to believe in myself. I just have to stay off the trans fats and the hooch. I just have to drink plenty of green tea and alkalized water and submit my genome to the right people. I will need to re-grow my melting liver, replace the entire circulatory system with smart blood, and find some place safe and warm (but not too warm) to while away the angry seasons and the holocausts. And when the earth expires, as it surely must, I will leave it for a new earth, greener still but with fewer allergens; and in the

flowering of my own intelligence some 1032 years hence, when our universe decides to fold in on itself, my personality will jump through a black hole and surf into a dimension of unthinkable wonders, where the things that sustained me on Earth 1.0: tortelli lucchese, pistachio ice cream, the early works of the Velvet Underground, smooth, tanned skin pulled over the soft Baroque architecture of twentysomething buttocks will seem as laughable and infantile as building blocks, baby formula, a game of Simon says do this. That's right: I am never going to die, caro diario. Never, never, never, never. And you can go to hell for doubting me. From the Hardcover edition.

Revue de presse Gary Shteyngarts wonderful new novel, *Super Sad True Love Story*, is a supersad, superfunny, superaffecting performance a book that not only showcases the ebullient satiric gifts but that also uncovers his abilities to write deeply and movingly about love and loss and mortality. It's a novel that gives us a cutting comic portrait of a futuristic America, nearly ungovernable and perched on the abyss of fiscal collapse, and at the same time it is a novel that chronicles a sweetly real love affair as it blossoms from its awkward, improbable beginnings. Mr. Shteyngart spent his earliest childhood in Leningrad, then moved with his family to the United States, and *Super Sad* reflects his dual heritage, combining the dark soulfulness of Russian literature with the antic inventiveness of postmodern American writing; the tenderness of the Chekhovian tradition with the hormonal high jinks of a Judd Apatow movie. It demonstrates a new emotional bandwidth and ratifies his emergence as one of his generation's most original and exhilarating writers. In recounting the story of Lenny and Eunice in his antic, supercaffeinated prose, Mr. Shteyngart gives us his most powerful and heartfelt novel yet a novel that performs the delightful feat of mashing up an apocalyptic satire with a genuine supersad true love story. Michiko Kakutani, *New York Times*

Gary Shteyngarts third novel, *Super Sad True Love Story*, had to be a total blast to write. It's an homage to science fiction, George Orwell's 1984 in particular, with a satirical postmodern overlay of authorial wish fulfillment. The text consists of Lenny's diary entries and Eunice's e-mails to various friends and family. They both write with endearing, sometimes clumsy earnestness, and their intertwining narratives, for all the book's cheeky darkness, pose a superserious question: Can love and language save the world? Elle Shteyngart makes trenchant, often hilarious, observations about a fading empire. *O Magazine*

With Shteyngarts nutty knack for tangy language, it's as if Vladimir Nabokov rewrote 1984. People It's not easy to summarize Shteyngart; there's so much satirical gunpowder packed into every sentence that the effect gets lost in the short version. But basically, this is a love story [that is] ridiculously witty and painfully prescient, but more than either of those, it's romantic. *Time* (summer preview) Finally, a funny book about the financial crisis. *Wall Street Journal* [A] smart send-up of our info-overload age *Love Story* is funny, on-target, and ultimately sad as it captures the absurdity and anxiety of navigating an increasingly out-of-control world. *Entertainment Weekly* Exuberant and devastating such an acidly funny, prescient book It's a wildly funny book that hums with the sheer vibrancy of Shteyngarts prose, and that holds up a riotous, terrifying mirror to a corrupted American empire in decline. *San Francisco Chronicle* The satirist author of *Absurdistan* rewrites 1984 as a black comedy set in a near future where everything scary about multinational banks, media super-saturation, and American cultural devolution is amped up to 11 (and really funny).

Details It's a love story, and as super-sad as the title promises Shteyngart is the Joseph Heller of the information age. That's the difference between Shteyngart and the average literary satirist (or even an above-average one, like Martin Amis): his warmth. A novel that's simultaneously so biting and so compassionate. *Salon* As illuminating, as gut-busting, and as purely entertaining as any piece of literature will be this year. *GQ* So I don't risk burying my recommendation where an inattentive reader might miss it, let me say right upfront: Read this book it's great. Shteyngarts hilarious dystopian novel, *Super Sad True Love Story*, is also sly and compliant, but like all great comedies, it is erected inside a scaffolding of sorrow, as the title promises. Shteyngart is a droll Kafka -- not so enigmatic, perhaps, but just as inimitable, and much, much funnier. He has a genius for composing the perfect, concise, illuminating phrase. Shteyngart, without resorting to pyrotechnics or hyperbole, insinuates his readers into an original, engaging and frightening world, at once foreign and familiar. I loved this novel. *Portland Oregonian* Gary Shteyngarts dystopian novel deserves a place on the shelf beside 1984 and *Brave New World*. The surprising and brilliant third novel from Russian-American satirist Shteyngart is actually two love stories. Shteyngart writes with an obvious affection for America at its most chilling, *Super Sad True Love Story* comes across as a *cri de coeur* from an author scared for his country. The biggest risk for any dystopian novel with a political edge is that it can easily become humorless or didactic; Shteyngart deftly avoids this trap by employing his disarming and absurd sense of humor (much of which is unprintable here). Combined with the near-future setting, the effect is a novel more immediate and thus more frightening, at least for contemporary readers than similarly

themed books by Orwell, Huxley and Atwood. NPR, Books We Like This summers literary crown prince. New York Observer Hilarious and unsettling the man can write a stellar sentence. Dallas Morning News Gary Shteyngart has a wicked penchant for steering his hapless characters into absurd situations, then letting real-life global forces roll over them. But his wild, exuberant wit and deadly accurate satire have made the Russian migr one of the most acclaimed, enjoyable and unsettling novelists working today His imagination is either warped or prophetic; you choose. But his writing is brilliant. Somehow, amid all this, he creates vulnerable, sympathetic characters whose foibles and blunderings toward one another we recognize as universal: super sad and true. Seattle Times Threads of narrative and brilliant motifs accumulate with apparent effortless and the narrative tone remains matter-of-fact and understated. He has gained a lot of praise for his first two novels, and yes, he does remind me of Nikolai Gogol and Evelyn Waugh both at the same time Super Sad True Love Story is about as amusing and harrowing a reflection upon the world we live in now and the direction we could be heading as you can hope to find. Jane Smiley, Philadelphia Inquirer Dystopic, mournfully funny The classics of fiction-as-social-forecast and the fact that Shteyngarts is one doesnt make it any less funny share a crucial characteristic: depressing familiarity. Newsday A slit-your-wrist satire illuminated by the authors absurd wit Shteyngarts most trenchant satire depicts the inane, hyper-sexualized culture that connects everybody even while destroying any actual community or intimacy. This may be the only time Ive wanted to stand up on the subway and read passages of a book out loud. Washington Post A bipartisan satirist who makes us simultaneously laugh and wince at our monstrous vanities Zaniness and tragedy are conjoined in his ambitious, uninhibited imagination. No subject is too serious to crack a joke about. But he is not being perverse or disrespectful; like all great satirists, he builds fun house mirrors that expose the distortions of contemporary reality Shteyngart is one of the most powerful voices of his generation. Miami Herald Uproarious. Santa Cruz Sentinel A spectacularly clever near-future dystopian satire What gives this novel its unusual richness is that undercurrent of sorrow. Slate This moving tale in futuristic New York is a fabulously sad romance Its hilarious, and its sad - a poignant moment that gets at the heart of both the girl and the society. St. Louis Post Dispatch These inventions are indicative of the books pleasure, which is simply its effluence from a mind as smart, loony and darkly prophetic as Mr Shteyngarts. I dont know how to read anymore, he said in his interview with Deborah Solomon. Thankfully his fans still do. The Economist, More Intelligent Life His satire is appallingly funny but never less than personal, a tour de force of ridiculous appropriation and conflation. Boston Globe An ingenious satire of America in decline: a nation obsessed with life extension and homeland security, betrayed by technology and utterly trivialized. L.A. Times summer preview Heres a big tip of the hat to Gary Shteyngart for having the nerve to write a novel-length stairehes shrewd, observant, snarkily funny. Newsweek You think the countrys a mess now? Just wait until you read about the unnerving near-future envisioned by the hilarious Gary Shteyngart in his satiric new novel Super Sad True Love Story, a 1984 for the cybertastic millennium. Super Sad True Love Story shows why Shteyngart was named one of New Yorker's trendy 20 Under 40 writers; hes a genius with parody. Miami Herald Not since mid-70s Woody Allen has anyone cracked so wise and so well. Who but Shteyngart recognizes the twin importance of skillful oral sex and a currency pegged to the Chinese yuan? Nobody. Esquire Shteyngart evokes America in a digitized post-literate age in Super Sad True Love Story, an Orwell-on-acid vision of a very near future in which life is streamed rather than lived, but romance, in all its perilous, old-fashioned wonderment, endures. Vogue Pity Lenny Abramov, the sad and hilarious human being at the center of Super Sad True Love Story, Gary Shteyngart's hilarious and sad new novel[an] all-too-plausible dystopia, where privacy of any sort is a thing of the past both frightening and devastatingly funny. L.A. Times The sheer exhilaration of the writing in this book ... is itself a sort of answer to the flattened-out horrors of the world it depicts. New York Times Book Gary Shteyngarts Super Sad True Love Story tries to be many things tragicomic 1984 update, poignant May-December romance per the title, heartfelt tribute to the nostalgic joys of plain ol' books and succeeds at most of them. But primarily, its the finest piece of anti-iPhone propaganda ever written, a cautionary tale full of distracted drones unwilling to tear themselves away from their little glowing screens long enough to make eye contact, let alone an actual lasting connection, with another human being. Its super sad cause its true, but that also makes it hilarious. Village Voice Hilarious and unsettling. Fort Worth Star Telegram I cant remember the last time a book so often made me laugh out loud and scared the hell out of me - sometimes on the same page. But Gary Shteyngarts new novel, the aptly titled Super Sad True Love Story, accomplishes an even rarer feat: Its a slashing satire with a warm heart Shteyngart makes it all disturbingly convincing. Both satire and speculative fiction tend to be chilly forms; he displays a mastery

of them in *Super Sad Love Story* yet never lets the tragic, wholly human bond between its lovers seem less than real. *St Petersburg Times* Shteyngart's world, evoked in painstaking and ingenious detail, feels close enough to touch - a nightmare we've already started to live and from which we can't seem to wake up. Shteyngart has always been able to see the humor in a half-cocked world as it slides toward madness. But true to his Russian origins and this novel's title, there is something unbearably sad about even his broadest and most savage satire. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* No surprise that it's hilarious, but it's also as finger-waggingly disapproving a vision of the technologically addicted, oversexed, dumbed-down world we inhabit as I've ever read. *The Forward* The surprising and brilliant third novel from Russian-American satirist Shteyngart is actually two love stories and while they're both, as promised, super sad, they're also incredibly (but very darkly) funny. *NPR Books We Like* If Gary Shteyngart is any indication, fiction will continue to be the place where authors ponder the survival of most everything else that matters. These inventions are indicative of the book's pleasure, which is simply its effluence from a mind as smart, loony and darkly prophetic as Mr. Shteyngart's. [A] profane and dizzying satire, a dystopic vision of the future as convincing - and, in its way, as frightening as Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*. It's also a pointedly old-fashioned May-December love story. . . . a heartbreaker worthy of its title, this is Shteyngart's best yet. *Publishers Weekly*, starred review Full-tilt and fulminating satirist Shteyngart (*Absurdistan*, 2006) is mordant, gleeful, and embracing as he funnels today's follies and atrocities into a devilishly hilarious, soul-shriveling, and all-too-plausible vision of a ruthless and crass digital dystopia in which techno-addled humans are still humbled by love and death. *Booklist*, starred review This cyber-apocalyptic vision of an American future seems eerily like the present, in a bleak comedy that is even more frightening than funny. Though Shteyngart received rave reviews for his first two novels (*The Russian Debutante's Daughter*, 2001; *Absurdistan*, 2006), those appear in retrospect to be trial runs for his third and darkest to date. *Kirkus*, starred review From the Hardcover edition.