



Imperfect: An Improbable Life

Jim Abbott, Tim Brown

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On an overcast September day in 1993, Jim Abbott took the mound at Yankee Stadium and threw one of the most dramatic no-hitters in major-league history. The game was the crowning achievement in an unlikely success story, unseen in the annals of professional sports. In *Imperfect*, the one-time big league ace retraces his remarkable journey.

Born without a right hand, Jim Abbott as a boy dreamed of being a great athlete. Raised in Flint, Michigan, by parents who saw in his condition not a disability but an extraordinary opportunity, Jim became a two-sport standout in high school, then an ace pitcher for the University of Michigan.

But his journey was only beginning.

As a nineteen-year-old, Jim beat the vaunted Cuban National Team. By twenty-one, he'd won the gold medal game at the 1988 Olympics and—without spending a day in the minor leagues—cracked the starting rotation of the California Angels. In 1991, he would finish third in the voting for the Cy Young Award. Two years later, he would don Yankee pinstripes and deliver a one-of-a-kind no-hitter.

It wouldn't always be so good. After a season full of difficult losses—some of them by football scores—Jim was released, cut off from the game he loved. Unable to say good-bye so soon, Jim tried to come back, pushing himself to the limit—and through one of the loneliest experiences an athlete can have.

But always, even then, there were children and their parents waiting for him outside the clubhouse doors, many of them with disabilities like his, seeking consolation and advice. These obligations became Jim's greatest honor.

In this honest and insightful memoir, Jim Abbott reveals the insecurities of a life spent as the different one, how he habitually hid his disability in his right front pocket, and why he chose an occupation in which the uniform provided no front pockets. With a riveting pitch-by-pitch account of his no-hitter providing the ideal frame for his story, this unique athlete offers readers an extraordinary and unforgettable memoir.

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