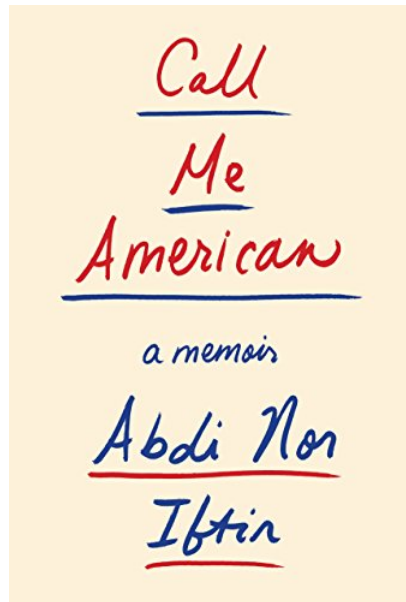


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The incredible true story of a boy living in war-torn Somalia who escapes to America--first by way of the movies; years later, through a miraculous green card. Abdi Nor Iftin first fell in love with America from afar. As a child, he learned English by listening to American pop artists like Michael Jackson and watching films starring action heroes like Arnold Schwarzenegger. When U.S. marines landed in Mogadishu to take on the warlords, Abdi cheered the arrival of these real Americans, who seemed as heroic as those of the movies. Sporting American clothes and dance moves, he became known around Mogadishu as Abdi American, but when the radical Islamist group al-Shabaab rose to power in 2006, it suddenly became dangerous to celebrate Western culture. Desperate to make a living, Abdi used his language skills to post secret dispatches to NPR and the Internet, which found an audience of worldwide listeners. But as life in Somalia grew more dangerous, Abdi was left with no choice but to flee to Kenya as a refugee. In an amazing stroke of luck, Abdi won entrance to the U.S. in the annual visa lottery, though his route to America--filled with twists and turns and a harrowing sequence of events that nearly stranded him in Nairobi--did not come easily. Parts of his story were first heard on the BBC World Service and This American Life. Now a proud resident of Maine, on the path to citizenship, Abdi Nor Iftin's dramatic, deeply stirring memoir is truly a story for our time: a vivid reminder of why western democracies still beckon to those looking to make a better life.

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