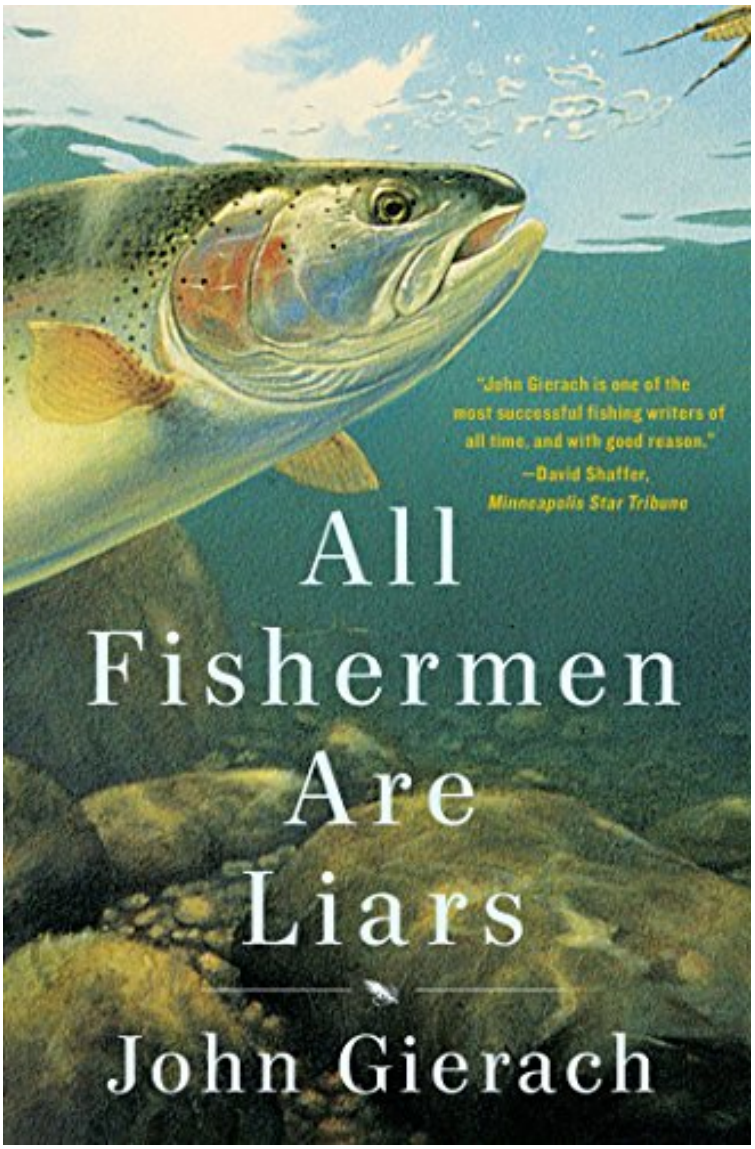
All Fishermen Are Liars (John Gierach's Fly-fishing Library) (English Edition)



Par John Gierach
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Par John Gierach : All Fishermen Are Liars (John Gierach's Fly-fishing Library) (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised All Fishermen Are Liars (John Gierach's Fly-fishing Library) (English Edition):

Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurThis elegiac tribute to the elusive art and ineffable pleasure of fly-fishing (Kirkus s) shows us why lifes most valuable lessonsand some of its best experiencesare found while fly-fishing.For John Gierach, the master of fly-fishing (Sacramento Bee), fishing is always the answereven when its not clear what the question is. In All Fishermen Are Liars, Gierach travels around North America seeking out quintessential fishing experiences, whether its at a busy stream or a secluded lake hidden amid snow-capped mountains. He talks about the art of fly-tying and the quest for the perfect steelhead fly (The Nuclear

Option), about fishing in the Presidential Pools previously fished by the elder George Bush (I wondered briefly if Id done something karmically disastrous and was now fated to spend the rest of my life breathing the exhaust of this elderly Republican), and the importance of traveling with like-minded companions when caught in a soaking rain (At this point someone is required to say, You know, there are people who wouldnt think this is fun). And though Gierach loses some fish along the way, he never loses his passion and sense of humor. Wry, contemplative, and livelythat is to say, pure GierachAll Fishermen Are Liars is a joy to readand, as always, the next best thing to fishing itself. From the early daysto his present cult status, Gierachs candor and canniness at the waters edge have been consistentHis grizzled, laconic persona is engaging and the voice of the common angler (The Wall Street Journal).ExtraitAll Fishermen Are Liars 1 A DAY AT THE OFFICE Chances are youre raised in the country or in a small town surrounded by country: someplace where you can easily walk or ride your bike to the edge of what until recently had been the known world, and then on into the fields, woods and creeks beyond. Some of this is private land and you occasionally have to crawl through a barbed-wire fence to get on it, but the niceties of ownership are left to the adults to sort out. To a kid, its all just unpopulated and there to explore. The first time a farmer yells at you for trespassing, you honestly dont know what hes talking about. Youre equipped for this wilderness with a hand-me-down folding knife and the Army-issue compass your father brought home from World War Two. The weight of these items in your pocket feels comfortingly substantial; although you understand only in a theoretical way that the compass is some sort of insurance against getting lost. You havent yet learned the hard lesson that it doesnt matter where north is if you dont know which direction you came from. In addition to the knife and compass, you have a cane fishing pole with a line stout enough to land a tarpon, as well as a slingshot that seems potentially lethal but maddeningly inaccurate. You also have a crude homemade spear that you keep hidden because you know Dad will ask what you plan to do with it and you wont have an acceptable answer. Taken together, these items constitute the beginning of a lifelong fascination with the tools of sport. You experience the kind of freedom that will be unknown to future generations. This is the 1950s, when kids are still allowed to run wild as long as theyre home by dark. Its also a time when low-grade delinquencylike trespassing, truancy or the odd fistfightcomes under the heading of boys will be boys. You might get scolded or spanked, but you wont have to undergo counseling. Like all children, you take your play as seriously as any young predator. The only difference you see when you begin to tag along with the grown-ups on actual hunting and fishing trips is that their toys are larger, heavier and in some cases louder than yours. At first youre there as a mascot, unable to keep up and making too much noise, but eventually you see that this is serious adult business and prove yourself enough to trade the slingshot for a .22 rifle and graduate to a rod with a reel on it. Dad begins to sense an opportunity. When the time comes for you to have your own shotgun, he gives you the Fox Sterlingworth 12-gauge he got from your grandfather. (Its a little more gun than you can handle, but youll grow into it.) Then he acts surprised to find that he no longer has a shotgun and says he guesses hell just have to buy himself a new one. It turns out to be the sexy Italian double hes been mooning over for years. The same thing happens with other gear until, by your late teens, Dad has all new stuff and your room looks like a used sporting goods store. Hunting and fishing are the two things you and your father can always talk about easily, but over time other subjects become quagmires. Theres the competition over the family sedan that comes with the first drivers license; the first serious awareness of politics spurred by the civil rights movement and the assassination of President Kennedy; books that werent assigned at school and that some of your teachers disapprove of; loud rock and roll and a certain dark-haired girl with big, soft eyes. In hindsight, you think you must have been confused, but at the time, you seem pretty damned sure of yourself. By the time you head off to college, youve begun to drift away from sport and are now trying to picture yourself as a poet and intellectual. On the other hand, you bring along your .22 and take the occasional break in season for some rabbit hunting. You now understand what trespassing is, and this time when the farmer yells at you, you explain that youre a struggling college student just trying to get a cottontail for dinner, exaggerating the poverty angle a little, but not exactly lying. He takes in the long hair and the attempt at a beard. Then he says, Next time, stop by the house first. Youve also brought a rod and theres a slow, brown river flowing through town, but youve never seen anyone fishing it and cant imagine anything living in water with that peculiar industrial aroma. Its only years later that you wonder what youd have found if youd followed the thing upstream, past the outflow from the brewery and on into farm country. But at the time, youre too busy with books, lectures, political demonstrations, music, beer, early struggles with writing and another girl with big eyes. Shes your third. Or maybe fourth. After graduation youre offered a job in the bar youve been drinking in for the last four years.

You suspect this is an act of charity. Your major was philosophy, which the bar owner has described as a quaint but useless discipline. With your bachelors degree in hand and no plans for graduate school, you begin to see his point. This tavern has seemed more like home than your various apartments and trailers, but youre envisioning a bigger change than switching from one side of the bar to the other. Youre unemployed if not actually unemployable and have no other prospects, so you drive out to the Rocky Mountains to look around. In Colorado, in a town at an elevation of 10,000 feet with five year-round residents (how did you end up here?), you go to work in a silver mine for room, board and shares. Youre living in a cabin on the mine property with two other young guys at loose ends: an out-of-work actor and a sullen revolutionary type who reveals nothing whatsoever about his past, including his last name. Its possible that he just values his privacy, but you suspect hes on the lam. The room is okay, but the board is on the thin side, tending toward beans and tortillas, so you rediscover fishing, this time for trout. They seem smallon the order of bluegillsbut theyre the loveliest fish youve ever seen and they live in country where both the scenery and the altitude take your breath awayone figuratively, the other literally. You dont have much money, but you buy a fly rod and later a rifle for mule deer. You had a deer rifle of sorts when you came west, but somewhere along the line you traded it for a used fuel pump and a tank of gas. It was a surplus .303 Enfield. No great loss. The Second World War has been over for twenty-five years now, but the used equipment is still readily available and cheap, so it constitutes most of your outdoor gear: clothing, packs, pup tents, sleeping bags, tarps, sheath knives, canteens, mess kits, Dads old compass and so on. If our troops in that conflict had been issued fly rods, youd have one of those, too. In the end, the shares in the mine youve been counting on dont pan out. It turns out that the owner sold several hundred percent of the thing to gullible investors and its largely worthless anyway. Eventually the authorities get involved. But no one comes to evict you from the cabin and you realize you could squat there indefinitely. Its tempting. Theres firewood to cut, water to haul, fish and game in the surrounding mountains and some blue-collar fun to be had in a tavern twenty miles down a dirt road. On the other hand, youre broke, theres no work and youd freeze over the winter, so you and your partners drift off in different directions. You never see either of them again. Theres a side trip to New York City, where you stay with a girlfriend from college, work a low-paying job and try to be a writer. None of it works out and one day you inadvertently panhandle a friend from college. You dont recognize him at first because hes wearing a sport coat and has cut his hair short. He buys you lunch and slips you a twenty. Youre embarrassed, but you eat the cheeseburger and take the money. Not long after that you go back to Colorado. You tell yourself you werent defeated by the city, its just that you couldnt stop thinking about mountains and rivers and brightly colored trout swimming in cold, clean water. You find a cheap place to live, trade your car for a seriously used four-wheel-drive and register it in Colorado so you can buy resident fishing and hunting licenses. You begin a series of manual-labor jobs to get by. Youre young and strong and a good worker, but your mind habitually wanders to the fishing and writing you now do in every minute of your time off. One day a boss catches you daydreaming and says, You know, another hump like you comes down the pike every day. You reply, Yeah, and theres another shitty job like this one around every corner. Its becoming clear that you dont have a future in the diplomatic service. In fact, youre not at all sure what you have in mind for yourself, but its beginning to look like it might involve a typewriter instead of a shovel. You marry one of the girls with big, dark eyes, but it doesnt last. When the justice of the peace who tied the knot asked if youd thought this through, you said, Sure, but in fact you hadnt. The divorce is painless. She doesnt want the books, the rifle or the fly rod. You have no use for the herbal tea, the tarot cards or the teepee. Other women in your life also work out temporarily, but eventually they all begin to give you a certain quizzical look that you come to recognize. Theyre asking themselves, What was I thinking? You continue to try things on for size: jobs, friends, ideas, writing styles, outdoor sports, various controlled substances that are available at the time and a wide range of wild country in all seasons. You realize that you cant write what you know when you dont know anything, so you travel compulsively and try everything. You make some mistakes, but none of them are fatal, although you do injure a knee, frostbite some toes and bugger an elbow, and none of them are ever quite the same again. In a college town you meet some writers and some fly fishers and settle in to learn the respective crafts. Youve been writing since high school and fishing since before you can remember, but it turns out you know less about either than you thought you did. On the other hand, youre not entirely surprised to find that success in both disciplines depends on patience, persistence, diligence and attention to detail. These were never your strong points, but you vow to change. You publish here and there in literary magazines for bragging rights, but no money. You even get a thin volume of poems into print, but come to see that poetry is unlikely to dollar up, as they say out West. As

someone once said, A publisher would rather see a burglar in his office than a poet. You also manage to catch some trout. In the grand scheme of things, these are not enormous accomplishments, but they make you inordinately happy. Decades later you review your Social Security earnings record and find that several of those years are commemorated by columns of zeros. You wonder how you managed to keep body and soul together. Apparently you were destitute, but thats not how you remember it. You live in an odd succession of houses and apartments with an equally odd succession of people: students, former students, would-be students, struggling writers, painters, musicians, craftsmen and others who defy categorization. You attend periodic house meetings to determine the identity of the people on the floor in sleeping bags. If no one whos paying rent knows them, theyre asked to leave. Youre neither a great writer nor a great fisherman, but these continue to be the two things you care about most and its a surprisingly long time before it occurs to you to put the two together. Finally you write a story about fly fishing and sell it to a magazine for the equivalent of a months wages. This is the first time youve been paid actual money for something youve written. The now-comfortable role of starving artist notwithstanding, it feels pretty damned good. You begin to freelance for fishing magazines, go to work as the outdoor columnist for a daily newspaper and publish a book that does well enough for the publisher to ask if you have another one in the works. It just so happens that you do. Its a gradual start, but when fly fishing begins to get fashionable, youre already in place: maybe not a top gun, but a somewhat established writer just the same. This is the equivalent of pulling off at a random turnout along an unknown river, stumbling into the cosmic green drake hatch and having the right fly. The books, the magazines and the newspaper dont pay all that well individually, but taken together they sometimes add up to enough. It happens slowly, with several false starts, but finally you quit the last of an interminable series of part-time jobs and begin making a living as a writer. This leads to occasional misunderstandings. Some people assume that youre now rich because the only other writer they know anything about is Ernest Hemingway. These include some who should know better, like the guy who writes in the London Times that your populist persona is just an act and that youre actually an eccentric millionaire. What? Luckily, none of your friends read the London Times, but they do read the magazine that names you angler of the year. Youre delighted, but the ribbing is unmerciful, beginning with the friend who asks, So, have those guys ever fished with you? You meet a man who, in the course of a durable friendship, teaches you most of what youll ever know about fly fishing and incidentally helps you dial yourself back in the direction of the native midwesterner youd always been. Hes also what youd call colorful, so you naturally write about him and early on people ask if hes real, or just a fictional character. Years later, when he goes on the road as a public speaker and you become somewhat reclusive, people ask him the same thing about you. You buy a small, mediocre house near a small, mediocre trout stream, and after a few good years you manage to pay off the mortgage. This leaves you nearly broke, but you own your home outright, which is crucial for a writera profession in which the regular paychecks needed for monthly payments are all but unknown. You grow a decent garden in black, river-bottom soil, raise chickens for eggs, meat and hackle, heat with wood you cut yourself, and hunt, fish and forage for at least some of the groceries. You learn, among other things, that as satisfying as subsistence is, its a full-time job that will be hard to maintain. The garden goes first. Youve begun to travel a lot during the growing season, and the hippie girl next door who agrees to weed and water it for a share of the harvest sometimes gets distracted and forgets. You meet another girl with those big, dark eyes you could never resist. Woman, actually. Its been a while now since either of you were kids. Shes a writer herself and comes from a long line of Great Lakes fishermen, so those are two things you dont have to explain. Youve been a couple for some time when she heads back to Michigan to fish with her family. When you drop her off at the airport, you jokingly say, Catch a fish for me. When you pick her up a week later, a crate large enough to hold a railroad tie rolls onto the baggage carousel. She says, Theres your fish. Its a thirty-pound Chinook salmon. By this time youve moved in together. There wasnt much discussion. It just sort of happened. It also just sort of happens that twenty-some years later youre still together. You live within driving distance of some of the best trout fishing in the country and theres an airport an hour and a half away, so you see a lot of rivers, streams and lakes, sometimes on assignment, sometimes on your own dime. These waters are all beautiful in their own way, but in the course of your travels you discover a few real sweet spots: places that are incomparable and unforgettable for reasons that usually have to do with the fishing, as well as something else that you glimpse from time to time, but that resists being distilled into sentences and paragraphs. You want to believe that at least some of these places are remote enough to adequately protect themselves, but then time and experience reveal that to be less true than youd hoped. So in your stories you begin to casually

omit the name of a stream or river, or change its name, or move its location from one state or province to another in order to protect the innocent. You dont really think you can single-handedly hold off the inevitable, but you do hope you can keep it from being your fault. In extreme cases, you engage in the fantasy that certain places dont exist and even if they do, you were never there. The transaction between writer and reader comes with some responsibility, but if you never write the story, all bets are off. You realize youve become one of those people who make a living with public words, and although youre not in the same class with lawyers and politicians, one thing you share with them is the real possibility of doing more harm than good. You adopt a quote from novelist Thomas McGuane as your professional motto: Whenever you feel like falling silent, do it. There was no calculation in this, but over time you develop a reputation in some circles as the rare fishing writer who can and will keep his mouth shut and are therefore sometimes taken to secret glory holes that few ever get to see. The worst that happens is that you occasionally go fishing without turning a profit: something normal people do every day. Youre now and then implicated as part of the fly-fishing industry. You dont quite see it that way, but denying it seems pointless, so you take to saying, I dont do this because its a business; its a business so I can do this. You also begin quoting John Mellencamp, who said, I never cared about moneybut I always wanted to get paid. Its a passable living and a good life. You have all the usual troublesfinancial, medical, personalplus a few that are peculiar to your profession, but youre doing the only two things you ever really wanted to do. Youre profoundly interested in fishing when youre fishing and just as fascinated by writing when youre at your desk. Both are great fun when theyre going well, and still worth the effort even when theyre not. When an interviewer asks if you consider yourself a fisherman first and a writer second or vice versa, you truthfully answer, Yes. You may not have actually beaten the system, but there are certain small victories. For instance, the accountant who now handles your taxes says that if some of his other self-employed clients saw what you legitimately write offfly rods, travel, fishing lodges, guide tips, etc.theyd shit a brick. You now pay more in taxes in a year than you used to make as a writer. You suppose that amounts to progress. Some days this seems like such an uncertain career that you wonder if you should have done something else. Other days you have so much fun you cant believe youre actually getting paid. Finally it occurs to you that youve pretty much accomplished everything you set out to do, its just that you didnt set out to do all that much. You realize that youve been writing about fly fishing professionally for thirty-five years and still havent run out of things to say. This can mean only one of two things: that the subject itself is inexhaustible or that youll never quite get it right. There are inevitable complications, but at its core, life is simple. At the desk its all about the luscious sense, sound and possibilities of language. On the water its all about the fish and the beautiful places they live. The only real difficulties you encounter are in getting from one place to the other. In the end, you fish as much as you want to and sometimes even a little more. You begin telling people, I have to go fishing; its my job. You dont exactly mean that as a joke, but understand thats how theyll take it. Still, even on those rare days when you trudge off to a trout stream not so much because you want to, but because your livelihood depends on it, you have a better day at the office than most.Revue de presseAll Fishermen Are Liars is rich in the savvy, humor, and sidelong takes on our sport that have made all of Johns books such addictive reading. (Paul Schullery, author of If Fish Could Scream and The Fishing Life)From the early days . . . to his present cult status, [Gierachs] candor and canniness at the waters edge have been consistent. . . . [His] grizzled, laconic persona is engaging. . . . The voice of the common angler. (David Profumo The Wall Street Journal)A reader can learn a whole lot about fishingand about lifethan they might have expected reading this book. (Kate Whittle The Missoula Independent)John Gierach remains the most consistently eloquent fly fishing writer of modern times. (James R. Babb, Editor, Grays Sporting Journal)John Gierach is one of the most successful fishing writers of all time, and with good reason. In his 17th book, Gierach reminds us in a delightful way that fishing never has been just about catching, though he can teach us a lot about that, too. . . . Despite taking trips as a famous angler to exotic fishing locales, Gierach has retained his down-to-earth fishing honesty and has never forgotten that some of the best stories are about wading a trout stream just down the road. (David Shaffer Minneapolis Star Tribune)[Gierach's] writing here is unfailingly witty, generous of spirit and full of hard-won but easily shared knowledge. . . . It goes without saying that Gierach is a masterful storyteller, but what's even more obvious after reading Liars is that he is a profoundly skilled writer. (Steve Duda The Flyfish Journal)A fishermans testimony to the faithful. . . . [An] Elegiac tribute to the elusive art and ineffable pleasure of fly-fishing, with plenty of information about how its done by true practitioners. (Kirkus s)Perceptive and witty. . . . These lyrical essays explode with descriptions of beautiful places, big fish, and beautiful fish. . . . But Gierach can write about

more than trout and salmon. (Booklist)Yet another Gierach masterpiece and well worth a read, even if you aren't into fishing. (David Keene The Washington Times)