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# The Cider House Rules

'Difficult to define, impossible not to admire'  
*Daily Telegraph*

JOHN  
the cider house rules

IRVING



Par John Irving  
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**Description :** Description du produitFirst published in 1985, *The Cider House Rules* is John Irving's sixth novel. Set in rural Maine in the first half of this century, it tells the story of Dr. Wilbur Larch--saint and obstetrician, founder and director of the orphanage in the town of St. Cloud's, ether addict and abortionist. It is also the story of Dr. Larch's favorite orphan, Homer Wells, who is never adopted.

Prsentation de l'diteur'The reason Homer Wells kept his name was that he came back to St Cloud's so many times, after so many failed foster homes, that the orphanage was forced to acknowledge Homer's intention to make St Cloud's his home.'Homer Wells' odyssey begins among the apple orchards of rural Maine. As the oldest unadopted child at St Cloud's orphanage, he strikes up a profound and unusual friendship with Wilbur Larch, the orphanage's founder - a man of rare compassion and an addiction to ether. What he learns from

Wilbur takes him from his early apprenticeship in the orphanage surgery, to an adult life running a cider-making factory and a strange relationship with the wife of his closest friend...ExtraitChapter One The Boy Who Belonged to St. Clouds In the hospital of the orphanage-the boys division at St. Clouds, Maine-two nurses were in charge of naming the new babies and checking that their little penises were healing from the obligatory circumcision. In those days (in 192\_), all boys born at St. Clouds were circumcised because the orphanage physician had experienced some difficulty in treating uncircumcised soldiers, for this and for that, in World War I. The doctor, who was also the doctor of the boys division, was not a religious man; circumcision was not a rite with him-it was a strictly medical act, performed for hygienic reasons. His name was Wilbur Larch, which, except for the scent of ether that always accompanied him, reminded one of the nurses of the tough, durable wood of the coniferous tree of that name. She hated, however, the ridiculous name of Wilbur, and took offense at the silliness of combining a word like Wilbur with something as substantial as a tree. The other nurse imagined herself to be in love with Dr. Larch, and when it was her turn to name a baby, she frequently named him John Larch, or John Wilbur (her fathers name was John), or Wilbur Walsh (her mothers maiden name had been Walsh). Despite her love for Dr. Larch, she could not imagine Larch as anything but a last name-and when she thought of him, she did not think of trees at all. For its flexibility as a first or as a last name, she loved the name of Wilbur-and when she tired of her use of John, or was criticized by her colleague for overusing it, she could rarely come up with anything more original than a Robert Larch or a Jack Wilbur (she seemed not to know that Jack was often a nickname for John). If he had been named by this dull, love-struck nurse, he probably would have been a Larch or a Wilbur of one kind or another; and a John, a Jack, or a Robert-to make matters even duller. Because it was the other nurses turn, he was named Homer Wells. The other nurses father was in the business of drilling wells, which was hard, harrowing, honest, precise work-to her thinking her father was composed of these qualities, which lent the word wells a certain deep, down-to-earth aura. Homer had been the name of one of her familys umpteen cats. This other nurse-Nurse Angela, to almost everyone-rarely repeated the names of her babies, whereas poor Nurse Edna had named three John Wilbur Juniors, and two John Larch the Thirds. Nurse Angela knew an inexhaustible number of no-nonsense nouns, which she diligently employed as last names-Maple, Fields, Stone, Hill, Knot, Day, Waters (to list a few)-and a slightly less impressive list of first names borrowed from a family history of many dead but cherished pets (Felix, Fuzzy, Smoky, Sam, Snowy, Joe, Curly, Ed and so forth). For most of the orphans, of course, these nurse-given names were temporary. The boys division had a better record than the girls division at placing the orphans in homes when they were babies; too young ever to know the names their good nurses had given them; most of the orphans wouldnt even remember Nurse Angela or Nurse Edna, the first women in the world to fuss over them. Dr. Larch made it a firm policy that the orphans adoptive families not be informed of the names the nurses gave with such zeal. The feeling at St. Clouds was that a child, upon leaving the orphanage, should know the thrill of a fresh start-but (especially the boys who were difficult to place and lived at St. Clouds the longest) it was hard for Nurse Angela and Nurse Edna, and even for Dr. Larch, not to think of their John Wilburs and John Larches (their Felix Hills, Curly Maples, Joe Knots, Smoky Waterses) as possessing their nurse-given names forever. The reason Homer Wells kept his name was that he came back to St. Clouds so many times, after so many failed foster home, that the orphanage was forced to acknowledge Homers intention to make St. Clouds his home. It was not easy for anyone to accept, but Nurse Angela and Nurse Edna-and, finally, Dr. Wilbur Larch-were forced to admit that Homer Wells belonged to St. Clouds. The determined boy was not put up for adoption anymore. Nurse Angela, with her love of cats and orphans, once remarked of Homer Wells that the boy must adore the name she gave him because he fought so hard not to lose it. From the Trade Paperback edition. *Revue de presse*"Superb in scope and originality, a novel as good as one could hope to find from any author, anywhere, anytime. Engrossing, moving, thoroughly satisfying."--Joseph Heller From the Hardcover edition.