


# Memoirs of an Imaginary Friend: A Novel

*By Matthew Dicks*

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**Memoirs of an Imaginary Friend: A Novel** By Matthew Dicks

Imaginary friend Budo narrates this heartwarming story of love, loyalty, and the power of the imagination?the perfect read for anyone who has ever had a friend . . . real or otherwise

Budo is lucky as imaginary friends go. He's been alive for more than five years, which is positively ancient in the world of imaginary friends. But Budo feels his age, and thinks constantly of the day when eight-year-old Max Delaney will stop believing in him. When that happens, Budo will disappear.

Max is different from other children. Some people say that he has Asperger's Syndrome, but most just say he's "on the spectrum." None of this matters to Budo, who loves Max and is charged with protecting him from the class bully, from awkward situations in the cafeteria, and even in the bathroom stalls. But he can't protect Max from Mrs. Patterson, the woman who works with Max in the Learning Center and who believes that she alone is qualified to care for this young boy.

When Mrs. Patterson does the unthinkable and kidnaps Max, it is up to Budo and a team of imaginary friends to save him?and Budo must ultimately decide which is more important: Max's happiness or Budo's very existence.

Narrated by Budo, a character with a unique ability to have a foot in many worlds?imaginary, real, child, and adult? *Memoirs of an Imaginary Friend* touches on the truths of life, love, and friendship as it races to a heartwarming . . . and heartbreaking conclusion.

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## Editorial Review

Review

“A novel as creative, brave, and pitch-perfect as its narrator, an imaginary friend named Budo, who reminds us that bravery comes in the most unlikely forms. It has been a long time since I read a book that has captured me so completely, and has wowed me with its unique vision. You've never read a book like this before. As Budo himself might say: Believe me.” ?*Jodi Picoult, New York Times bestselling author of Sing You Home*

“Wholly original and completely unputdownable. MEMOIRS OF AN IMAGINARY FRIEND is a captivating story told in a voice so clever and honest I didn't want it to end. The arresting voice of THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME with the emotional power of ROOM and the whimsy of DROP DEAD FRED, but in a class of its own.” ?*Eleanor Brown, New York Times bestselling author of The Weird Sisters*

“An incredibly captivating novel about the wonder of youth and the importance of friendship, whether real or imagined. Delightfully compelling reading.” ?*Booklist*

“[A] fun read and engaging exploration of the vibrant world of a child's imagination.” ?*Publishers Weekly*

“Quirky and heartwarming” ?*Kirkus*

About the Author

MATTHEW DICKS is a writer and elementary school teacher. His articles have been published in the *Hartford Courant* and he has been a featured author at the Books on the Nightstand retreat. He is also a Moth storyteller and a two-time StorySLAM champion. Dicks is the author of two previous novels, *Something Missing* and *Unexpectedly Milo.* He lives in Newington, Connecticut, with his wife, Elysha, and their children, Clara and Charlie.

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**one**

Here is what I know:
My name is Budo.
I have been alive for five years.
Five years is a very long time for someone like me to be alive.
Max gave me my name.
Max is the only human person who can see me.
Max’s parents call me an imaginary friend.
I love Max’s teacher, Mrs. Gosk.
I do not like Max’s other teacher, Mrs. Patterson.
I am not imaginary.

## two

I am lucky as imaginary friends go. I have been alive for a lot longer than most. I once knew an imaginary friend named Philippe. He was the imaginary friend of one of Max's classmates in preschool. He lasted less than a week. One day he popped into the world, looking pretty human except for his lack of ears (lots of imaginary friends lack ears), and then a few days later, he was gone.

I'm also lucky that Max has a great imagination. I once knew an imaginary friend named Chomp who was just a spot on the wall. Just a fuzzy, black blob without any real shape at all. Chomp could talk and sort of slide up and down the wall, but he was two-dimensional like a piece of paper, so he could never pry himself off. He didn't have arms and legs like me. He didn't even have a face.

Imaginary friends get their appearance from their human friend's imagination. Max is a very creative boy, and so I have two arms, two legs, and a face. I'm not missing a single body part and that makes me a rarity in the world of imaginary friends. Most imaginary friends are missing something or other and some don't even look human at all. Like Chomp.

Too much imagination can be bad, though. I once met an imaginary friend named Pterodactyl whose eyes were stuck on the ends of these two gangly, green antennas. His human friend probably thought they looked cool, but poor Pterodactyl couldn't focus on anything to save his life. He told me that he constantly felt sick to his stomach and was always tripping over his own feet, which were just fuzzy shadows attached to his legs. His human friend was so obsessed with Pterodactyl's head and those eyes that he had never bothered to think about anything below Pterodactyl's waist.

This is not unusual.

I'm also lucky because I'm mobile. Lots of imaginary friends are stuck to their human friends. Some have leashes around their necks. Some are three inches tall and get stuffed into coat pockets. And some are nothing more than a spot on the wall, like Chomp. But thanks to Max, I can get around on my own. I can even leave Max behind if I want.

But doing so too often might be hazardous to my health.

As long as Max believes in me, I exist. People like Max's mother and my friend Graham say that this is what makes me imaginary. But it's not true. I might need Max's imagination to exist, but I have my own thoughts, my own ideas, and my own life outside of him. I am tied to Max the same way that an astronaut is tied to his spaceship by hoses and wires. If the spaceship blows up and the astronaut dies, that doesn't mean that the astronaut was imaginary. It just means that his life support was cut off.

Same for me and Max.

I need Max in order to survive, but I'm still my own person. I can say and do as I please. Sometimes Max and I even get into arguments, but nothing ever serious. Just stuff about which TV show to watch or which game to play. But it *behooves* me (that's a word that Mrs. Gosk taught the class last week) to stick around Max whenever possible, because I need Max to keep thinking about me. Keep believing in me. I don't want to end up *out of sight, out of mind,* which is something Max's mom sometimes says when Max's dad forgets to call home when he is going to be late. If I am gone too long, Max might stop believing in me, and if that happens, then *poof.*

## three

Max's first-grade teacher once said that houseflies live for about three days. I wonder what the life span of an imaginary friend is? Probably not much longer. I guess that makes me practically ancient.

Max imagined me when he was four years old, and just like that, I popped into existence. When I was born, I

only knew what Max knew. I knew my colors and some of my numbers and the names for lots of things like tables and microwave ovens and aircraft carriers. My head was filled with the things that a four-year-old boy would know. But Max also imagined me much older than him. Probably a teenager. Maybe even a little older. Or maybe I was just a boy with a grown-up's brain. It's hard to tell. I'm not much taller than Max, but I'm definitely different. I was more together than Max when I was born. I could make sense of things that still confused him. I could see the answers to problems that Max could not. Maybe this is how all imaginary friends are born. I don't know.

Max doesn't remember the day that I was born, so he can't remember what he was thinking at the time. But since he imagined me as older and more together, I have been able to learn much faster than Max. I was able to concentrate and focus better on the day I was born than Max is able to even today. On that first day I remember Max's mother was trying to teach him to count by even numbers, and he just couldn't get it. But I learned it right away. It made sense to me because my brain was ready to learn even numbers. Max's brain wasn't.

At least that's what I think.

Also, I don't sleep, because Max didn't imagine that I needed sleep. So I have more time to learn. And I don't spend all my time with Max, so I've learned lots of things that Max has never seen or heard before. After he goes to bed, I sit in the living room or the kitchen with Max's parents. We watch television or I just listen to them talk. Sometimes I go places. I go to the gas station that never closes, because my favorite people in the world except for Max and his parents and Mrs. Gosk are there. Or I go to Doogies hot-dog restaurant a little ways down the road or to the police station or to the hospital (except I don't go to the hospital anymore because Oswald is there and he scares me). And when we are in school, I sometimes go to the teacher's lounge or another classroom, and sometimes I even go to the principal's office, just to listen to what's going on. I am not smarter than Max, but I know a lot more than him just because I am awake more and go places that Max can't. This is good. Sometimes I can help Max when he doesn't understand something so well.

Like last week Max couldn't open a jar of jelly to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. "Budo!" he said. "I can't open it."

"Sure you can," I said. "Turn it the other way. Lefty loosy. Righty tighty." That is something I hear Max's mom say to herself sometimes before she opens a jar. It worked. Max opened the jar. But he was so excited that he dropped it on the tile floor, smashing it into a million pieces.

The world can be so complicated for Max. Even when he gets something right, it can still go wrong.

* * *

I live in a strange place in the world. I live in the space in between people. I spend most of my time in the kid world with Max, but I also spend a lot of time with adults like Max's parents and teachers and my friends at the gas station, except they can't see me. Max's mom would call this *straddling the fence.* She says this to Max when he can't make up his mind about something, which happens a lot.

"Do you want the blue Popsicle or the yellow Popsicle?" she asks, and Max just freezes. Freezes like a Popsicle. There are just too many things for Max to think about when choosing.

Is red better than yellow?

Is green better than blue?

Which one is colder?

Which one will melt fastest?

What does green taste like?

What does red taste like?

Do different colors taste different?

I wish that Max's mom would just make the choice for Max. She knows how hard it is for him. But when she makes him choose and he can't, I sometimes choose for him. I whisper, "Pick blue," and then he says, "I'll take blue." Then it's done. No more straddling the fence.

That's kind of how I live. I straddle the fence. I live in the yellow and the blue world. I live with kids and I

live with adults. I'm not exactly a kid, but I'm not exactly an adult, either.
I'm yellow *and* blue.
I'm green.
I know my color combinations, too.

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## Users Review

**From reader reviews:**

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Have you spare time to get a day? What do you do when you have a lot more or little spare time? Sure, you can choose the suitable activity with regard to spend your time. Any person spent all their spare time to take a go walking, shopping, or went to the particular Mall. How about open as well as read a book entitled Memoirs of an Imaginary Friend: A Novel? Maybe it is being best activity for you. You understand beside you can spend your time using your favorite's book, you can more intelligent than before. Do you agree with its opinion or you have various other opinion?

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