



It Never Rains in Tiger Stadium: Football and the Game of Life

By John Ed Bradley

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"It was the biggest high you could have. No drugs could match it. The way it felt to run out there with the crowd yelling for you. I wish every kid could experience that."

Such was the charmed life of 21-year-old John Ed Bradley, All-SEC center for the Louisiana State University Tigers. But after his final football game, a 34-10 Tiger romp over Wake Forest in the 1979 Tangerine Bowl, he firmly closed the door to his locker and to his past. He moved on, seemingly untouched by the game, to become a successful journalist and novelist.

But Bradley couldn't help looking back, and soon that past was right in front of him. After the deaths of his old coach, Charles McClendon, and a fellow lineman, Bradley could no longer fight off his Tiger memories. Twenty-three years later, he still knew the names, weights, and jersey numbers of the teammates he had called brothers, and whom he had been neglecting ever since.

It Never Rains in Tiger Stadium is inspired by Bradley's classic essay "The Best Years of His Life," which appears in *Sports Illustrated: Fifty Years of Great Writing*. It chronicles his rediscovery of the team that he had long forsaken but never forgotten, and his search for forgiveness from teammates who had never forgotten him.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

John Ed Bradley is the author of several highly praised novels, including *Tupelo Nights* and *My Juliet*. A former staff writer for *The Washington Post*, Bradley has contributed features to *Sports Illustrated*, *Esquire*, and *GQ*. He lives in Opelousas, Louisiana.

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