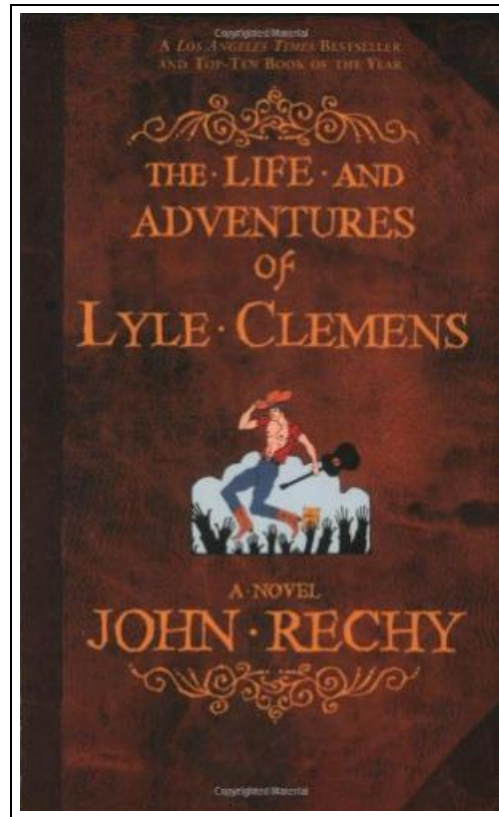


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Grove Press / Atlantic Monthly Press, United States, 2004. Paperback. Condition: New. Reprint. Language: English . Brand New Book. Modeled on the classic 18th-century picaresques like Fielding's *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* and Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, *The Life and Adventures of Lyle Clemens* is the modern-day bildungsroman of a prodigiously attractive young Texan named Lyle Clemens. Lyle is kind of a holy fool who, like *Chance in Being There*, illuminates the actions, motivations, and prejudices of others through his lack of cynicism. He is a simple babe, in the woods of Texas and Los Angeles. Lyle's mother, Sylvia, is a beautiful woman who was raised Pentecostal and rebelled against her mother through sexuality but her dreams to become Miss America were dashed by her mother in a particularly traumatic way, and Lyle's father (Lyle the First, a dashing cowboy), who consoled her in her time of need, left her when she became pregnant, leaving only money for an abortion Sylvia never got. Sylvia never talks about her own childhood or Lyle's, and takes refuge in alcohol; an entertaining Chicana Catholic kook named Clarita, given to religious visions and wacky pronouncements, helps Sylvia raise Lyle. Despite his unusual circumstances, Lyle has a sunny disposition. Like his father, Lyle is given to wearing cowboy boots and other Western attire, and often has to explain to people that he's never actually ridden a horse. Things come to a head when Lyle reaches sexual maturity and falls in love with a girl in his school a beautiful young Chicana named Maria. Unfortunately, Maria's father Armando was one of Sylvia's boyfriends and thinks he is Lyle's father. Sylvia, out of vague sexual possessiveness toward her son, colludes with Armando to keep them apart, though she knows...



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