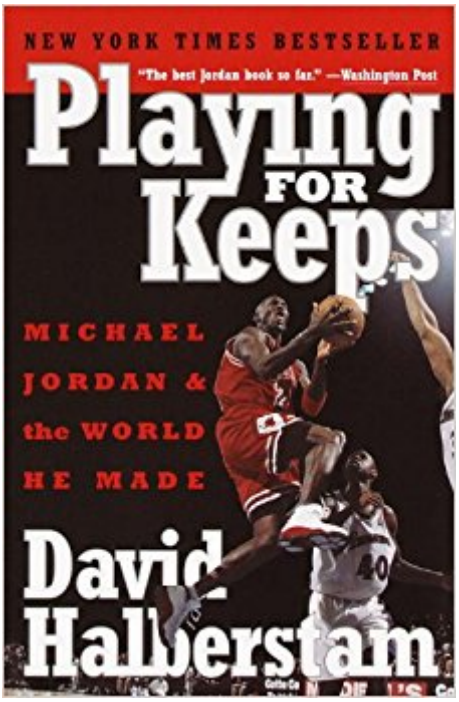
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Playing For Keeps: Michael Jordan And The World He Made



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Synopsis

From The Breaks of the Game to Summer of ’49, David Halberstam has brought the perspective of a great historian, the inside knowledge of a dogged sportswriter, and the love of a fan to bear on some of the most mythic players and teams in the annals of American sport. With Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls he has given himself his greatest challenge and produced his greatest triumph. In Playing for Keeps, David Halberstam takes the first full measure of Michael Jordan’s epic career, one of the great American stories of our time. A narrative of astonishing power and human drama, brimming with revealing anecdotes and penetrating insights, the book chronicles the forces in Jordan’s life that have shaped him into history’s greatest basketball player and the larger forces that have converged to make him the most famous living human being in the world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

One of the finest nonfiction writers in any lineup, Halberstam likes to alternate what he’s deemed his serious work--books like The Best and the Brightest, The Fifties, and The Children--with his sporting interludes, though in his hands, sports are much, much more than fun and games. Books like The Breaks of the Game and October 1964 use sports as a prism. Culture, race, society, and history are all filtered through it, and Halberstam refocuses--and interprets--what comes out the other side. That he would now turn his considerable abilities to exploring Michael Jordan is not surprising. Halberstam loves hoops, and Jordan not only defines the game, he defines an era. His fame crosses international borders as easily as he dribbles past half-court lines. In focusing on Jordan--as athlete and force of nature--and his osmosis from a young hoop dreamer to product pitchman to the

world, Halberstam is really examining intangibles like myth and legend, celebrity and fame, wealth and image, excellence and genius, race and style, the qualities of heroism and the pursuit of perfection. "That there had been even one Michael Jordan seemed in retrospect something of a genetic fluke," he writes, "and the idea that anyone would arrive in so short a span of time and do what he did both on and off the court seemed highly unlikely." But the phenomenon that is Jordan did just that. Understanding, even admiring, what he did, how he did it, and what it means in a basketball context and a larger one is Halberstam's goal, and, despite Jordan's lack of cooperation--or maybe because of it--Halberstam's muscular prose and thinking scores powerfully. Yet, there is a wistfulness, in the end, to Playing for Keeps; the game doesn't seem as much fun and collegial as it used to for Halberstam, and Jordan, great as he may be, emerges with less of the historic grace exhibited by Jackie Robinson, Ali, and Arthur Ashe than with a quality that Halberstam deems the athlete-explorer "in terms of going beyond previously accepted limits of what was humanly possible, and somehow by dint of physical excellence and unmatched willpower, pushing those limits forward that much more." Dazzling, certainly, but not necessarily heroic. Playing for Keeps is also available on audiocassette. --Jeff Silverman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Halberstam (The Children, etc.) has written an excellent book about the game of basketball and its greatest player. Readers familiar with Halberstam's customary insight into American life might think he pulls some punches. But this is an engrossing portrait?much edgier than the ballplayer's own current bestseller, For the Love of the Game. This is an examination of Jordan as athlete and media phenomenon, of the superstar's professional life and also of the NBA's coming of age. The focus is squarely on Jordan's astounding competitiveness and will power, qualities that, Halberstam argues, have as much or more to do with Jordan's success than even his remarkable talent. Meandering back and forth through time, Halberstam covers everything from the invention of ESPN to the genius of Spike Lee's Nike commercials?and every major playoff game Jordan played. With equal enthusiasm, Halberstam profiles the supporting cast: Bulls' coach Phil Jackson, whose job was to "maximize Jordan's abilities, without letting him suck the oxygen away from his teammates

Another excellent book by Halberstam. His insights into social power dynamics make this book a compelling addition to what I'm sure is an already a crowded field of Michael Jordan biographies. I read this book as a fan of the author rather than the subject and came away a bigger fan of both. Don't ignore this book simply because you don't like sports (you bookish nerds).

this book was in great condition when I received. it is virtually new. great reading .no marks or writing inside.

Great story and truly inspiring. I had to get the paper book at the library. It was not ideal that this book was only available as a cassette tape. I would have much preferred an MP3, audible book or atleast a CD. To compound matters, it was abbridged which/ I feel like I cheated the story when I read or listen to abbridged copy, I avoid it whenever possible.

I’m not sure anybody can write a better book about the subject. Anyone with the slightest interest in Michael Jordan or the NBA needs to read this book.

As anyone who’s familiar with David Halberstam’s work can attest, you’re hard pressed to find a better written dissection of nearly any topic unless it was by Halberstam himself..which given his attachment to certain subjects, is a possibility. Simply put, Halberstam was such a talented writer, that he was capable of making the most mundane events and details fascinating. When comparing Playing for Keeps with The Breaks of the Game, his early 80s dissection of the Portland Trailblazers though the former was probably a greater literary accomplishment, Playing for Keeps was a more interesting read for me. A large part of this is the subject matter, Michael Jordan, who established himself, in the most pathological of fashions as the greatest NBA player of all time. However as interesting of a feature as MJ is, if you’re reading this book, you probably don’t need a primer on Michael Jordan’s greatness. What sets this book apart is the detailed descriptions of what the NBA became economically in the 1990s.One if the many things that is great about Halberstam is his no stones left unturned approach to any subject matter. In spite of omitting much of Michael Jordan’s personal life from this book, I feel that reading this provides a clear picture of Michael, and even more so the climate of the NBA in the 1990’s, which is the exact started purpose of the book. In it, you’ll likely read tidbits regarding the 90s Bulls that you will not have seen elsewhere, and you’ll gain unique perspective to how the league flourished in the 80s and 90s, and the ramifications of that success.I read this book immediately after reading The Breaks of the Game, and doing so really added great perspective for not just understanding the league, but also Halberstam’s unique writing perspective. In truth both are kind of geared toward a niche market: NBA diehards and/or David Halberstam loyalists. If you have an interest in league history, TBOTG is worth your time, however if you were to only read one Playing for Keeps is far less obscure and dated. Having devoured just

about any and every NBA book on the market, I can day without question that DH's writing is far superior to anyone else who has attempted. Highly recommended.

great investigative piece, very solid book.halberstam is now deceased, but this book could really use an update, several characters are now in very different places. jordan tarnished his legacy playing with washington, he has also been atrocious as an executive and owner. chicago, reinsdorf and krause have had only failures since jordan and pippen left. jackson has proven he is biggest winner, he led several other nba champion teams after and we'll see how he does as an executive.

While trying to stay as unbiased as possible, the writer tends to soften his words to avoid any notions that this is a takedown book. While not afraid nor apologetic to drop an actual F-bomb in quotes, Halberstam doesn't choose stronger words that would be more accurate to describe a certain situation, emotion, or character trait. Most of the important stuff is covered here, but it's mostly glossed over, or assumed that the reader has read it elsewhere. With Jordan being the supposed center of the topic, the writer chose instead to focus on all the people surrounding him and going in depth into that. I suspect that's why the title is so unfocused or broad in spectrum as to include the word "World" in it.Overall, it's a nice ride back in time, but you leave the book having a blurrier look at the man in the middle of it all.

A well written bit of insight behind the Jordan story. A must read for for those who want to understand the Jordan "Legend". Lots more to it than just basketball.

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