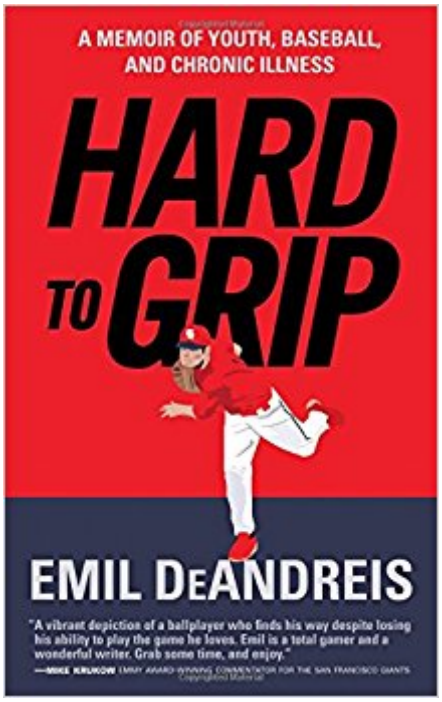
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Hard To Grip: A Memoir Of Youth, Baseball, And Chronic Illness



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Synopsis

In 2008, after a record-breaking career as a D1 college baseball player, Emil DeAndreis' life seemed set: He was twenty-three, in great shape, and had just been offered a contract to pitch professionally in Europe.Ã Â Ã Â Then his body fell apart.Ã Â Ã Â It started with elbow stiffness, then swelling in his wrist. Soon, his fingers were too bloated to grip a baseball. He had Rheumatoid Arthritis, a disease that causes swelling and eventual deterioration of the joints, mostly targeting old people and women.Ã Â Ã Â Hard To Grip tells the story of a young manÃ¢â ¬â„¢s body giving out when he needs it most. It chronicles an ascending sports career, the ups and downs of life in the NCAA, and the challenges of letting go of pro baseball due to a dehumanizing condition. In a series of humorous anecdotes, Emil takes the reader on his bittersweet journey of a young manÃ¢â ¬â„¢s having to grapple with an Ã¢â ¬Å“old womanÃ¢â ¬â„¢s disease.Ã¢â ¬Â• From striking out future major leaguer All Stars, to sitting in support groups; from breaking university records, to barely making it up the stairs; from language barriers with Chinese healers to figuring out how to be employed as a vegetable, this book unveils the disease with humor and fearless honesty through the eyes of an unlikely victim. This memoir is an honest, rueful and at times hilarious story about learning to come to terms with a new reality, and an inspiring account of how Emil learned to run with the disease and not from it.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"A vibrant depiction of a ballplayer that finds his way despite losing his ability to play the game he loves. Emil is a total gamer and a wonderful writer. Grab some time, and enjoy." Ã¢â ¬â •Mike

Krukow, former Major League pitcher, Chicago Cubs, Philadelphia Phillies, San Francisco Giants; color commentator, San Francisco Giants"The soul of baseball is in the stories it tells.Ã Â Hard to GripÃ Â is an inspirational, sad and amusing tale of a real life, told right by Emil DeAndreis." Ã¢â ¬â •Tim Brown, co-author with Jim Abbott, New York Times best-seller Imperfect: An Improbable Life;Ã Â co-author with Rick Ankiel, The Phenomenom

Emil DeAndreis is the author of Beyond Folly (Blue Cubicle Press). He is a high school baseball coach, and he teaches English at College of San Mateo. He lives in San Francisco with his wife.

DeAndreis accomplished something significant with this memoir - he got me interested in baseball! His descriptions of the emotions and relationships between the players, especially the pitcher and catcher, had me fully engaged. I loved reading about his different coaches and teachers, too. When his physical problems began, my heart sank and even though I knew where it all lead, I kept hoping for a different outcome. I found myself reluctant to put this book down and read it in 2 days. If you don’t care at all about baseball, you will still find this book to be an engaging reading experience.

Hard to Grip is a short memoir about the struggles of a high school star athlete turned college ball player coming to terms with the cruel and relentless reality of losing that dream to rheumatoid arthritis. I’ve always found these stories interesting (a la NFL’s Undrafted) and this was no different. You follow his career from start to present, from boy to man, and everything in between. Emil has a great voice; witty, authentic and unabashed on his journey of self-realization in his baseball world. You can expect an entertaining and thought-provoking story that anyone can enjoy. It’s a quick read and I very much look forward to more from this author. Highly recommend!

DeAndreis writes on such an emotional level that you feel like you are living his story with him. Having a son who is competing in college, Emil’s story resonates with me on a level that I did not expect. Seeing him emerge so successfully, helps remind me that success is measured on many different levels. Hard to Grip is a must read for both parents and athletes, because so often we lose sight of the journey that athletes endure in their quest for excellence and how that defines them as a person. Hard to Grip isn’t about loss, it’s about redemption and growth. It’s one of my favorite books this year!

Wow! I’m not an avid reader, but "Hard To Grip" was amazing. To wrap a love story around a

passion for baseball and to weave in a heartbreaking debilitating and rare chronic disease was SO compelling. Tears of joy and sadness came intermittently as I flipped pages waiting for the next life experience. What a beautiful writing!

DeAndreis shares stories of the thrill of his baseball life, love, battle with rheumatoid arthritis and transition into life after playing college baseball. His stories were captivating and I enjoyed the way he told them. Each chapter reeled me in with intriguing characters, descriptive situations (ranging from high school days to life after playing baseball) and thought-provoking perspectives. I finished Hard to Grip with a sense of connection and understanding of his triumphs, hopes and struggles. Truly a wonderful book which I encourage others to pick up soon.

"What ever happened to the strong, silent type?" Tony Soprano asks his shrink Dr. MelfiIn Hard to Grip, Emil DeAndreis proved himself to be a rare breed: the strong, silent type capable of poetic vulnerability.Whether you like baseball or not, do or do not suffer from a chronic illness, Hard to Grip is a must read. It’s virtually impossible to find the right cocktail of humor and raw human emotion and DeAndreis delivers just that.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book! I was already laughing out loud by the Prologue and though it’s funny throughout, it really develops into something beautiful; I felt like I was experiencing all of Emil’s emotions along with him as he chronicles his life.

A fantastic, relatable, and thought-provoking book. It was impossible to put down as I found myself relating to many of the emotions DeAndreis chronicles from both his playing career and his struggles being away from the game.

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