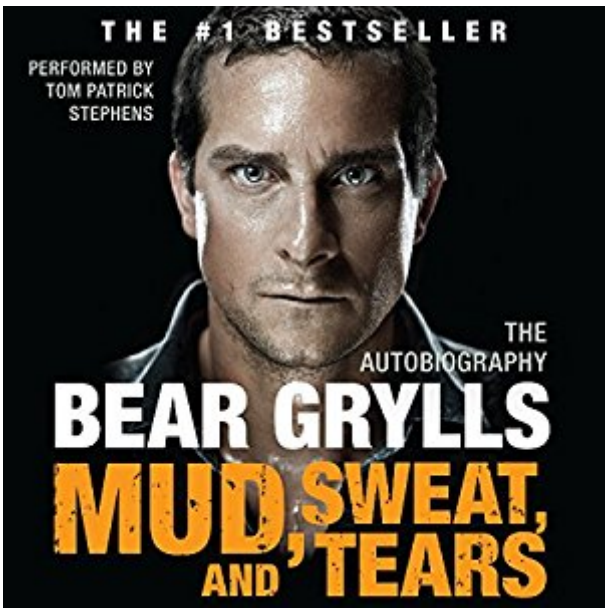
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Mud, Sweat, And Tears: The Autobiography



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Synopsis

Already a number-one London Sunday Times best seller, Mud, Sweat, and Tears is the adrenaline-fueled autobiography of the mega-popular star of the hit survival series Man vs. Wild, adventurer Bear Grylls. A former British Special Forces commando, a man who has always sought the ultimate in dangerous challenges, Bear’s true story reads like an outdoors action-and-adventure novel. But Bear’s story is true - full of breathtaking escapes and remarkable exploits that would make any Jack London or H. Ryder Haggard hero proud.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Having been a fan of Man vs Wild for as many years as it’s been around, I looked forward to reading his autobiography. The book starts out with a family history, way back into the 1800’s, into the early 1900’s, and up to the current generations. Then we learn about his upbringing, the environment that moulded him into the man he’s become. The school years go on a little too long, but once he begins his attempt at joining the Special Services, the book becomes more of what I expected. From there, he takes on his climbing expedition of Mt Everest. This section of the book could be a separate book on it’s own. Vivid detail, unbelievably harsh conditions, and his physical struggles all make for a tremendous recount of the adventure. The remainder of the book details his marriage, family, and TV career. For all his accomplishments in life, he never once comes across as boastful or as a braggart...his humble and self-effacing manner makes him come across as a regular guy. A regular guy that’s done more in his life than most of us would do in several lifetimes.

I think autobiographies are difficult to write to in an interesting way for a general audience. The reading audience (like any story telling audience) wants to read the usual elements of any good story - dreams, wants, risks, oppositions, crisis, lessons, internal and external character change and growth, etc.One of the big problems with autobiographies is that most lives just aren't that interesting. For example, seeÃ Â A Million Miles in a Thousand Years: How I Learned to Live a Better Story. Thus autobiographies often end up as a near-meaningless set of disconnected vignettes from the character's life, with little of interest or meaning or relevance to a general audience.For example, the book might say "Here are some random memories of where I grew up, what I did as a child, how well I did in school, some of the relatives and people I knew, how I started in my career, what happened later, etc." (Even the sentence above seems routine and boring as I write it...)It helps if the author is a celebrity (this book qualifies), because big fans of the author will probably like whatever is written, regardless of content (see all the 5 star reviews, for example).Focusing on the book itself, as a recounting of vignettes from the author's life so far, this book is no doubt reasonably accurate. The writing is reasonable, the vignette stories are reasonable, the pace is reasonable, and the book moves along. It seemed to me there were three main sections of the book - the author's early life, his SAS qualification and bad parachute landing, and his Everest trip, with some ending material on his role in the Man vs. Wild TV show.But as for being really interesting or meaningful to a general audience, the book doesn't seem to be anything special. The author does try to include various quotes and stories from his own life to encourage readers to keep on going when the going gets really tough (like the author did). However, it seemed to me that the inspirational conclusions seemed disconnected from the stories - the book seemed to repeat the same pattern over and over again: some physical challenge in SAS qualification/training or Everest, followed by another "keep going when it's really tough" quote.Autobiography reviewers must also be careful to separate their evaluation of the book from evaluation of the author's life story. It seems to me that the book itself had a flavor of "Hey, look at my cool life of adventure, and look at what I got away with", and that quite a few of the 5-star reviewers were fans of the author agreed that the author's life was cool and adventurous. Many of them seemed to be talking about the author and his cool life, rather than about the book itself.As a book, I don't think it was anything special because it contained general stories without too much interest or meaning to a general audience. And none of the stories seemed to have changed the author much, internally or externally. He seemed to be a child who preferred physical achievements to mental achievements (eg school work), and with lots of luck, seems to be a celebrity man who still prefers physical

adventures (supported by teams with lots of modern technology, dramatized for TV audiences). Nothing in his story seems to have changed him much.As for physical achievements and adventure stories, there are many other better books out there, such as the ones below. (It feels odd but fair for me to be comparing an autobiography story with pure adventure stories, but it seems reasonable because the author's book seems to be 2/3 adventure story, and not autobiography.)What I liked about the book - in reaction to the "Hey, look at the cool adventure life that I'm living" (kind of a more modern George Plimpton makeover) - was that it made me think more about life. It seems to me that there are many other life stories that have more real adventure (unsupported by military training or TV filming teams and budgets), and that produced more meaningful changes in the people who lived them.Maybe anyone can say "Hey, look at the cool adventurous life I have lived." And who am I or anyone else to dispute their claim? But I think I can legitimately say that this book - although a reasonable description of the author's life and thoughts about it - did not seem particularly insightful, meaningful, or relevant to me, as a non-fan of the author (I had never heard of him).I wouldn't recommend this book to readers, unless they're already fans of the author. I think there are quite a few other better books to read first.The Proving GroundInto Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest DisasterThe Climb: Tragic Ambitions on EverestLife in the French Foreign Legion: How to Join and What to Expect When You Get ThereOne Bullet Away: The Making of a Marine OfficerEat and Run: My Unlikely Journey to Ultramarathon GreatnessAdrift: Seventy-six Days Lost at SeaWhite Nights - Menachim BeginAlone - Admiral Richard Byrd

Wow, I'm so glad I could read about Bear's adventures without going through them myself. This man really is made of different stock and the best parts of this book are his accounts of going through horrendous elite military training, his subsequent close call with death, and his daring climb of Everest. I almost felt I was right there myself although I was curled up in bed and reading well into 4am. I just couldn't put his book down! Best yet, he's not some mindless, macho guy. Bear is the real deal. He's mart, intelligent and also very sweet. He's a sensitive and well grounded family man and the book leaves you feeling inspired. His final words of motivation are truly life changing and the book is a real thrill.

This is a great book. Read it over the course of one day and couldn't put it down. As a caution to those who think he will discuss his TV career in the book, he hardly goes into that until the last 20 pages of the 400 page book. This is about his life from early childhood to his young- mid twenties in which he did some of the most difficult things a man can do in life. Discusses life growing up with a

great father, school years, SAS military training, recovery from breaking his back, meeting his wife, climbing Mount Everest, and finally getting on Man vs. Wild. Great depiction of what a person with true grit and a disciplined faith filled life can accomplish if they put their mind to it and keep going no matter what.

We enjoyed this more than expected. I've seen his show a few times but it was never my thing; he seemed likable enough. It takes a different mindset to push and reach such physically and mentally challenging hurdles. I enjoyed getting a taste of how his mind works. I found him motivating even though my goals are far-far less exciting. I would have liked to know more about his family life. I think this could be a great read for a younger person looking for their path to understand that goals are worth achieving and it takes a lot of hard work, mental toughness and sometimes failures to get what you really want. I found some of the style a bit annoying or difficult but I took it as a sign that he wrote it and it was his voice, but I don't know.

It's hard to believe any human being could go through what Bear has with his training. I'm 64 and female,was pretty much a tomboy when I was young, I would have loved to go on a Running with Bear Grylls trip. That would have been my dream. I'm sure I will meet up with him in heaven one day and tell him this was one of my favorite books and his shows. I'm on to reading another one right now! Awesome read, awesome Person and awesome Christian!!! Mel.

Inspiring. Bear Grylls' enthusiasm is palpable throughout. As someone who has dealt with some hefty injury in the past I found his resilience in this department especially compelling. The book was one of the only I've read this year that I've had serious difficulty putting down.

Exciting personal account of his life. Kept my interest through the whole book.

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