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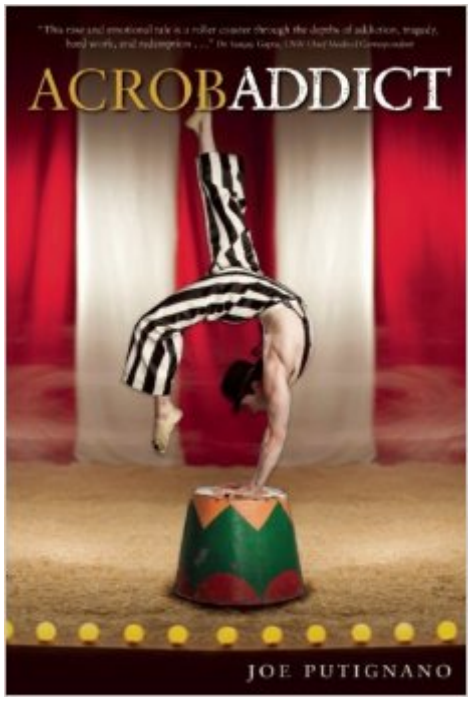
Acrobaddict



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Synopsis

Follow the author as he goes on a harrowing journey from the US Olympic Training Center to homeless shelters to shooting heroin on the job to being declared dead. This story goes beyond addiction. It is about the fragility and tenacity of the human spirit and how that spirit can redeem each and every one of us by helping to push us through the darkness, whether the darkness is from death, divorce, or the disease of addiction.Acrobaddict is a story about the close relationship between athletics and drug addiction—how the same energy, obsession, and dedication that can create an Olympic athlete can also create a homeless drug addict.PUBLISHERS WEEKLY (Starred review) After reading former Olympic gymnastics hopeful Putignano's sinister yet intoxicating memoir of addiction, recovery, and more addiction, you wind up feeling like one of his closest friends. The first-time author, who now portrays Crystal Man in Cirque du Soleil's traveling production of Totem, divulges what must be nearly every significant detail of his journey from the basement of his parents' Massachusetts home, where as an 8-year-old he taught himself flips using old couch cushions; to the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, where the author's insane quest for perfection exposed his insecurities and triggered his self-loathing; and finally to a seemingly never-ending series of addict escapades throughout his college and post-college years that somehow did not even climax after he was twice declared clinically dead. Putignano's homosexuality plays a crucial role in his story, and it is the one topic here he handles delicately. Elsewhere, his prose is unfiltered: graphic and intimate. Prone to hyperbole to the point of distraction, Putignano nevertheless writes so vividly about his highs that readers practically experience them with him. Similarly, his lows drop them into the private circles of hell on earth he created. A more powerful anti-drug missive would be tough to find. (Sept.)LIBRARY JOURNAL (July 22, 2013) Dale Farris, Groves, TX–Former star acrobatic contortionist and gymnast of the Cirque du Soleilâ ™s “Totem,â • performer in Twyla Tharpâ ™s musical The Times They Are Aâ ™changin, and guest on Dr. Sanjay Guptaâ ™s CNN show Human Factor, Putignano, shares his heartfelt, emotionally wrenching story of addiction to heroin. Putignanoâ ™s memoir takes readers on an unsettling journey from his experience in the U.S. Olympic Training Center to homeless shelters to shooting heroin on the job, and even being declared dead. His vivid, brutally honest story begins with his realizing at an early age his innate talent for gymnastics, followed by his obsession with becoming an Olympic gymnastic champion, how he abandoned his Olympic hopes to chase his love of heroin, and ultimately how he managed to overcome his addiction and move into long-term recovery and stability. The narrative is replete with colorful descriptions of his many harrowing experiences, and deep musings that have formed the foundation for his commitment to

remain free of drugs and a shining light for others who may be seeking guidance. VERDICT Putignanoâ ™s honest memoir of drug abuse is a valuable addition to substance-abuse literature. His status as a successful gymnast and performer helps connect readers, and his impressive, erudite style results in a highly credible addition to this rapidly saturating genre.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I read this memoir in the span of two days - which says something of its power. This isn't an easy book to read, though. He really does take us on a tour of what his hell looked and felt like. I felt exhausted by the time I reached the final page! That he had both the discipline and skill to write this memoir speaks eloquently to his character as a man.And, yet, I find myself wanting more because I have so many questions about how he found redemption and stayed the course of recovery. He speaks of the fear and self-hatred that became his enveloping demons and I wanted him to delve beneath skin and bones and explore in more nuance what those fears felt like. All through the journey, he met people who fell in love with him and believed in him and we're willing to suffer with and for him. But, I want to know why they were willing to do this - who is this Joe that they loved?In some respects, he does such a fine job of conveying what deformed his soul that I don't always glean how his innate goodness managed to spark even in darkness. I think I wanted the narrative of his journey into self-destruction to be tighter and of his journey into recovery more expansive. I was most moved in those sections where he reflects on what essentially is the sacred dimensions of his journey to becoming the man he was meant to be. I wanted even more of those insights as they

give his story its unique resonance.What I want, though, does not take away from what he gave us - a heroic story that sets before us the mystery of the human will and heart.I look forward to his next book - there’s got to be a "next" book!

Wow. A personal memoir by a talented, young man who provides a blow-by-blow account of his descent into hell and back again from the world of drugs, including heroin. This is a remarkable book in many ways. First, this book is an utter page turner as Mr Putignano’s life story is highly dramatic, from his early talent at competitive gymnastics, to his fall into disgrace through the use of drugs, to his coming out as a gay man, to his recovery and success as a Cirque du Soleil performer. His story is sufficient to make this a compelling read; what elevates this to a spiritual tale of a hero’s journey is his remarkable writing. Speaking of using coke, he writes: "I treasured my first line, like a lover’s tender kiss....After I snorted the "opening credit" I loved to light a cigarette and suck an Altoid mint, calling this combination my "steak dinner." The combination of imagery, and wry self-deprecating humor makes this an honest, humble book that allows the readers to immerse themselves in very difficult subject matter and still be entertained. There is plenty of inherent drama as the reader wonders, "could it get any worse" and "how is it he is not dead" and "how does someone like that ever find recovery." But Mr. Putignano does recover, and his tale of redemption is gratifying indeed. After I read this book, I felt pretty good about my own challenges in life, a deep sense of caring for Mr. Putignano’s continued recovery , and a fervent wish he keeps on writing. A very powerful book.

Joey’s story, in a word, is heartbreaking. He takes you along his journey from childhood, through adolescent, and into adulthood. As you read, his words make you rise and fall with him. You find yourself rooting for him even when you know the darkness that lies around the next corner. You pray for him to find peace, love, and self acceptance. You wish that you were there for him in the early years, that you knew, that you could have done something to ease the pain. His dance with the devil is so captivating that you find yourself living each moment with him, like a friend instead of a reader. All who read this will not only desperately want to go back in time to support Joey but also pray that this next leg of his journey will find him in love, not necessarily with another, but with himself.

A real life, first-hand coming of age story through the darkest corners of hell that we know exist but too few people survive to tell about. Joe vividly describes in cringing details (he’s almost too good of

a poet) and you feel his pain and sorrow to the point of exhaustion. Joe’s story begins in his childhood home in Massachusetts, a home you can relate to, imperfect , dysfunctional, yet with undertones of love. A boy that doesn’t fit in becomes almost supernatural with his amazing talent as a gymnast and ambition of being an Olympian. He is within reach when his real battle begins. From one drug overdose to another, one destroyed relationship to another leaves the reader pleading, "How much can one man suffer???" And the reader will ask that question even before getting to Joe’s struggle with heroin, his ultimate demon. The reader must have endurance to appreciate the gravity of his struggles then be able to cry with him and then jump on his magic carpet ride through his uphill battle to tap into that light that he carries today and ultimately conquering his demons. Joe is an artist, he is a Light, and he gives everyone on this planet a sense that hope can become reality. Acrobaddict is truly a masterpiece that must be shared with the world. It’s destined for Broadway, a Rent meets Billy Elliott but the real deal!

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