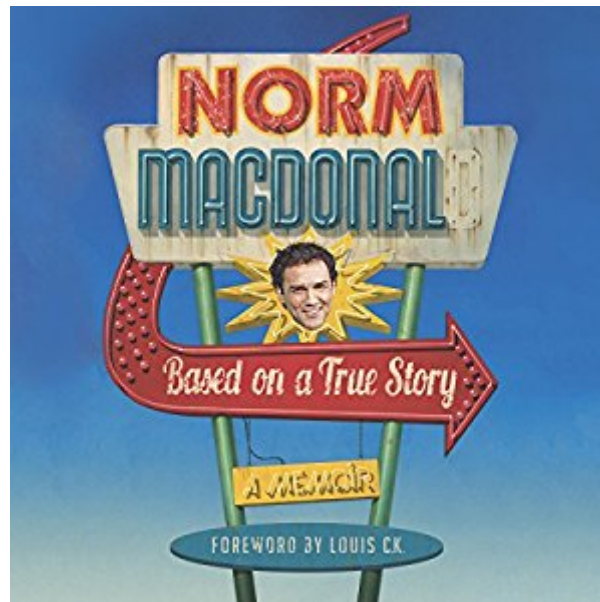


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Based On A True Story: A Memoir



Synopsis

Wild, dangerous, and flat-out unbelievable, here is the incredible memoir of the actor, gambler, raconteur, and SNL veteran and one of the best stand-up comedians of all time. As this book's title suggests, Norm Macdonald tells the story of his life - more or less - from his origins on a farm in the-back-of-beyond Canada and an epically disastrous appearance on Star Search to his account of auditioning for Lorne Michaels and his memorable run as the anchor of Weekend Update on Saturday Night Live - until he was fired because a corporate executive didn't think he was funny. But *Based on a True Story* is much more than a memoir; it's the hilarious, inspired epic of Norm's life. In dispatches from a road trip to Las Vegas (part of a plan hatched to regain the fortune he'd lost to sports betting and other vices) with his sidekick and enabler, Adam Eget, Norm recounts the milestone moments, the regrets, the love affairs, the times fortune smiled on his life, and the times it refused to smile. As the clock ticks down, Norm's debt reaches record heights, and he must find a way to evade the hefty price that's been placed on his head by one of the most dangerous loan sharks in the country. As a comedy legend should, Norm peppers these minutes with classic jokes and fondly mythologized Hollywood stories. This wildly adventurous, totally original, and absurdly funny saga turns the conventional comic's memoir on its head and gives the listener an exclusive pass into the mad, glorious mind of Norm Macdonald.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 7 hours and 23 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

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Language: English

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Customer Reviews

A memoir can be many things, the least likely of which is true. Hinged around publicly documented events, the rest is created by a mix of ego and fantasy, even without any political motivation.

Celebrity memoirs are even worse, with gossip about bigger celebrities to drive up sales and a focus on the thing that made them famous rather than the more intensely revealing and compelling times in their lives. Norm Macdonald rejects all of that while embracing it too, creating something vile, brimming with love, and hilarious. The book begins with a bit of a primer on how it should be read. Alternatively, it could be considered a test of whether you will "get it" or not. As the author notes in one of his more literal dialogues, his humor leaves many feeling that they understand something that the unwashed masses don't. It is often considered dry, but that doesn't capture it in my view. I would describe his humor as warmly reflective, like a wet mirror. Rather than rattling off political commentary, he acts out human absurdities that we all share like a puppet show. When we see ourselves dancing on his limp wrists, it is both hilarious and poignant. It feels like it was meant just for us, and anyone who isn't laughing must not understand. This only works because he is filled with insight and empty of hate or judgment. He is the opposite of the many comedians that we applaud for saying what we are already thinking. Instead, we laugh at ourselves, and might even be changed in the process. Given this approach, Macdonald's memoir makes complete sense. Since no memoir can be true, he will make one that is honest. While loosely based on the events of his life, it uses those events more as plot devices for the story of his own insecurities and haphazard career path than as rigid signposts.

Norm has achieved his goal of writing the best celebrity memoir ever. It's 95% blatant lies and you can't really tell where truth begins, but it's still the best. This is what a comedy writer does when his work is not edited into oblivion. Given that Norm is prone to spinning yarns whenever he is interviewed and it is always hilarious, it is not surprising that his autobiography would be more of the same and with the same result of being hilarious. Louis CK sums up Norm in the Introduction quite well: he is the best comedian ever. He is a comedian's comedian and all the best comedians frequently say "Norm is the best." Because he is. If you're not very familiar with Norm's comedy or personality, you might pick this book up on a lark and be somewhat confused by it. But, if you have watched his podcast with glee and waited patiently for its return, then you already love Norm's pacing, the way he talks, the way he blatantly lies for his own amusement, his quick wit and much slower, deliberate deep thoughts about life. His great taste, which has earned him so much respect, steers him far clear of anything that's hacky, but he is often eager and willing to make a really dumb joke that's so bad it's funny. Or maybe it's just funny and not so bad at all. Maybe it's not so dumb, either. With Norm, the world gets a little topsy-turvy. Laughter is an involuntary reaction to the absurd. It's a very strange phenomena which people have studied and come up a little empty about.

There are theories about the role of laughter in evolution and biology and such, but nobody really understands it. Well, Norm as studied it and he has not come up empty. He knows exactly what he's doing.

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