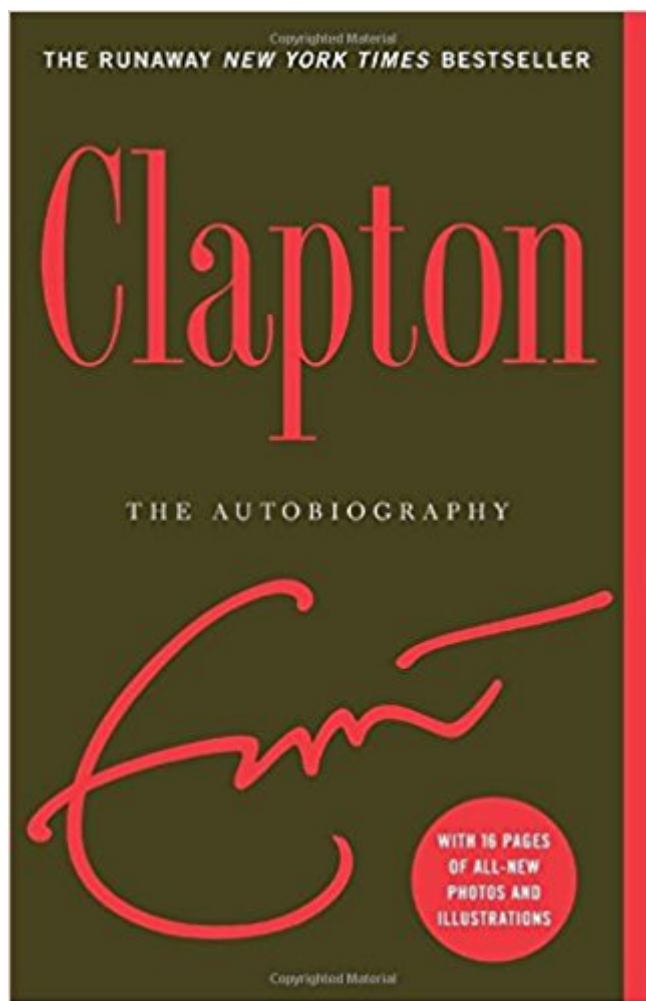


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Clapton: The Autobiography



Synopsis

With striking intimacy and candor, Eric Clapton tells the story of his eventful and inspiring life in this poignant and honest autobiography. More than a rock star, Eric Clapton is an icon, a living embodiment of the history of rock music. Well known for his reserve in a profession marked by self-promotion, flamboyance, and spin, he now chronicles, for the first time, his remarkable personal and professional journeys. Born illegitimate in 1945 and raised by his grandparents, Eric never knew his father and, until the age of nine, believed his actual mother to be his sister. In his early teens his solace was the guitar, and his incredible talent would make him a cult hero in the clubs of Britain and inspire devoted fans to scrawl "Clapton is God" on the walls of London's Underground. With the formation of Cream, the world's first supergroup, he became a worldwide superstar, but conflicting personalities tore the band apart within two years. His stints in Blind Faith, in Delaney and Bonnie and Friends, and in Derek and the Dominos were also short-lived but yielded some of the most enduring songs in history, including the classic "Layla." During the late sixties he played as a guest with Jimi Hendrix and Bob Dylan, as well as the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and longtime friend George Harrison. It was while working with the latter that he fell for George's wife, Pattie Boyd, a seemingly unrequited love that led him to the depths of despair, self-imposed seclusion, and drug addiction. By the early seventies he had overcome his addiction and released the bestselling album 461 Ocean Boulevard, with its massive hit "I Shot the Sheriff." He followed that with the platinum album Slowhand, which included "Wonderful Tonight," the touching love song to Pattie, whom he finally married at the end of 1979. A short time later, however, Eric had replaced heroin with alcohol as his preferred vice, following a pattern of behavior that not only was detrimental to his music but contributed to the eventual breakup of his marriage. In the eighties he would battle and begin his recovery from alcoholism and become a father. But just as his life was coming together, he was struck by a terrible blow: His beloved four-year-old son, Conor, died in a freak accident. At an earlier time Eric might have coped with this tragedy by fleeing into a world of addiction. But now a much stronger man, he took refuge in music, responding with the achingly beautiful "Tears in Heaven." Clapton is the powerfully written story of a survivor, a man who has achieved the pinnacle of success despite extraordinary demons. It is one of the most compelling memoirs of our time.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Readers hoping for sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll won't be disappointed by the legendary guitarist's autobiography. As he retraces every step of his career, from the early stints with the Yardbirds and Cream to his solo successes, Clapton also devotes copious detail to his drug and alcohol addictions, particularly how they intersected with his romantic obsession with Pattie Boyd. His relationship with the woman for whom he wrote Layla culminated in a turbulent marriage he describes as drunken forays into the unknown. But he genuinely warms to the subject of his recovery, stressing its spiritual elements and eagerly discussing the fund-raising efforts for his Crossroads clinic in Antigua. His self-reckoning is filled with modesty, especially in the form of dissatisfaction with his early successes. He professes ambivalence about the famous Clapton is God graffiti, although he admits he was grateful for the recognition from fans. At times, he sounds more like landed gentry than a rock star: bragging about his collection of contemporary art, vigorously defending his hunting and fishing as leisure activities, and extolling the virtues of his quiet country living. But both the youthful excesses and the current calm state are narrated with an engaging tone that nudges Clapton's story ahead of other rock 'n' roll memoirs. (Oct. 9) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“Like the bluesmen who inspired him, Clapton has his share of scars... his compelling memoir is... a soulful performance.”
• People “An absorbing tale of artistry, decadence, and redemption.”
• Los Angeles Times “One of the very best rock autobiographies ever.”
• Houston Chronicle “A glorious rock

history. **New York Post** "This book does what many rock historians couldn't: It debunks the legend... puts a lie to the glamour of what it means to be a rock star. **Greg Kot, Chicago Tribune** "Strong stuff. Clapton reveals its author's journey to self-acceptance and manhood. Anyone who cares about the man and his music will want to take the trip with him. **Anthony DeCurtis, Rolling Stone** "Clapton is honest... even searing and often witty, with a hard-won survivor's humor... an honorable badge of a book. **Stephen King, New York Times Book Review** "Riveting. **Boston Herald** "An even, unblinking sensibility defines the author's voice. **New York Times** "An unsparing self-portrait. **USA Today**

I bought this autobiography hoping to learn more about the music, his musical influences, and the amazing musicians he's worked with over the years. While the book does cover some of that, the focus on this book is his struggle with addiction. His struggles with drugs and alcohol are very important to him and I get that. I just wish it was more about the music than his struggles with drugs, alcohol, and his failed relationships. Your mileage may vary.

I have such mixed feelings about this book and can't really recommend it to readers. If you are a music fanatic you would find his book is full of famous musicians and some not so famous to most people. However his hard living drinking years are hard to imagine and you must wonder how any of them survived. I admit I skimmed through much of those early years but what I found fascinating was EC's determination to change his life and how he managed to do so. It could not have been easy given his life style to finally give up the drink and drugs and still associate in that culture as a musician. The most amazing detail to me was that he managed to stay sober through the hardest grief known to any person, the sudden, tragic loss of his beautiful son Conor.

This autobiography by Eric Clapton kept my interest & was hard to put down. He was very candid RE his thoughts & actions. Music lovers would appreciate this book. Eric Clapton revealed he learned his parents were actually his grandparents, who doted on him. He never met his birth father and he was not raised by his unwed mother who lived elsewhere. He hated the "bastard" label & these secrets contributed to his distrust of others, especially women. He admired blues artists, Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, B.B. King, Robert Johnson & wanted to play like them. Later in his career, he was able to collaborate with some of these heroes. He considered Muddy Waters a "father

figure."Clapton, in his early career came off as smug & pompous, because he thought he was more artistically "pure" than bandmates such as The Yardbirds & Cream. Clapton, by his own admission, had difficulty expressing his emotions & was a "people pleaser." Once he obtained something he sought, i.e. affection of Patti Boyd Harrison, he seemed to experience a let down & then move onto a new challenge. He abused many substances- alcohol, pot, cocaine, heroin, etc resulting in ulcers, seizures, near death. He was arrested for drunkenness & a verbal altercation, while on a plane in Tulsa. And was released from the county jail when he showed police who he was by playing his guitar. He was in rehab twice, the first time he was unable to bring his guitar. When he became 'clean & sober' he questioned who was he? Just a musician? Who were his friends? What would he do with his leisure time other than drink & drug? How did his sobriety affect existing relationships? How did his sobriety affect guitar-playing? He shared he matured after 20 years of sobriety. He started Crossroads- Antigua to help other addicts. Clapton and associates auctioned off personal guitars to raise funds for Crossroads Treatment Centre. The most poignant sections were recounting his grief after the accidental death of his young son Conor. And hope in establishing a relationship with his 6 yr old daughter Ruth who was raised by her mother. The only complaint I had was he called some fans "loonies." He eventually understood the stigma of addiction, why couldn't he acknowledge the stigma of mental illness?

I was so disappointed by this book. I have always thought that Clapton was a man with soul but through his writings I find a narcissistic drug addict. The book is boring, mostly chronicling his drug use and all the famous people that he has worked with or been influenced (in his music) by. Most of it literally read like he had made a list. He skims briefly over the pain he has caused others (especially the women) all his life and blames most of that on his addictions. This is probably true. He did get sober about 20 years ago and later met a 22 year old girl who seems to have been a big influence in turning him into a nicer human being. They have 4 children together and the love seems to be there. Perhaps Clapton has trouble revealing his positive side in relationships but he has no trouble praising his music. I like to think that is true but I came out of this book pretty much disliking the man but still loving his music.

The book starts slow and clearly needed editing. Too bad nobody edited it. About a third of the way into the book, the writing improves and Clapton's story is engaging. I enjoyed reading his approach to playing the guitar and the stories behind the songs and albums. Towards the end, Clapton spends endless pages thanking everyone. It's nice he's grateful but the gratitude is boring. It's a worthwhile

read and I'm glad I took the time to read it.

Clapton, truly one of the greatest guitarists of my generation, was not the person he appeared to be on stage. In fact, this story tells of his personal difficulties and fears, his disappointments and triumphs and his foibles -- all in his own, brutally honest words. Clapton's story tells of a person steeped in debauchery who, through strength of character, overcame psychological issues and addictions to drugs and alcohol and achieved redemption.

I had mixed feelings about this book. As a Clapton fan, I enjoyed the detailed history of his life and his career. I loved reading about his muses, both in regards to his overall style and to particular songs. He is brutally honest about his past and portrays himself in quite a bad light, particularly during his years of drug abuse and alcoholism. What I didn't enjoy about this book was that I often found myself confused or lost. As an American, I was occasionally lost with all of the British vernacular and slangs used. I would often have to re-read something to get this gist of what he was saying. During Clapton's career, he has worked with so many musicians, producers, managers, etc. Over the course of the book it became very difficult to keep track of who was who. People from his past would reappear and I would have a hard time remembering who they were and why they were significant. For the most part, I enjoyed the book and would recommend it to any serious Clapton fans.

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