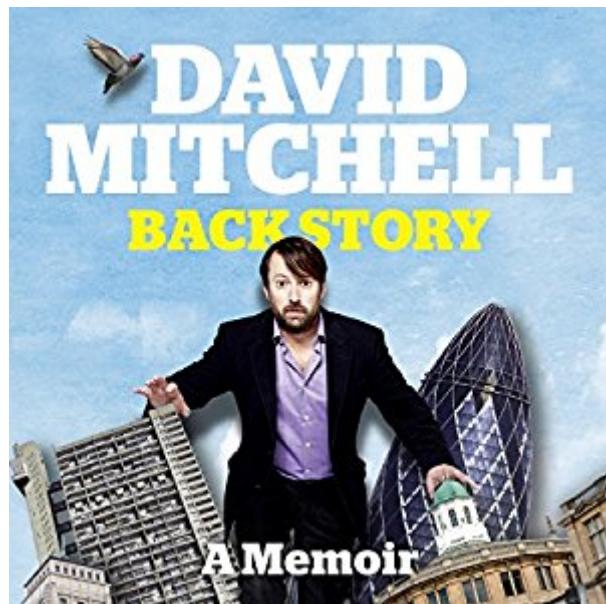


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David Mitchell: Back Story



Synopsis

David Mitchell, who you may know for his inappropriate anger on every TV panel show except Never Mind the Buzzcocks, his look of permanent discomfort on C4 sex comedy Peep Show, his online commenter-baiting in The Observer or just for wearing a stick-on moustache in That Mitchell and Webb Look, has written a book about his life. As well as giving a specific account of every single time he's scored some smack, this disgusting memoir also details: The singular, pit bull-infested charm of the FRP ('Flat Roofed Pub') The curious French habit of injecting everyone in the arse rather than the arm Why, by the time he got to Cambridge, he really, really needed a drink The pain of being denied a childhood birthday party at McDonalds The satisfaction of writing jokes about suicide How doing quite a lot of walking around London helps with his sciatica Trying to pretend he isn't a total **** at Robert Webb's wedding That he has fallen in love a LOT, but rarely done anything about it Why it would be worse to bump into Michael Palin than Hitler on holiday That he's not David Mitchell the novelist, despite what David Miliband might think

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I know that my heading for this implies surprise that I found this enjoyable, but I just love the unique way David went about telling his story. I so enjoy his appearances on British panel shows (which I have to see almost exclusively through benevolent British YouTubers who take pity on us poor Americans who don't get those shows on BBC America.) A few of the other books I've read written by comics/comedians read at least partly as if they simply wrote down chunks of their stand-up

routines. And most of those lose a good deal of the amusement in the retelling in print. David doesn't really do that, or if he does, he does it MUCH better. But David starts his story by talking about the daily walking exercise he started a few years ago to relieve a progressively deteriorating back condition (which is cleverly written in the title as a pun.) What he does as he takes you through his life and significant personal and professional events and anecdotes by mentioning in the first paragraph of each chapter a new and different landmark on his way along his exercise route. And a very interesting way to go about reading this story is by following it on Google Maps. I KNOW that sound creepy and stalk-y, but I live more than 4700 miles away, have no curiosity whatever about where he lives and the only hint he gives of where he lives is simply mentioning the name of the borough. He doesn't even give away his street name, much less his house number, but instead starts the story at the first main thoroughfare he reaches in his exercise route. And it is a doozy of an exercise route. But it was so interesting to call up each landmark or street name on Google maps and see what he saw and experience the physical journey with him. As an Anglophile, I found this method wonderful and educational. It's a "wordy" book, which is silly way to describe any book; it makes one think that that the alternative would be a picture-y book. But he's educated and bright and his particular brand of humor is how he uses words to turn ordinary ideas into amusing ones. Again, a poor description of "wordy." This is definitely a "reader's" book, and I mean that in a way to convey that, if you aren't a devourer of books as a primary hobby and preference of how to spend an empty afternoon, this book will probably begin to weigh rather heavily along about the 4th or 5th chapter. But for me, I only craved more at the end. One of these days, I hope, he's going to write a series of books on a walking tour of ALL of London. It'll take him months, I'm sure. The best part is when he mentions his first (or 2nd, really) meeting of (the VERY pretty) Victoria Coren and his complete falling head over heels in love with her. But at that point, she's unavailable as she chose to pursue a relationship with someone else. And it can only be said that he quite literally pined for her. He pretty much admits it. Not in a crippling way; indeed, it was a motivation to turn a 20-minute exercise into an hour as a way to work through a broken heart. He mentions the other ways in which he tried to cope with a loss he was certain would be lifelong, none of which were fulfilling nor healthy, and most of which he regrets. Then, remarkably, a few years later, they meet again at the right time when she had run through that previous relationship. She was available and interested and he eventually got to marry the first, true love of his life. So it was amusing, interesting and, in the end, romantic. This last part would probably be considered a "spoiler," but his marriage to Victoria is public record and there are a few photos of his wedding online; the reader can hardly claim to have the story ruined because I told you how it ended. His next book should be written as he

walks through the very center of downtown London and describes his experiences with new fatherhood (if he wants kids; some people don't, which is fine.)

If you love David Mitchell and the sarcastic yet naive persona he has perfected on tv, you will love this book. It goes into his youth and college years as well as meeting Robert Webb. It goes into his years of living on the edge before striking it rich and now living the "easy" life. Threaded through the whole tale is a walk through the suburbs of London... as if he is telling you his life story while you walk with him through the town. The only problem you might have with this book is he writes the same way he talks. A bit haughty and scattered but always brings it back by the end. If you haven't listened to him talk, you might get annoyed with the way this reads... get bored or confused. I found that to properly enjoy this book, I had to imagine his voice and cadence and it all fell into place for me.

If you like him then you'll enjoy it, if you don't then buying his autobiography was an odd choice. The thin conceit of telling the story while going for a walk is great. It enables stories and related thoughts to co-exist without having to over cook them with linking filler. It also enables a title that's both multi-leveled and a pun. So he's snuck in a pun, and made it work and the title wasn't even his idea. The prick. I enjoyed this a lot and the 2nd last chapter where the guy gets the girl (spoiler, meh you already know. By the time you read this he's 90 and his 3 kids are publicly fighting over the royalties to his wax statue in madam Tussaud's water closet) is especially great and bold of him to be so honest and open. If you are a fan at all then have a read.

There's something timeless and quintessentially English about David Mitchell and I'm sure he knows it. This engaging memoir captures that fact and more- so if you like that whole "Brit" comedic tradition you'll enjoy this easy to read, never too deep or revealing, autobiographical work. David has a great turn of phrase and the ability to bring a lot of smiles- and occasionally a belly laugh- as you read this mostly charming book. His anecdotes unfurling as he is walking around London works well as a device here, anchoring him even more firmly to the geography of the city that shapes his current comedic world. Some of the parts in later chapters about work deals- the wheeling and dealing and back-and-forthing in the TV industry, have limited appeal to those of us outside the industry and become a bit tedious, but there are plenty of other stories to keep up interest- and anyway that's what a Kindle finger-tap is for! The final chapter is a lovely, eloquent and revealing proclamation of love for his wife, and also a neat closure to the picture of his single life that he has

shared so entertainingly. A highly enjoyable light read.

Hilarious and informative about more than just David Mitchell himself. What a guy. Definitely recommend this book if you've enjoyed David Mitchell on the TV.

I haven't read the whole book. I've flitted about - reading the intro chapters, the ending, and a few parts in the middle, and looking at the photo section. Don't ask why. It's probably because I don't have time to read it for hours on end at the moment and wanted to zip through a bit of it. Here's what's important if you're considering buying this book: It had me laughing out loud in all those bits and pieces I read - including the photo section where David's comment on himself in a very ill-fitting Superman costume as a cute little kid is hilarious. I will have to add that I'm British by birth, although I've lived in the U.S. since the age of 5 - but maybe that early exposure to Britain makes me more appreciative of British humor and language. I dunno. I just know this was (what I've read so far) a terrific and funny read. Oh, and also, David's wonderful, romantic soul as evidenced when he speaks about his now wife, Victoria, melted my heart. It's nice to know guys like him are still around. Can't wait to sit down and enjoy reading the whole thing.

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