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Suga Water: A Memoir



Synopsis

The affluent world of crew is rocked by the first all-black high school rowing team in the country. Out of their neglected neighborhood, a group of young men emerge to show that there are new heroes and bonds that can be found amidst the noise and chaos of the Westside of Chicago. Led by a kind but determined benefactor and an inspired team captain, the Manley crew team must overcome obstacles to discover what it really means to succeed.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Arshay Cooper is a practiced rower, motivational speaker, and volunteers for numerous community outreach organizations. In 1997, Arshay joined the first all-black rowing team at Manley High School. After rising to team captain and graduating high school, he shifted gears and dedicated two years of his life to Americorps. In 2002 Arshay enrolled at the Cooking Hospitality Institute of Chicago. Over the years Arshay has worked as a personal chef for World Wrestling Entertainment, Warner Brothers, and has fed various celebrities. After years working in the food industry, Arshay returned to his true passion of working in the inner city. He has coached at the Chicago Youth Rowing Club; worked as the program director at Victory Outreach's Midwest region; Organized stop the violence rallies; Created and founded many off the street programs. As a national speaker, his audience has included public schools, conferences, community centers, sports teams, UFC fighters, and President Bill Clinton. Arshay currently lives in Harlem. Suga Water is his first book.

This book. Wow. Just Wow.Let's review the easy things first...-How does an author, who

experienced things I couldn't imagine, articulate deep topics in a way to make each moment inspirational. There is the silver lining undertone, even if faint. I never lost interest, even for a second.-Well written. The author wasn't trying to portray a character or stereotype in this book. He was real. If you really want a teaser...read the epilogue. You will see a glimmer of the genuine person that shared his life with us in this memoir, selflessly.Now for the harder part...-I am a lady who grew up in a small city in South Dakota. How could I possibly relate to an author who writes about things that were unfathomable to me? I grew up where a gunshot wound (while few and far between) were hunting accidents. Alcohol and Marijuana were the drugs of choice...I had no idea what heroin or meth were until high school when we learned about it in health class. I have been fortunate to move around the U.S., travel the world and experience living in many cities, including Chicago. I've been within blocks of violence...but fortunately, never seen first hand, day-in-day-out the affects of drugs and violence. And while I haven't lived that in my life, I have seen perseverance and inspiration in many forms....But this author, this story...provoked a lot of thought, emotion and more importantly...HOPE.There isn't anyone that couldn't find at least some portion of this book relatable. For those that participate in sports...It is a MUST read. The emotions, wins, losses, achievements and failures are on point. I am a runner...and I can tell you, there were many times I KNEW the emotion he was talking about.Thank you for sharing your story Arshay. You are truly remarkable and I know your story will change the lives of many. And it is not just your story, but it is how you tell the story...and how you live the story.This review does not do this book justice. It truly is the best book I have read in a very long time. Challenge yourself to be empowered and inspired. Read this book.

Hands down one of the best memoirs I've read this year.Through the stories and the natural writing, Arshay invites you into his childhood. You feel like you are right there with him throughout the entire book...he never abandons the reader.A theme from the book that most applied to my career/life is that of teamwork, a bond you have with the people you spend the most time with each and every day. When you take people from a variety of backgrounds and life experiences and present them with a challenge, knowing that they need to work together in order to achieve greatness, you may witness something completely life-changing. The struggles and obstacles that the team faced during the rowing competitions mirrored some of the obstacles that they faced growing up: trust, teamwork, security, friendship, etc. And the lessons learned, that Arshay articulates chapter after chapter, can be applied to a variety of life events.Taking obstacles and turning them into something positive takes a great deal of maturity and class. And trying to maintain that as you move forward in life - that

brings an enormous amount of respect. And THAT is exactly what you witness throughout this book.

This is a truly inspiring book for all ages! There is so much heart and soul in the writing; it will make you cry, laugh and cry again. I couldn't put it down and was mesmerized by the story. The author is courageous in sharing his experiences and whether you can relate to his specific circumstances or not, I think we can all relate to letting our true self and inner spirit overcome obstacles in our journey of life. As a counselor, I would also highly recommend this for teachers, college and graduate students to help them see how their positive interactions can help change the outcome of others.

Suga Water is a story of hope. 1. A wealthy banker, Ken A, started the first black rowing team at a Chicago area high school. It was an investment of money, time, and relationships. These kids mattered to him, his family, and the coaches he hired. Lives of poverty and despair turned around. 2. It is also the story of changes in Arshay's mother. A former drug addict who was close to death, she found salvation. In turn, she radiated peace. Broken people listened to her because they knew she understood from first hand experience; drug addicts became clean. To me, that's courage. 3. Finally, while training with the rowing team, Arshay invested in his teammate - "I will be my brother's keeper." Hope is possible when there is love. Here are 3 incredible examples. I write this review in July 2016. With recent spikes in extreme violence (both domestic and international), social media reflects the sorrow and doubts of recent days. Push back against the chaos. Love . . . as Ken, Arshay, and Arshay's mother have done - invest in lives. Let people and relationships matter more than possessions. Thank you, Arshay, for your memoir.

This was so beautifully written, inspiring, and worth every penny. I think this author is definitely someone to watch out for! An amazing story told with courage, heart, and humor that took me from laughing out loud to crying like a baby and back again. I loved every single page. When will this be a movie?!?!

Suga Water is an inspiring and touching memoir that I've personally recommended to a number of people before I was even done reading it -- then several more when I finished. It resonates on so many levels, telling the story and struggles of at-risk youth in urban Chicago, about young athletes craving structure and guidance from their adult coaching staff, about the loss and restoration of faith, and about the drive to survive, endure, and somehow succeed in a world where few options seem available. Very powerful and uplifting -- a great read.

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