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Poker Brat: Phil Hellmuth's Autobiography



Synopsis

If you know Phil Hellmuth then you either love him or hate him! His rants, tirades, and lines like “I can dodge bullets baby” and “If it weren’t for luck, I’d win them all” are epic and have earned him the nickname the “Poker Brat.” However, whether you love him or hate him, he is undoubtedly the greatest poker player of our time. Phil is a global poker icon who holds every record at the World Series of Poker, including an extraordinary 14 world championships. In *Poker Brat* Phil paints a picture of his early Midwestern life, in which he struggled mightily in grade school and high school, but always had aspirations to do something great. Phil takes you from the low lows of his life to the high highs, and shows you how he developed an unhealthy ego along the way, which eventually turned into his “poker brat” persona. In *Poker Brat*, Phil shares his own powerful tips and techniques, the ones that he used to set his goals, and then he shows how he achieved those goals as he climbed to the summit of the poker world.

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Customer Reviews

You think you know all time poker winner Phil Helmuth from TV? Well you don't until you read this fast paced, power packed, biography from a man who has forever changed the face of Poker and maps out what it means to be the best no matter what field you pursue. This page turner is a must read for anyone who wants to know what it takes to excel no matter what path is chosen. Do yourself a favor and get to know the real Phil Helmuth.

I got this book mixed up with one of this other books. But it was good reading.

I love poker and hence my interest in reading this book. I find the game fascinating but the zero sum nature of it worries me especially with what this teaches all the young players who are addicted to it nowadays. I'd recently seen a Daniel Negreanu documentary which I found encouraging as he conveyed his desire to use poker for good and had listed a clear path for doing so. I was hoping to find similar rays of sunshine in this book from another of the leading figures in the game. I flew through the first half despite the fact it was patently obvious that Hellmuth is a very poor story teller. He unfortunately doesn't have a clue about the use of the vital writing tool of showing and not telling. In fact he starts each new paragraph with a bold headline that immediately tells you what the next section is about, thereby removing all of the normal suspense and intrigue inherent in the telling of a story. The reader isn't left to infer anything for themselves but has every minor detail spelt out for them including constant bracketed cross references to other sections in the book that pertain to the subject matter being discussed as you'd normally find in a text or reference book. He also includes the listing of exact dates that he left for Europe or did certain things. Totally unnecessary detail that contributes nothing to the 'story'. Despite these negatives I found the first half of the book held my interest as it chronologued Phil's early development and poker successes. However in the second half it completely lost direction and became very disjointed and about dropping names of all the wealthy and successful entrepreneurs who are now his friends. My lasting impression is unfortunately of a very ego driven ultra-materialistic individual who instead of growing has regressed even further into his own legend as his wealth has increased. Clearly he has used his position for good with the charity work he has done but the appendix which lists in detail every cent he has helped raise, only acts to detract from that good. Perhaps the only positive from the book for me was seeing how the clear listing of one's goals can help you achieve them. Disappointing and

forgettable.

This was really a great book. Phil's personal perspective on poker events that I'd already lived through by watching on television was fascinating. I really learned a lot about Phil's poker life. He also tells a lot of amusing day-in-the-life stories not having to do with poker. As for the 2 biggest Hellmuth criticisms: 1) inappropriate outbursts and 2) EGO, I learned a lot about these issues as well. Many of these outbursts have been downright mean and uncalled for. I think Phil has an involuntary response to things that don't make sense to him. He would never call a hand for a lot of money with 10-4 off suit, and for the life of him, he can't understand why anyone else would either. Where a robot would just short circuit, Phil instead starts steaming faster than a dry ice sculpture in the Nevada desert. And who knows - it's possible there is a premeditated component to these outbursts, to shame someone who isn't playing smart poker (and warn onlookers) in order to discourage amateur play in a professional event? Phil's chances in a tournament are much better against a roomful of players near his level than in a field of clueless contestants and he knows that. To put it in simplest terms: If he's a 3 to 1 favorite against some goofball, then that's a good thing, but he's also smart enough to know if he runs into 4 of those goofballs in the same tournament, that's not a good thing. With regard to the ego issue, I have a different take than most, including Phil himself. Personally, I think Phil is the best tournament player of all time. Maybe 6 or 7 years from now we might be having that conversation about Daniel or 15 years from now, maybe Jason is but right now it's Phil for sure. And yes Phil recaps his brilliant play without missing a detail but he also doesn't hesitate to discuss his faults and failures nor does he hesitate to give credit to other players for their great accomplishments. Given these 2 facts, I don't really see Phil's horn blowing as an ego thing. I think he is quick to call attention to any great accomplishment and he won't dial down his account of a fact simply because it involves something he himself did. In any event, many people who know Phil talk about what a nice and honest guy he is (including Daniel in the foreword) and I think that's true and a lot of his positive side comes out in the stories he tells. If he continues to play hard and play smart, then he truly deserves 10 more bracelets. And his wife deserves a medal.

While the meat of the book is fun and moderately interesting, it becomes very clear that Mr Hellmuth

LOVES to talk about himself, his contacts with all of his billionaire friends and the fact that he has more money than you! This man is not saving the world, but he'd like for you to kiss his ass as though he is.

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