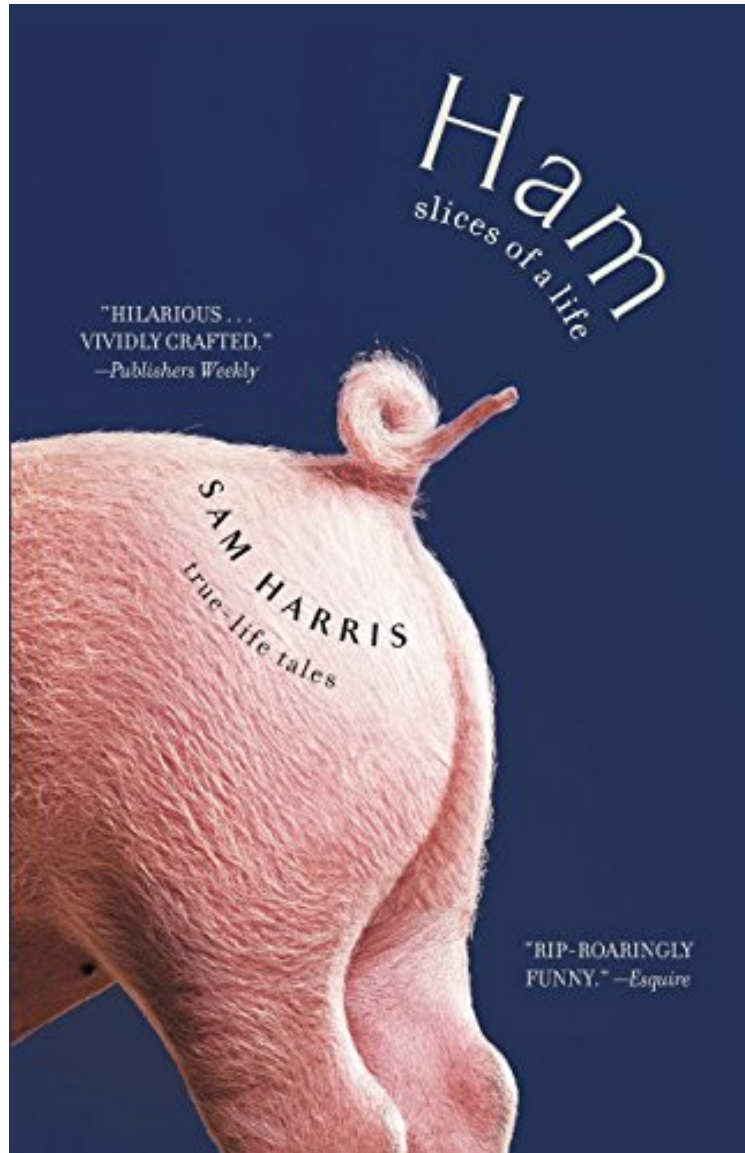


(Download pdf ebook) Ham: Slices of a Life: True Life Tales

Ham: Slices of a Life: True Life Tales

Sam Harris

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Sam Harris : Ham: Slices of a Life: True Life Tales before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ham: Slices of a Life: True Life Tales:

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. A Humorous and Sobering Story By D. Verner Sam Harris narrates his life to this point in a way that is by turns hysterically funny and incredibly poignant. Growing up gay in Oklahoma in the 1960's, he must come to terms with his family, the close-minded residents of his little town and himself. He becomes a singer, and music and musical theater are his salvation. He moves among the top tier of contemporary

musicians. His account of his concert in Cleveland with Aretha Franklin is priceless. Sam deals with major social issues of our time with sensitivity, humor and insight. This read might not be for everyone, but it has a lot to offer anyone with an open mind and heart. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A surprisingly deep and compelling look at the forces, internal and external, which shaped a life. By Customer In a time when autobiographies seem to primarily fall into two camps--either everything is perfect and they wouldn't change a thing; or they have some titillating secret about why they are far less wholesome than you thought so buy the book--it was refreshing to read an autobiography that seems to have done some real soul searching. I had no idea who Sam Harris was before reading this, and was a bit turned off early in the book by the name dropping of famous friends and costars, but once he got past that and dove into his childhood and the difficulties in growing up and the later difficulties with alcoholism I realized I hadn't picked up a light but darkly humorous book that many earlier reviewers had compared to David Sedaris, but something substantially deeper. Few people's life stories are really interesting enough to write a book about, and even fewer are willing to do the hard job of introspection in a way that helps you to think about your own life as you walk through theirs. Mr. Harris does this. Kudos to you Mr. Harris for your deeply moving story. And thank you for the lesson of your psychology teacher. May we all aspire to such a mentoring moment. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Hysterical, Poignant, Inspiring. I want more! By Avid Reader Sam Harris delivers a book deliciously rich in laughs. Guffaw, laugh out loud laughs. I've read the comparisons to Sedaris, and I get that, but this is so much more. The HEART and human perspective in each of these finely crafted stories reaches well beyond a good time. Lesser writers entertain you for the moment and it's over. Ham sticks with you, and even, dare I say, transforms you. Harris diffuses through incredible wit and wry humor to make this reader open and available for thought provoking, sometimes painful examinations of the human spirit. His hysterical riff on a washer and dryer are a beautiful artful entrance to a revealing look at blind optimism and the question of "bright side" tenacity in the face of all evidence to the contrary. It's funny funny, but really about survival. The entire book is filled with self deprecating self examination from a man who seems hellbent on believing life and people are intrinsically good - with much evidence to the contrary. The book has suspense, tragedy, joy, sorrow, absurdity, celebrity, show biz anecdotes, addiction, loss, and is ultimately is about triumph over adversity. Even the celebrity stories with famous names like Franklin, Minnelli and Osmond are much more revealing about Harris than the famous names. Ham never goes for the mean-spirited style of so many books written by people in show business. The stories are about Harris and his quest to make sense of it all in his engaging, all out funny, clever and super smart style. Other times not so funny, but equally powerful.. Some stories had me sobbing. Though the specifics may be Harris's, the themes and feelings and emotions and questions are universal. The writing itself is beautiful. Exquisitely vivid, visual, and visceral. Plain speak at times and poetic at others. Raw and honest and still funny. THAT'S a good book for me. I recommend HAM to anyone who has ever felt different and anyone who found their survival tools. The book inspires. It makes fun, it wrestles and twitches and sometimes shocks, but it truly inspires. How can a book so funny also be oddly spiritual? I think (and hope) that this is the first of many books from this gifted author. This is not a celebrity autobiography. This feels like a writing career. He has the chops. And as varied and spectacular as Mr. Harris's career seems to have been, this may be where his voice shines the brightest. I look forward to the next and hope we don't have to wait too long!

In a collection of personal essays that are "both rip-roaringly funny and sentimental, drawing natural (and justified) comparisons to David Sedaris and David Rakoff" (Esquire), longtime recording artist and actor Sam Harris recounts stories of friendship, love, celebrity, and growing up and getting sober. In sixteen brilliantly observed true stories, Sam Harris emerges as a natural humorist in league with David Sedaris, Chelsea Handler, Carrie Fisher, and Steve Martin, but with a voice uniquely his own. Praised by the Chicago Sun-Times for his "manic, witty commentary," and with a storytelling talent The New York Times calls "New Yorker-worthy," he puts a comedic spin on full-disclosure episodes from his own colorful life. In "I Feel, You Feel" he opens for Aretha Franklin during a blizzard. "Promises" is a front-row account of Liza Minnelli's infamous wedding to "the man whose name shall go unmentioned." In "The Zoo Story" Harris desperately searches for a common bond with his rough-and-tumble four-year-old son. What better place to find painfully funny material than in growing up gay, gifted, and ambitious in the heart of the Bible belt? And that's just the first cut: From partying to parenting, from Sunday school to getting sober, these slices of Ham will have you laughing and wiping away salty tears in equal measure with their universal and down-to-earth appeal. After all, there's a little ham in all of us.

"A vividly crafted series of essays...a charmingly candid collection." (Publishers Weekly) "[Harris] has the writing chops to tell a good tale...entertaining and occasionally moving tales from the wilds of showbiz." (Kirkus) "Reading singer-actor Harris's essays is like having your smartest gay BFF propped up on your pillow sipping cosmos, regaling you with gossip and his keen wit." (People) "The essays in Ham are both rip-roaringly funny and sentimental, drawing natural (and justified) comparisons to David Sedaris and David Rakoff." (Esquire) "The show's title is also the name of Mr. Harris's just-published book of essays and stories. Funny, touching and cheerfully self-deprecating, the show consists of enthusiastic readings from his book with full-tilt renditions of songs....The darker side of Mr.

Harris's tale concerns his struggle with his homosexuality, his attempted suicide and his eventual self-acceptance. It is an archetypal coming-out story to which he brought an inspirational spin...every move generates excitement. The word "ham" says it all." (Stephen Holden, *The New Yorker* (on the musical performance based on Ham)) "With a wry sense of humor, Harris writes about his life through humorous essays. Touching on everything from parenting to show business, he dishes on the ups and downs of his life through a witty lens." (PopSugar) "Harris is such a marvelously engaging, clever, storyteller that you'll be enraptured by every word that comes out of his mouth. With a fine eye for detail and actor's expressiveness, Harris paints wonderfully vivid portraits of various episodes of his life. And then there's that still glorious, blow-the-roof-off, remarkable singing." (Theater Pizazz) "Sixteen short stories of a triumphant, tragic, and most of all, hilarious life in show business make up Sam Harris' new memoir." (Jackie Lyden, NPR) "This neo-vaudevillian stage persona, Harris has opted to launch Ham the only way he knows how: extravagantly, theatrically and, most of all, big...refreshingly self-effacing observations and playful humor." (The Huffington Post) "Ham is a fabulous and funny, tasty treat; sweet and savory with just right touch of tang." (Broadway World) "Sam Harris, singer, songwriter, actor, and general multi-hyphenate, puts a comedic spin on episodes from his life...he's up there with David Sedaris and David Rakoff." (The Advocate) "Harris writes with bouncing-on-your-toes energy, rushing from subject to subject with the occasional lingering moment to ponder things that are important to him. His is an eagerness that's endearing...hilarious...teary. With humor, soul-baring, name-dropping, and just the right mix of vulnerability, Ham is a definite pleasure to read. If you're looking for a memoir that you can enjoy, embrace this one whole-hog." (Dallas Voice) "Ham is, by turns, harrowing and hilarious, uplifting and soul-shattering, agonizing and liberating." (Oklahoma Magazine) "Ham is honest and heartbreaking, entertaining and devastating all at the same time." (The Steadfast Reader) "Ham is humorous, soul baring, name dropping, and just the right mix of vulnerability and snarkiness." (Washington Blade) "Ham is a dishy celebrity memoir combined with profoundly harder things like 9/11, alcoholism, suicide attempts, coming out, marriage and parenting. There is as much hilarity in the book--he knows how to make people laugh, especially at him. He really opens up, showing us his struggles, and has far deeper dimensions that I wasn't expecting when I picked up this book. He's clearly added writing into his stable of talents, and I am hoping folks will give this book a try." (The Tattered Cover) "Ham is a collection of heartfelt, sharply funny memoirs. At a time when other essayists in the style of David Sedaris and Augusten Burroughs seem to have scraped the bottom of their autobiographical barrels, Harris arrives with great observational writing chops and a deep well of material to draw upon." (Passport Magazine) "Harris is wry, witty, bitchy, pensive, inspirational, and laugh-out-loud funny in this winning collection of essays." (Courier-Journal-Gannett Press) About the Author Sam Harris's diversified career has run the gamut from singer and songwriter to actor on Broadway, film, and television to writer, director, and producer. His now legendary performances on TV's *Star Search* led to a multi-million selling recording career. Sam has nine studio CDs to his credit, is a Tony-nominated Broadway star (*The Life*, *Grease*, *The Producers*), was a series regular on the CBS series *The Class*, and is the creator of the TBS television series *Down to Earth*, among others. Sam lives in Los Angeles with his husband, Danny, and their child, Cooper. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Ham: Slices of a Life 1. Unwrapped When I was nineteen years old, while helping my aunt Betty reorganize her kitchen cabinets, I discovered a beaten and worn plastic Mary Poppins cup and saucer marooned in the back corner of an ignored shelf. They were issued in 1964, the year of the movie's release. My aunt told me they'd been intended for me when I was little, but my father had returned them to her because I was "too obsessed with Mary Poppins and singing and dancing." In the next room, my dad, uncle, brother, and all four boy cousins could be heard yelling in that guttural, grunting Cro-Magnon caterwauling exclusively reserved for watching football games on television and killing wild pigs on a hunt. I marched into the living room and presented the cup and saucer with outstretched arms. "Do you remember these?" I said, my confrontational passion unbecoming some battered old plastic children's dishes. They all stared at me, confused, as if I'd just asked for an honest opinion about the chances of a fashion comeback for the ascot. "Uh, no, son," said my father. "Ask your mother." The Cowboys scored another touchdown and the room erupted as they hug-slapped and adjusted their crotches. My father loved the Cowboys and could recount the great plays of the last twenty years. But he had no memory of banning the Mary Poppins treasures. Cue home movie: Christmas 1964. I am three years old. My mother is operating the camera. It is in grainy, Super 8 color, and there is no sound. A toy army tank and various toy guns are strewn about and a mini-rifle is propped against the wall. Plastic grenades litter the floor. GI Joe lies in a coffinlike cellophane-covered box. It is a battlefield of unwrapped but unattended boy toys around the base of our silver aluminum Christmas tree, which is bobbed with shiny red and green Woolworth balls, reflecting the muted shades of an electric color wheel. I open a new wool coat, charcoal with a spattering of white, knee length, with large lapels and giant black buttons. Now this is a present! I eagerly put it on and model it full-tilt. I am overtaken with euphoria and begin to dance. The camera pans to capture the delight of each of my three grandparents, until it lands on my father, whose young, handsome face steams with displeasure and perhaps a touch of anger. His posture reflects a just released sigh of defeat. The camera pans back to me, still dancing. I look to my father and take in his reaction. For a split second I lose my timing. Then I take a big breath, turn back at the camera, smile, and . . . just dance harder.