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Survivor: One Man's Battle With HIV, Hemophilia, And Hepatitis C



Synopsis

On January 3, 1987, teenager Vaughn Ripley receives what seems to be a death sentence. A lifelong hemophiliac, he has been infused with tainted blood and is found to be HIV+. In this memoir, Ripley not only recounts his life living with severe physical ailments, but also details his fight to live. Survivor follows him as he receives his fateful news and examines how this single piece of information pushes the innocent boy headlong into a hard life of drugs and alcohol. After several years and many near-death incidents, he finally overcomes the drug addiction and tries to create some semblance of life out of the resulting carnage. He describes how he turned his life around to become a professional database administrator, how hemophilia contributed to his tendency toward being an adrenaline junkie, and how medical advances allowed Ripley and his wife to become parents. His story is one of courage and tenacity, as he demonstrates the will to face the world head-on and overcome the physical ailments in order to lead an active, productive, and positive life.

Book Information

Paperback: 284 pages

Publisher: iUniverse (September 30, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1450260306

ISBN-13: 978-1450260305

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.6 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 16 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #3,005,885 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #68 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Diseases & Physical Ailments > Hepatitis](#) #580 in [Books > Medical Books > Medicine > Internal Medicine > Pathology > Diseases > AIDS & HIV](#) #66087 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Memoirs](#)

Customer Reviews

"This is the story of one man's ascent from reckless rage to enlightened understanding. The best part is that the climb continues -- against all odds!" --Alan Hobson, Cancer Survivor, Bestselling Author of *Climb Back from Cancer*

Vaughn Ripley is one of the longest living HIV+ people on the planet. He has raced motorcycles, rock climbed, attempted Mount Rainier, and run a marathon. In his spare time, he enjoys writing,

playing guitar, weight lifting, mountain biking, and off-roading. He lives with his wife and two children in Maryland.

Vaughn's life could have been scripted in the tradition of Joseph Campbell's hero monomyth. From the outset, you root for Vaughn as he overcomes bullying and his self-restriction from the activities he loved because they were too dangerous for someone with his hemophilia. Just as he has begun to find inner strength, his life is devastated by the batch or batches of bad blood containing HIV, which is still not his lowest point. The real strength of Vaughn's writing is his ability to make you forget that he was battling the deadly viruses and deadly bleeding condition. In order to accomplish all Vaughn has accomplished HIV, Hep C and hemophilia had to be an afterthought to him... and his book reflects his thinking. Through the book you learn about the joys of off-road driving, rock climbing, mountaineering, motorcycle racing and all the other brushes with death that Vaughn warped into fantastic reasons to live (as well as database analysis). When reading you imagine yourself without fear, simply going out and doing all of the things the back of your head tells you that you cannot or should not do. Mid fantasy, imagining yourself capable of removing your fear, Vaughn writes a paragraph talking about throwing up his anti retroviral therapy multiple times a day and the fantasy comes crashing down around the reader into an unbelievable reality. Vaughn's book builds a story of an entirely normal man with a very diverse set of interests and accomplishments, but the intermittent reminders of how tenuous his hold on life is compared to the reader's makes his story anything but ordinary. Survivor is clearly two different stories. There is one story that is of a normal life, where a teenager pushes his limits, finds his way through the women he loves and builds his career slowly and steadily through hard work. The second story is one where the fear of death and pain is completely removed from an otherwise normal, if not timid individual and what is possible if you throw caution to the wind and simply go for it. The two stories woven together create an inspiring story applicable and relevant to all of us. We all have limited time to live, and reading Survivor is an excellent reminder to get off the couch and get moving... regardless of our current struggles or lingering demons.

Just finished the book. Wow great read! This was also an easy read. Whether you are going through as much as Vaughn or not, it really puts things in perspective for one's own life that someone can have so many things happen to them that would keep them down, but Vaughn fights back and pursues life to its fullest. It's an adventure story of Vaughn traveling through and conquering life. I expected the adrenaline junkie and health aspects based on the descriptions I've seen and it was

great that he included all the other aspects of his life. I like the format, it covered Vaughn's every emotion thinkable invoking much emotion from me. I so very much recommend reading this book for anyone even if its just for the adventure!!!

Nice smooth transaction. Item arrived as advertised. Would recommend.

I just finished *Survivor: One Man's Battle with HIV, Hemophilia, and Hepatitis C* and my first thought after reading the last page was that you should never judge a book by its title. Vaughn graciously sent me a free copy of his memoir to read. I put it in my to-be-read pile back in February of this year and then anxiously watched as it got closer to the top of my pile. Since I deal with my own blood disorder (I'm the opposite of hemophilic; my blood clots too much) and I've lost a dear friend and mentor to HIV, I wasn't really looking forward to a memoir that dug into living daily with these health-related issues. However, I remembered the enthusiastic emails Vaughn sent me and I wasn't going to let him down about reading and reviewing his book just because I was afraid of the title. Immediately upon opening the book, I realized my fears were unfounded. Anyone who starts a book with a quote from Josey Wales has my attention: "Dyin' ain't much of a livin' boy." The 264 pages that follow this opening quote have nothing to do with dying and everything to do with living. This is a memoir so Vaughn includes the obligatory thank you to family, friends, and coworkers who have supported him in life. You read about how Vaughn dealt with each health related issue when necessary. But the thing that becomes apparent very quickly is that his memoir isn't really about surviving, it is about living. Vaughn lives to get the maximum out of life. If you have any interest in rock climbing, motorcycles, cycling, or healthy living there is plenty in this memoir to keep you reading. He adventures and misadventures are written in very short, concise entries that make this a perfect read before bed or on your lunch hour as you can read about a few adventures in a small amount of time. You'll read about some hilarious and hair raising adventures. You'll be touched by some poignant and heart warming memories. And you'll see how one man chose not to be defined by labels and made his own way in life. Vaughn doesn't hide behind his illness or his pen. He tells you both the good and the bad about his life. Regardless of the situation, he makes a plan and moves on. It is that perseverance that has allowed him to take on such challenges as climbing Mt. Rainier--you'll have to read the memoir to find out if he made it to the top--and be successful in business. And when you finish this memoir, you'll feel a sense of hope. Not just for Vaughn, but for yourself. Remember how I said I was afraid to read this book, well I realized facing your fears is really what this book is about. There were plenty of times Vaughn could have taken a less risky path

and played it safe, but he never let his fear get in his way. There are certainly times when life forced him to change his goals. Yet, Vaughn never let life break him, but rather just bend him in a new direction. There is a lesson in that for all of us. And that is why I think the title is misleading. This isn't a book about surviving--though Vaughn has certainly suffered--it is really about living. Ten percent of the author's royalties are donated to AIDS research so with one purchase you can improve your outlook on life and improve our world.

I enjoyed very much reading this book and at times I felt like I was sneaking into and reading Vaughn's diary, because it was so personal and honest. It was like sitting with a friend who has great stories to tell and listening to all of them with a smile. It is truly inspiring what he has accomplished in a lifetime that some people thought he wasn't even going to be around for. It makes me think about what I have done with my time on "this place we affectionately call earth" and what I want to do in my future. I am no daredevil like Vaughn Ripley and have no plans to climb mountains or jump out of airplanes however I am thinking on my own little level of what I want to accomplish now and I feel inspired to set a goal slightly beyond my own comfort zone. Vaughn has done amazing things with all the obstacles he has to overcome. Thank you for writing your story for all of us to share and understand your joy and pains. I'm sure you will continue to live life to the fullest and good luck bungee jumping!

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