



A Fighter's Heart: One Man's Journey Through the World of Fighting

By Sam Sheridan

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In 1999, after a series of wildly adventurous jobs around the world, Sam Sheridan found himself in Australia, loaded with cash and intent on not working until he'd spent it all. It occurred to him that, without distractions, he could finally indulge a long-dormant obsession: fighting. Within a year, he was in Bangkok training with the greatest fighter in muay Thai (Thai kickboxing) history and stepping through the ropes for a professional bout. That one fight wasn't enough. Sheridan set out to test himself on an epic journey into how and why we fight, facing Olympic boxers, Brazilian jiu-jitsu stars, and Ultimate Fighting champions. Along the way, Sheridan delivers an insightful look at violence as a career and a spectator sport, a behind-the-pageantry glimpse of athletes at the top of their terrifying game. An extraordinary combination of gonzo journalism and participatory sports writing, *A Fighter's Heart* is a dizzying first-hand account of what it's like to reach the peak of finely disciplined personal aggression, to hit—and be hit.

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Editorial Review

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Sheridan joined the merchant marines after high school, eventually graduated from Harvard, and worked his way to Australia on a yacht. There, in 1999, he decided to indulge his fascination with fighting, hoping to test himself and explore what has become a mostly sublimated aspect of masculinity. After some months of training in Australia, he moved to Bangkok to train with a legendary Muay Thai (kickboxing) champion. That experience--and his first professional bout--expanded into a multiyear odyssey in which he trained with Olympic boxers, Brazilian jujitsu champions, and Ultimate Fighting combatants. The magic in his account is in the telling detail--not only about how he suffers, trains, and fights but also about his reactions to his surroundings; the way, for example, he finds himself gradually becoming indifferent to the street orphans of Brazil, desensitized by their very omnipresence. It isn't Sheridan's toughness or fearlessness that makes this an involving excursion into a shadow world; it's his ability to re-create the textures of those shadows and to make us care about his oddly quixotic journey. *Wes Lukowsky*

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Review

“[An] excellent book.” —BoxingScene.com

Users Review

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Todd Jacobs:

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