



Man on Wire

Philippe Petit

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The basis for the motion picture: "By evoking his youthful passion for the World Trade Center, Petit brings the towers' awesomeness back to life." —*San Francisco Chronicle* More than a quarter-century before September 11, 2001, the World Trade Center was immortalized by an act of unprecedented daring and beauty. In August 1974, a young Frenchman named Philippe Petit boldly—and illegally—fixed a rope between the tops of the still-young Twin Towers, a quarter mile off the ground. At daybreak, thousands of spectators gathered to watch in awe and adulation as he traversed the rope a full eight times in the course of an hour. In *Man on Wire*, Petit recounts the six years he spent preparing for this achievement. It is a fitting tribute to those lost-but-not-forgotten symbols of human aspiration—the Twin Towers. 120 black & white illustrations

Man on Wire Details

Date : Published (first published November 17th 2008)

ISBN :

Author : Philippe Petit

Format : Kindle Edition 241 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Biography, Autobiography, Memoir

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From Reader Review Man on Wire for online ebook

Triston Lincoln says

Man on Wire by Philippe Petit is the first-hand account of Philippe's death-defying high-wire walk across the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. It is the non-fictional story of the years of preparation, practicing his craft and setbacks all leading up to his walk across the sky between the towers, 110 stories up, on a summer morning in 1974.

The author, Philippe Petit, used plentiful literary techniques to tell his story from his perspective in vivid detail. In particular, Petit used a ton of figurative language to tell his story. There are many examples of figurative language throughout the book, and he tended to use a lot of similes, metaphors, imagery and personification.

I enjoyed reading this entire book but the part I liked the best is towards the end of the story, as Petit describes what he was thinking about before and while he was out on the wire that day. He is able to illustrate a picture in our imaginations that being up in the clouds was like leaving the world and entering another. He lets his feet and courage lead him across the wire eight times, and even lying down on it at one point. When he describes walking on the wire, he talks like he is not a human. This part of the story is my favorite because during this part, he finally achieves what he had spent years planning, and he describes in unique, vivid details on what it was like for him up in the sky.

I think that Man on Wire by Philippe Petit is great, well written, and interesting throughout the entire book. The book is especially important now that the twin towers are no longer there. No one can ever attempt the feat that he achieved making this book important. Petit pays tribute to the towers and the end of the book, along with an inspiring message on how we should unite and rebuild together. I would recommend this book to anyone who enjoys reading, non-fiction books, and inspiring stories. I enjoyed reading this entire book, especially towards the end when he completes his walk on the wire.

Kathryn Bergeron says

Summary: Phillippe Petit tight rope walked across the Twin Towers.

Why I Read This: For an article

Review: Such a promising story but so poorly done. The first 150 pages were incredibly boring. The last 100 pages were redeeming, but the book ended with 20 pages to which my only response was, 'This guy is too French for his own good.'

Chrissie says

The book is written with excessive tension and in a frenetic tempo. Does this express the feeling of the high-wire artist himself, or is it to increase the suspense of the book? The high-wire artist himself wrote this book, 27 years, after the feat. And what was that feat? In August 1974 the twenty-four year old Frenchman, Philippe Petit, fixed a tight-rope between the Twin Towers in NYC then under construction. This was 1353 feet above ground, 110 floors up. Just to think of this makes me feel ill. Of course none of this was done with

permission. Philippe traversed the rope not once, not twice, but eight times - at dawn, with thousands of spectators watching from below. He wanted the publicity.

I would recommend the book to those of you who like a book filled with tension. Exactly how the high-wire feat was executed is followed step by step. Planning is disorganized, so the telling is disorganized too. Arguments and betrayals. You learn about the six years from the initial inspiration to its execution, the execution itself, how the authorities behaved afterwards and what Philippe Petite came to do in the following years. How he came to write this book, his thoughts on the 9/11 and the rebuilding of the Towers - all of this is covered. The latter chapters, after the spectacle itself, are more calmly presented. This leads me to believe that the author chose to make the earlier writing exciting, and I personally did not like the frenzy of this. The narrator of the audiobook, Andrew Heyl, further increases the tension and frenzy through his narration.

Having completed the book, I know the full story, but I don't feel I understand the man. Asked why he did it, his reply was approximately, "I see three oranges and I have to juggle them; I see two towers and I must walk!"

There were terms used that were never explained, although you do end up understanding how it was done. I wanted to know what happened to Barry, who worked on the 82nd floor and helped them. Why isn't this told?

The book does tell you about the event, but how it was written was more to excite than to inform. What you are looking for should determine whether you want to read the book or not. I appreciated Colum McCann's Let the Great World Spin, on this very same feat, much, much more.

Kathy says

This was a blast to read and very well written. I never knew much about this walk, but I did recall the event. I had no idea that something like this was far from spontaneous! This author is a real "project manager"! Fun to read.

Axel Efinger says

This biography tells the true story of a man named Philippe petit who literally tight roped the twin towers. It is a very powerful biography that shows the readers that there are some absolute crazy people in this world that would do anything. This man is one of them. We learn all about this character and what intrigues him to do these stunts. This book isn't like anything I've read before and it proves that just about anything is possible.

Degan Walters says

Beautifully written book about an incredible feat. He talks about the preparation to walk on a wire between the Twin Towers but the telling is filled with emotion and magic and art. And his ego but that is forgivable.

Jane says

I am fascinated by this man. I remember when this happened, but never knew much about Petit himself. Truly an amazing individual!

Chas says

Philippe Petit's breathtaking story of "Le Coup," better known as his tightrope walk between the Twin Towers, continues to amaze me.

From the beginning you know Petit is no ordinary person. As a young boy he finds his passion in tightrope walking. He throws himself into it and sets an amazing goal for himself. A goal that would make anyone think he is a madman. Petit decided the two tallest buildings in the world are his. They were built for one reason, for him to walk from the top of one to the other on a thin cable. Petit finds a way to fulfill his dream. His passion and drive for success overcome any obstacles, even though there are many. When he steps onto that cable, your heart will skip a beat. The beauty of his art, his masterpiece of which he is creating, is almost tear provoking.

In all, Philippe Petit is a wild Frenchman. He has the balls of a bull, and a hunger to fulfill his dream that propels him to success. This book captures his amazing adventure through short 1-3 page long chapters. His thoughts are sporadic, and he decides to convey them to us in such a way. I would recommend this book to anyone. This book will inspire you, rather Petit will inspire you. The lesson of this book is to never give up on your dream. The impossible is possible we are taught.

If you like to read, you will like this book. It's that simple.

Kelly Macfarlane says

A very readable book about an incredible event. A lot of personality, logistics, and big dreams made real by an amazing, if occasionally a bit too acerbic, artist. I was inspired to read this after seeing the movie (in IMAX -- had to close my eyes for a number of the scenes). I still have no idea how it's possible for any human being to walk on a wire between the tops of the World Trade Centre, but this book goes a certain way to explaining what motivates Petit to do his walks.

Mary Karpel-Jergic says

I have always been deeply amazed by Philippe Petit's high wire walk across the twin towers in NY. Without much visual record of his achievement, this book provides the incredible backdrop to the story - the immense amount of preparation and the absolute confidence in execution.

My knees go weak at even the thought of what he did.

Terry says

This story is absolutely beautiful. The passion with which this man speaks about his art, or more accurately his life because the distinction between passion and purpose disappear at this level of commitment, is awe inspiring. The story is simultaneously a suspenseful tale and a motivational anecdote. The chapters are short and well written, making it an enjoyable read. Petit speaks incredibly objectively from his memory and as such at times you'll hate him, at times you'll love him, you'll want to laugh, cry and everything else as though you're right there. I would definitely recommend this to anyone looking for a real life achievement tale about accomplishing your dreams.

My one caution and reason I did not give this 5 stars. There is a documentary by the same name on the same subject. I never like movies better than the books they're based on but here might be the one exception. The film is absolutely excellent, in my opinion, and because of this while the book is still great, I might like the film better. Personally, I'd say check them both out and you be the judge!

Audrey says

I admit, I saw a documentary about this before reading the book, but it is very inspiring while also having many elements of a novel while also being a memoir of events which led up to Philippe Petit walking the wire between the two World Trade Center towers. There are photographs and drawings scattered throughout the text which help the book feel almost like a journal or scrapbook which one has been invited to look inside.

Maggi says

Phillipe Petit is more a magician/wire walker than writer, yet he has crafted this incredibly fascinating story of his strange and wondrous "coup" into an entertaining narrative. The poetry of his description of the actual walk sharply contrasts with the agony of getting there; the logistics involved were mind-boggling, time-consuming and exhausting. When he finally walked, he had been up all night working hard and was terribly dehydrated, yet he performed a feat few on the planet could manage. A triumph of the human spirit. This is inspirational stuff. The pictures are terrific.

Jason Coffman says

Truly amazing story told by the man who did it. Petit's excitement is infectious, and his writing is so evocative I literally felt dizzy thinking about him up on the top of the World Trade Center. Massively entertaining.

Paul Schenk says

Nail biting well written account of the months long preparation and execution of secretly getting all equipment needed to get a steel cable strung between the two towers of the World Trade Center while it was being constructed. Don't miss this fantastic read!
