



Acrobaddict

Joe Putignano

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Follow the author as he goes on a harrowing journey from the US Olympic Training Center to homeless shelters to shooting heroin on the job to being declared dead. This story goes beyond addiction. It is about the fragility and tenacity of the human spirit and how that spirit can redeem each and every one of us by helping to push us through the darkness, whether the darkness is from death, divorce, or the disease of addiction.

Acrobaddict is a story about the close relationship between athletics and drug addiction—how the same energy, obsession, and dedication that can create an Olympic athlete can also create a homeless drug addict.

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY (Starred review) After reading former Olympic gymnastics hopeful Putignano's sinister yet intoxicating memoir of addiction, recovery, and more addiction, you wind up feeling like one of his closest friends. The first-time author, who now portrays Crystal Man in Cirque du Soleil's traveling production of Totem, divulges what must be nearly every significant detail of his journey from the basement of his parents' Massachusetts home, where as an 8-year-old he taught himself flips using old couch cushions; to the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, where the author's insane quest for perfection exposed his insecurities and triggered his self-loathing; and finally to a seemingly never-ending series of addict escapades throughout his college and post-college years that somehow did not even climax after he was twice declared clinically dead. Putignano's homosexuality plays a crucial role in his story, and it is the one topic here he handles delicately. Elsewhere, his prose is unfiltered: graphic and intimate. Prone to hyperbole to the point of distraction, Putignano nevertheless writes so vividly about his highs that readers practically experience them with him. Similarly, his lows drop them into the private circles of hell on earth he created. A more powerful anti-drug missive would be tough to find. (Sept.)

LIBRARY JOURNAL (July 22, 2013) Dale Farris, Groves, TX—Former star acrobatic contortionist and gymnast of the Cirque du Soleil's "Totem," performer in Twyla Tharp's musical *The Times They Are A'changin*, and guest on Dr. Sanjay Gupta's CNN show *Human Factor*, Putignano, shares his heartfelt, emotionally wrenching story of addiction to heroin. Putignano's memoir takes readers on an unsettling journey from his experience in the U.S. Olympic Training Center to homeless shelters to shooting heroin on the job, and even being declared dead. His vivid, brutally honest story begins with his realizing at an early age his innate talent for gymnastics, followed by his obsession with becoming an Olympic gymnastic champion, how he abandoned his Olympic hopes to chase his love of heroin, and ultimately how he managed to overcome his addiction and move into long-term recovery and stability. The narrative is replete with colorful descriptions of his many harrowing experiences, and deep musings that have formed the foundation for his commitment to remain free of drugs and a shining light for others who may be seeking guidance. *VERDICT* Putignano's honest memoir of drug abuse is a valuable addition to substance-abuse literature. His status as a successful gymnast and performer helps connect readers, and his impressive, erudite style results in a highly credible addition to this rapidly saturating genre.

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