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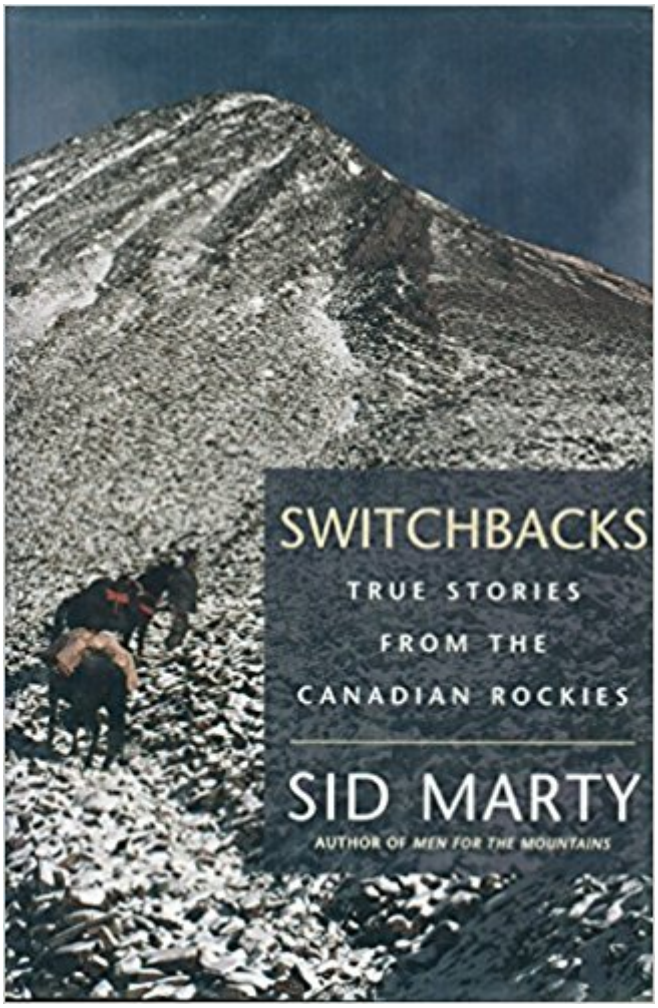
Switchbacks: True Stories From The Canadian Rockies



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Synopsis

In Switchbacks, Sid Marty draws on his own memories and those of friends and former colleagues in relating a series of true mountain tales. Among his subjects are: the old guide who built a staircase up a cliff; the stranded snowshoer who was rescued between rounds of beer in a Banff tavern; the man who catered to hungry grizzlies; an opinionated packrat with a gift for larceny; and a horse named Candy whose heart was as big as a stove.Along the way, Marty tries to answer the kind of questions that all of us must face some day. Do we really have to Ã¢â ¬Å“grow upÃ¢â ¬Â• and abandon adventure as well as youthful ideals? Can the mountains draw old friends back together, when politics and life styles have set them apart?Sid Marty writes gracefully of the land he loves and lampoons a few bureaucrats whose policies sometimes threaten its integrity. His portraits of the people Ã¢â ¬â œ and creatures Ã¢â ¬â œ that make their lives in the mountains are affectionate and respectful. But, above all, this is a collection of engaging, surprising, funny, and superbly told true stories by a gifted writer.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“In prose as clear as the mountain air, Marty relates one marvellous story after another, drawing on his more than 25 years experience in the Rocky Mountains.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â œNational PostÃ¢â ¬Å“MartyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s artistry is such that the stories in Switchbacks seem to have emerged from the mountains themselves.Ã¢â ¬Â¦Some chapters will have your adrenalin coursing and your heart pounding; one or two others may make you weep. All of them will thrill you with the concrete vitality of landscape and language.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â œGlobe and Mail

In Switchbacks, Sid Marty draws on his own memories and those of friends and former colleagues in relating a series of true mountain tales. Among his subjects are: the old guide who built a staircase up a cliff; the stranded snowshoer who was rescued between rounds of beer in a Banff tavern; the man who catered to hungry grizzlies; an opinionated packrat with a gift for larceny; and a horse named Candy whose heart was as big as a stove.Along the way, Marty tries to answer the kind of questions that all of us must face some day. Do we really have to ?grow up? and abandon adventure as well as youthful ideals? Can the mountains draw old friends back together, when politics and life styles have set them apart?Sid Marty writes gracefully of the land he loves and lampoons a few bureaucrats whose policies sometimes threaten its integrity. His portraits of the people ? and creatures ? that make their lives in the mountains are affectionate and respectful. But, above all, this is a collection of engaging, surprising, funny, and superbly told true stories by a gifted writer.

We ordered this book written by an early ranger in the Canadian Rockies to read on a trip to that area. It was well written and informative - fun to read while we were there.

Excellent book. Very entertaining with the Canadian Rockies as a background

A Canadian friend gave me a copy of this book to read and I enjoyed every bit of it. Even though I am not familiar with the area Sid Marty’s stories take place in, I was glued to the book until I finished. The stories are so fantastic they could only be true and so entertaining I read many of them out loud to who ever was around at the time. Here is a small sample: "This woman had a terrible sunburn. She was lying naked in her tent, covered with cold cream, when a black bear walked through the tent door. The lady froze, played dead, and without much preamble, the black bear began to lick off the cold cream - all of it. Then he wandered off in search of dessert, leaving his victim uninjured, though emotionally debilitated - to say the least." Yup, that is just a small sample of the stories in the book, some of which made you laugh, some cry and some just downright bigger than life. The mountain descriptions were complete enough to get the picture, as well as the rescues and the helicopter techniques like being transported through the air from a sling under a helicopter for rescue purposes. Sid Marty’s life experiences are lessons to us all from patrolling on horseback to recalling the history of climbers who went before him. If you like outdoor stories, or Marty’s other books you will enjoy this one as well.

Once again, Sid Marty has produced another ’must read’ about the beautiful Canadain Rockies. His first book "Men for the mountains" is still a classic adventure and environmental tale about the Rocky Mountain Parks, with this as it’s somewhat continuation. It differs however in that it reads as more of a climbing/historical acount of the pioneers of the Lake Louise, Banff and Jasper areas rather than of the park system and how it is managed and sometimes mismanaged. For an Albertan and a frequent visitor of the Rocky mountain park system, this was a great book in that the names of the places I visit now have greater significance and meaning.I give it only four stars instead of the five "Men for the mountains" received only because the narrative is less engaging and is more of a history lesson, but still a great mountain book."Leaning on the wind" is another great choice if you enjoyed either of these books.

I’ve just discovered Sid Martys’ books this year. I’m finding all his books are spellbinding. What makes Switchbacks so remarkable is that the adventures recorded are true stories. I could not put this book down. If you love the great outdoors, if you love to learn more about the history of North American parks,in this case, the Canadian Rockies, this is a must read.

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