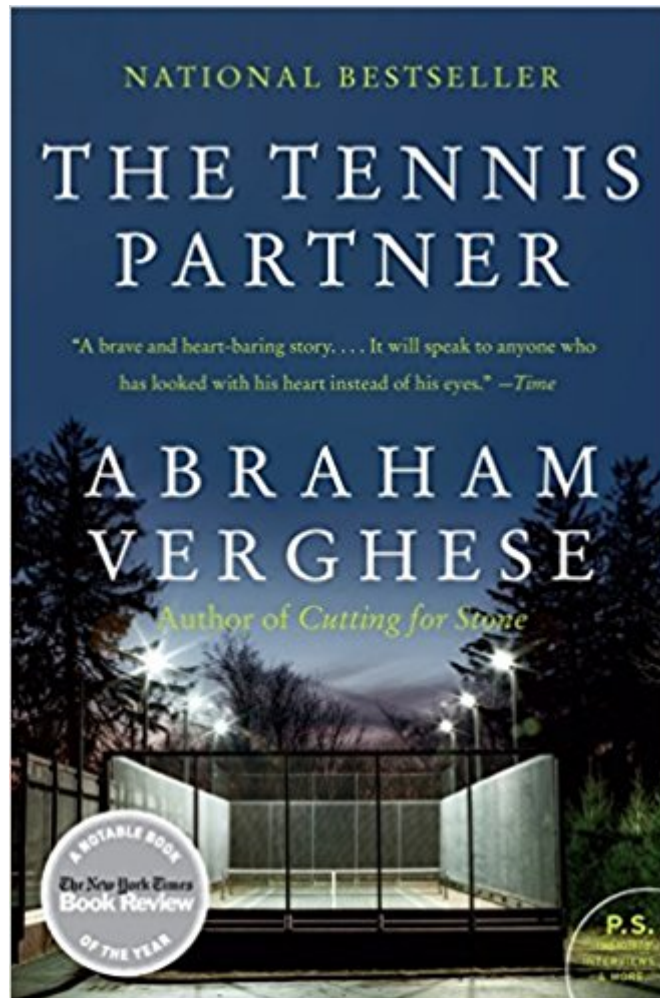




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The Tennis Partner



Synopsis

An unforgettable, illuminating story of how men live and how they survive, from the acclaimed New York Times bestselling author of *Cutting for Stone* When Abraham Verghese, a physician whose marriage is unraveling, relocates to El Paso, Texas, he hopes to make a fresh start as a staff member at the county hospital. There he meets David Smith, a medical student recovering from drug addiction, and the two men begin a tennis ritual that allows them to shed their inhibitions and find security in the sport they love and with each other. This friendship between doctor and intern grows increasingly rich and complex, more intimate than two men usually allow. Just when it seems nothing can go wrong, the dark beast from David's past emerges once again and almost everything Verghese has come to trust and believe in is threatened as David spirals out of control.

Book Information

Paperback: 368 pages

Publisher: Harper Perennial; Reissue edition (September 20, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0062116398

ISBN-13: 978-0062116390

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.8 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 230 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #51,722 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #19 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Regional U.S. > South #142 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Medical #1946 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Memoirs

Customer Reviews

What is it about sports that makes some men wax as mystical as a Castaneda Yaqui? In the hands of writers such as David James Duncan and Norman Maclean, the simple, repetitive motions of baseball, fly-fishing, and golf have acquired almost numinous significance. In *The Tennis Partner*, Dr. Abraham Verghese takes on his own fascination with tennis and comes up with as good an explanation as any: "In the way we controlled the movement of a yellow ball in space, we were imposing order on a world that was fickle and capricious. Each ball that we put into play, for as long as it went back and forth between us, felt like a charm to be added to a necklace full of spells, talismans, and fetishes, which one day add up to an Aaron's rod, an Aladdin's lamp, a magic carpet.

Each time we played, this feeling of restoring order, of mastery, was awakened." For both Verghese and his tennis partner, a fourth-year medical student named David Smith, the game is a much-needed island of order in the midst of personal chaos. Both men are struggling to rebuild their lives, Verghese undergoing a painful divorce, Smith struggling with an intravenous cocaine addiction. For a brief, idyllic period, their friendship flourishes; Verghese mentors Smith in the examining room, while Smith, an Australian who competed briefly on the pro circuit, ends up Verghese's teacher on the court. But there are dark corners to David's personality, and under the mounting pressures of medical school and his increasingly complicated love life, these come to the fore. Even as he learns how to inhabit his new life, Verghese watches with horror as his friend relapses, dries out, then relapses again. The author of the powerful *My Own Country*, a chronicle of caring for AIDS patients in rural Tennessee, Verghese once again proves that the skills of a good doctor are strikingly similar to those of a good writer. Careful observation, compassion, restraint: these are the instruments Verghese uses to stunning effect in *The Tennis Partner*. A paean to the healing powers of tennis, this book is also a moving meditation on friendship, fatherhood, love, addiction, and the particular loneliness of physicians. --Mary Park --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In his eloquent memoir, *My Own Country*, Verghese described a parallel story, that of a stranger (himself) and AIDS both becoming part of a rural Tennessee town. Once again, Verghese weaves his own story with that of a place and another person to come up with something moving and insightful. As he tries to cope with a new job on the faculty of Texas Tech School of Medicine, the move to El Paso and the breakdown of his marriage, he meets David, a medical student and former tennis pro. Tennis matches with David reawaken Verghese's passion for the game, and soon the two become regular partners. Their connection is complicated by their shifting roles: Verghese, David's teacher in the hospital wards, becomes his student on the tennis court. For Verghese, the matches offer an escape from loneliness; for David, a recovering drug addict, even more is at stake. Only on the court can they reach a state of grace: "our tennis partnership was special, different, sacred like a marriage." Ultimately, as David's life takes some disturbing turns, Verghese finds himself forced to choose between his role as friend and that of authority figure. While David's story provides the main narrative drive of the book, it's interwoven with Verghese's descriptions of his AIDS patients, his relationship with his sons and meditations on El Paso's distinctive landscape. It's a hard trick but Verghese combines all these elements into a cohesive whole, moving easily between moments of quiet reflection and anxious anticipation. If, as he writes, "to tell a life story [is]

to engage in a form of seduction," then Verghese is a master of romance. Agent, Mary Evans. Author tour.-- to engage in a form of seduction," then Verghese is a master of romance. Agent, Mary Evans. Author tour. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

We often hear plenty stories of the relationship between doctors and patients yet this is an excellent reading on the not as much talked about and revealed relationship between physicians. Yet just like any stories on relationships, it's about being persons and how we stumble or triumph in relating to, empathizing, and being humans with each other. The prose is beautiful, the author has a great gift in seeing and writing about his insights, thoughts, sentiments, and his surroundings in intelligent and beautiful ways, and best of all, he's a great story teller that makes non fictional events/materials great stories.

Not being a tennis player put me at a disadvantage (the kinds of strokes, the tennis 'jargon') but this still was an enjoyable and entertaining book. (Spoiler alert!) It has a sad ending, so I only gave it four stars. Interesting dynamic between the former pro-player turned medical student, and his medical professor/instructor part-time tennis buff. I read it in my book club, and another member who does play tennis loved it.

This was an excellent read! Verghese blends medical scenarios with descriptive tennis plays into a really good read. Profound insights...I'm a great fan of Verghese!

Verghese is the author of one of the best novels I've ever read - "Cutting for Stone", and I had hoped this biographical story would be interesting. For me it was too much tennis and not engaging. My son is a doctor in Texas, so I thought the medical part of the storyline was relatable. The addiction part of the story was rather sparse as far as the addicted young doctor was concerned.

Abraham Verghese gives us more than a story about the deep bond between two men learning from each other. He splays open his heart and speaks from the very essence of his soul. It is rare to find such unflinching honesty and self disclosure from a man of his professional standing. Revealing an intensely personal time as he doubts himself and his choices, and faces his limitations, he allows us an intimate view into his journey for self discovery. Parts of the book give far more details on tennis than most readers would care to know. However, this aspergerish focus on details allows us

to appreciate his exquisite abilities of observation as a diagnostician, compassionate doctor, passionate teacher, and lover of life. As we experience the beauty and pain of his primary relationships, his greatest strengths become his weakness as well. Sometimes getting lost in the details he misses the larger understanding and context of what is actually developing. His charm is being willing to disclose his shortcomings and learn from them. This is the third book I have read by Dr. Verghese. His fictional "Cutting for Stone" is a remarkable bestseller. "My Own Country" and "The Tennis Partner" are more autobiographical and utterly captivating. Abraham Verghese blesses our world by the stories he shares, his devotion to his work as a doctor and teacher, and by his very love of life. I can hardly wait for his next book...I hope he is writing one!

A good read. Love verghese's books. This was my second read of this book--first was years ago for pleasure. This read was for book club.

This was another well written book by Abraham Verghese. Often a good book prompts me to read another by the same author and, all too often, I am disappointed. Cutting for Stone by Verghese was outstanding and so was The Tennis Partner. I enjoyed it for the outstanding writing as well as his topics. The reader is brought into the room as one who experiences personally, and not more from the reader's standpoint. Now.... I need to read his third, "My Own Country."

Verghese takes a realistic look at addiction through a close friend's experiences. He's torn between family, job, and his friend's problem. The family disintegrates because of his dedication to a job he loves. He's forced to face his own shortcomings as a father and a husband. His friend spirals down to the lowest level of addiction despite Verghese's best efforts. It's sad and disappointing. But the read is supreme.

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