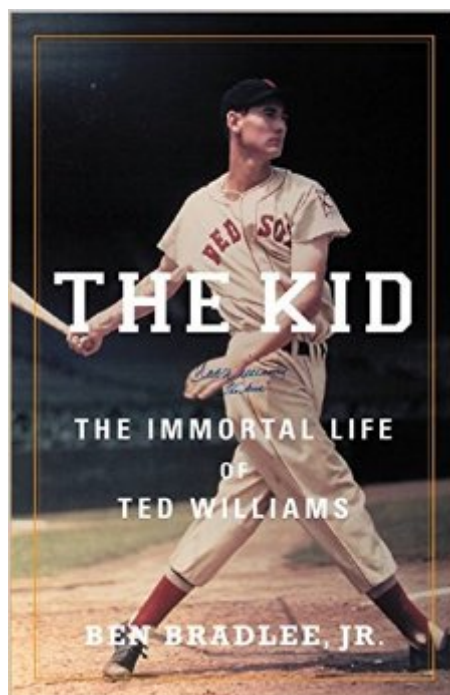


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The Kid: The Immortal Life Of Ted Williams



Synopsis

At long last, the epic biography Ted Williams deserves--and that his fans have been waiting for. Williams was the best hitter in baseball history. His batting average of .406 in 1941 has not been topped since, and no player who has hit more than 500 home runs has a higher career batting average. Those totals would have been even higher if Williams had not left baseball for nearly five years in the prime of his career to serve as a Marine pilot in WWII and Korea. He hit home runs farther than any player before him--and traveled a long way himself, as Ben Bradlee, Jr.'s grand biography reveals. Born in 1918 in San Diego, Ted would spend most of his life disguising his Mexican heritage. During his 22 years with the Boston Red Sox, Williams electrified crowds across America--and shocked them, too: His notorious clashes with the press and fans threatened his reputation. Yet while he was a God in the batter's box, he was profoundly human once he stepped away from the plate. His ferocity came to define his troubled domestic life. While baseball might have been straightforward for Ted Williams, life was not. THE KID is biography of the highest literary order, a thrilling and honest account of a legend in all his glory and human complexity. In his final at-bat, Williams hit a home run. Bradlee's marvelous book clears the fences, too.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Whew! It has taken me two weeks to pioneer my way through this detailed biography of Ted Williams authored by Ben Bradlee, Jr. but the effort was worth it. We now have had two five star biographies on Williams, the other by Lee Montville entitled "Ted Williams". Both are worth your time. If you want to know practically everything you care to know and more about Teddy Ballgame than Bradlee's book "The Kid" would be the book to read. Some may feel they are being told more

than what would interest them because Bradlee goes into great detail about the several wives of Williams in addition to his children and step-children. In addition there is a detailed hassle regarding Ted being "stored" in the Alcor facility in Scottsdale, Arizona, that may be belaboring to some readers. Ted Williams was a man of many mood swings which may have dated back to his childhood where his mother was a dedicated worker with the Salvation Army and pretty much ignored him as did his father as well. Williams could be profanely abusive to people including his many wives and others who crossed his path. He, no doubt, could be very difficult to live with. On the other hand he could be very gentle with youngsters and would go out of his way to be of assistance to others who were in need. It was the great Rogers Hornsby who gave Williams the advice to "get a good ball to hit." Red Sox clubhouse man Johnny Orlando tagged Williams with the nickname "The Kid." Red Sox owner Tom Yawkey was often beloved by his players. He did, however, run a house of prostitution in South Carolina in which he, himself, took advantage of. We have often heard of "The curse of the Bambino" in which the Bosox failed for so many years to win a championship due to their shipping Babe Ruth off to the Yankees in 1920.

Ted Williams was a tortured person, as this lengthy biography makes clear. But, oh my, what a hitter he was! The last player to hit .400. With a major league career that began in 1939, in 1957--at an advanced age for a player--he hit .388. If he had any legs left, he may well have hit .400 if he would have been able to get some "leg hits." The book accomplishes several worthy goals. First, it provides a big picture description and analysis of his baseball career--from the time when he first started playing until his retirement. It shows a growth as a player--from indifferent to playing defense to becoming a pretty decent outfielder. The book depicts his approach to hitting very nicely. It also shows the volatile side of him, when he would lose his temper, publicly get into painful disputes with reporters, sometimes not hustling when he would become angry with someone, and so on. And the ways he would "psyche" himself for a game. For instance, taking swings in the locker room, he would say: "I'm Teddy [expletive deleted] Ballgame of the Major [expletive deleted] Leagues. How can this pitcher get me out with his [expletive deleted] pitching" (I could not retrieve the exact quotation, but this is close). The book has his batting statistics at the end (page 785), and that is helpful, to get a sense of the trajectory of his career. Second, it gives a glimpse of Williams as a person. Not always pretty. He was married a number of times and the end result was often unpleasant. He had numerous affairs, had a wicked temper. In short, he tended to treat his wives badly. While his children would say that he was a good father, he was often away. And his personality. . . . He was obviously someone with some emotional/mental problems.

I don't remember many events from my youth, but those that I do are vivid and clear. I remember a time as a Boy Scout taking an excursion in the late 1960's with my troop to Tiger Stadium to see the Washington Senators vs. the Detroit Tigers. We all knew that Ted Williams (Senators' coach) would be there and hoped for a glimpse of the Legend. Luckily we faced the visitor "dug out" way up in the cheap seats. I remember seeing the great man standing like a statue made of marble sternly watching the Senators perform. I thought to myself - " Ted could pick up a bat and knock one out of the park if he wanted to", but he was the manager and chose to see his players do the job. I don't remember the outcome of this game. I just remember Ted Williams standing tall. I admire Ted Williams to this day, and believe the man was bigger than the game. This timely published book is one of many attempts to define the complicated life of Ted Williams. He didn't like the press, wouldn't tip his hat to the fans (until his later years), and wrote his own account " Ted Williams - My Turn at Bat " as an attempt to straighten things out. Ted Williams always had something to prove, and the tenacity & talent to do so. It's hard to say what he would of thought of this book. I think he would have had issues, but as I read it: I got the sense that the author made every attempt to be impartial and honest about this complex and legendary man. Ted Williams admits he was very sensitive. He would hear the single boo in a stadium of cheering fans. He did not like the press, and if they ever put Ted back together some day, he properly wouldn't like this book. Ted said "he always felt the weight of the world on his shoulders when he was actively playing".

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