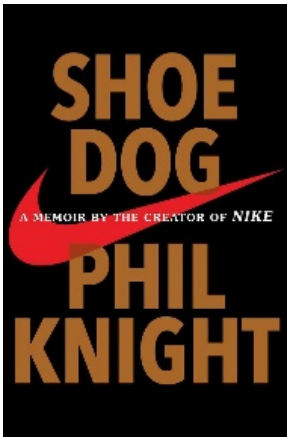


Book Review

Shoe Dog –A Memoir by the Creator of NIKE

Author: Phil Knight

Published in 2016 by Scribner (p. 381)



Shoe Dog is the story of Phil Knight's struggle in establishing brand Nike and overcoming failure against all odds decked against him. It's an autobiography, a novel and a thriller all rolled in one. Knight's message in

the book is clearly summed up in his own words, "Let everyone else call your idea crazy...just keep going. Don't stop. Don't even think about stopping until you get there, and don't give much thought to where 'there' is."

Knight, who attended University of Oregon (later Stanford), started selling running shoes in mid-60. He imported those shoes (not Nike yet) from an unfamiliar Japanese manufacturer, Onitsuka who had no idea that Knight's company, Blue Ribbon was just a registered name in Portland, Oregon. However, Onitsuka liked the idea of starting selling shoes in the U.S and agreed to make deal with Blue Ribbon. That was only the beginning.

Knight ran his operation on a shoestring (no pun intended) struggling for cash to pay Onitsuka for delivery of shoes. He lived hand to mouth and in debt while holding a nine to five job for the survival of his company and his nascent family. Knight was lucky to have Bill Bowerman, a well-respected running coach at University of

Oregon on his side. Bowerman, took Onitsuka shoes apart and attempted to enhance them. He also experimented with better materials for comfort. His ideas proved to be popular with his athletes.

The book's chapters are organized by year, and much of the book is spent on the first 10 years of the company (launched in 1962). Knight is able to convey the fear and frustration of living on the edge even as his company continued to grow. For example, Knight describes receiving the "pair count" (how many pairs of shoes shipped) from the warehouses every day. Because he depended on daily sales to generate the cash he needed to keep the business alive, "the daily pair count determined my mood, my digestion, my blood pressure, because it largely determined the fate of Blue Ribbon," he writes. "If we didn't sell all the shoes in our most recent order, and quickly convert that product into cash, we'd be in big trouble."

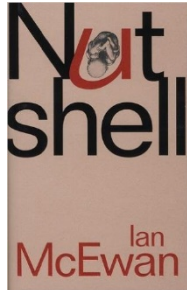
Shoe Dog is a compelling read. While many business biographies offer a litany of deals and sales figures, Knight tells his story through the people of his company — especially the motley crew of the first Nike employees who fought to keep Blue Ribbon afloat year after year. *Shoe Dog* (a term that refers to people "who devoted themselves wholly to the making, selling, buying or designing of shoes," Knight writes) is a textbook on the immense challenges and potential rewards of entrepreneurship. If you need some encouragement beyond "Just Do It" then read *Shoe Dog*.

-Reviewed by Anil Shrivastava

Nutshell

Author: Ian McEwan

Published by Jonathan Cape (Paperback)



Apart from the fact that this is a take on "Hamlet", this novel, undeniably (!), has its own matchless merit.

"Between the conception of a deed and its acting out lies a tangle of hideous contingencies".... Quite a premise: a fetus is watching

and commenting (in a most sagacious way!) on the drama unfolding around his mother's life... My first instinct was to wonder: is there a "pro-life" message in that? But that was probably the paranoia from the ongoing elections here in US - which was then explained in an interview that I read, where McEwan said that the "pro-choice" vs "pro-life" thought never entered his mind in writing of this novel. He even said that only Americans might find this thread of thought in it. Ha! No wonder...

And even before I read that interview, I had to abandon that idea - simply because so much else was overpowering in this book: first of all - McEwan's striking eloquence, where exceptional humor meets the most serious of discussions ; secondly - a riveting plot; and thirdly - an ongoing commentary by the author (through the mind of the unborn child) about the world's political scenery, global changes: a succinct but astute analysis of everything that's wrong with the world today... "Revenge unstitches a civilization" - how about that for summing it all up.... His thoughts about Europe are compelling: "Old Europa tosses in her dreams, she pitches between pity and fear, between helping and repelling. Emotional and kind this week, scaly-hearted and so reasonable the next, she wants to help but she doesn't want to share or lose what she has." A thoroughly captivating read. **-Reviewed by Irene Rudra**