



A Personal Odyssey

By Thomas Sowell

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This is the gritty story of one man's lifelong education in the school of hard knocks, as his journey took him from Harlem to the Marines, the Ivy League, and a career as a controversial writer, teacher, and economist in government and private industry. It is also the story of the dramatically changing times in which this personal odyssey took place.

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A Personal Odyssey By Thomas Sowell Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Thomas Sowell is known for speaking--and writing--his mind, even when his opinions won't win him any popularity contests. In thoughtful, straightforward books like *The Quest for Cosmic Justice* and *Civil Rights: Rhetoric or Reality?* he questioned affirmative action and expressed frustration with government bureaucracy, elaborating on his ideas of personal freedom and responsibility in the process. In *A Personal Odyssey*, we're shown glimpses of the man behind the ideas, and while the narration is sometimes frustratingly distant, it's an enjoyable history of a fascinating man. Beginning with his early life in North Carolina, where his encounters with white people were so limited that he didn't really believe that "yellow" was a possible color for hair, Sowell details his childhood with humor and appreciation for the adults who raised him with love, attention, and high expectations. Throughout the experiences that follow, from the U.S. Marines to Howard and Harvard Universities to his fellowship at Stanford's Hoover Institute, Sowell's strong opinions make him stand out from the herd. His brother sums up this trait in describing Sowell's son: "Tommy, when I see a dozen kids, all doing the same thing, and in the midst of them is one kid doing something entirely different, I don't have to guess which one is our mother's grandson." You don't have to be familiar with Sowell's scholarly works to appreciate his life--this is a read for any freethinking iconoclast. --
Jill Lightner

From Publishers Weekly

A nationally recognized economist and scholar, Sowell recounts his long, steady climb from a hardscrabble North Carolina childhood to the top ranks of influential conservatives within the Republican Party in Washington. Sowell, who is African-American, racked up a series of notable accomplishments through sheer determination and a refusal to let his race prove an obstacle to a productive life. His grit and focus became evident during his early years as a rebellious schoolboy in Harlem, an unremarkable stint in the Marines, his later studies at Howard University and his frustrating time at Harvard. Of particular note is his unwavering approval of leading economist Milton Friedman, who taught Sowell at the University of Chicago. Known for his attention to detail and the nuance of his theoretical writings, Sowell doesn't consistently display those skills to advantage: he often seems to race through key periods in his life, leaving the reader to wonder what elements of significance have been left out. However, he pulls no punches in his conservative stance on the thorny issue of race, which has frequently put him in opposition with the African-American community, and demonstrates his steadfast belief in meritocracy. He earns points for his revelations about his personal disappointments, his painful divorce and his frustrations with an unkind media, dispelling a common belief that he was a close adviser of President Reagan. Offering only a controlled, muted look at the author's inner world, Sowell's account occasionally seems arrogant, but often reflective and always provocative. (Sept.)
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From Library Journal

Imagine a life in which you succeed at every task you undertake, you vanquish every opponent in a verbal dual, and you show off your mental prowess outrageously and get away with it. This is the essence of Sowell's life story, as he tells it. Even his divorce is depicted as if he had no part in it. Modesty is not one of his strengths. The author, a well-known conservative educator and economist, heaps criticism on just about everyone whoever crossed him or attempted to thwart his ambitious rise from a difficult home life and semipoverty to national prominence. Like Reagan and Teflon, nothing sticks to Sowell, at least in his version. Either way, he must get credit for what appears to be total recall. Fact or fiction, listeners may judge for themselves. Jeff Riggenbach provides his usual proficient narration. Recommended. Mark Pumphrey, Polk Cty. P.L., Columbus,

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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Regina Nichols:

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Marianne Button:

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