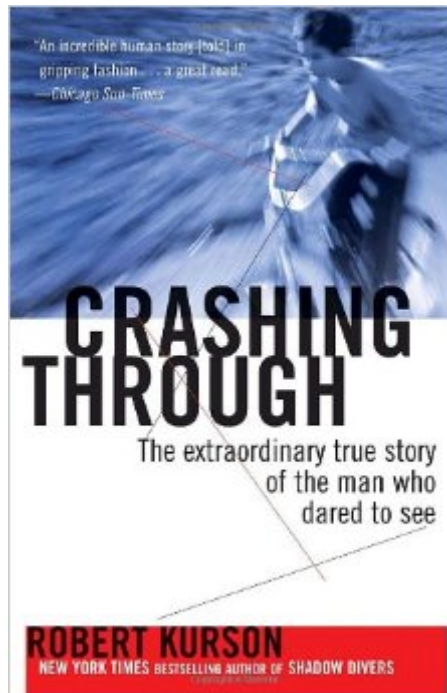


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Crashing Through: The Extraordinary True Story Of The Man Who Dared To See



Synopsis

Mike May spent his life crashing through. Blinded at age three, he defied expectations by breaking world records in downhill speed skiing, joining the CIA, and becoming a successful inventor, entrepreneur, and family man. He had never yearned for vision. Then, in 1999, a chance encounter brought startling news: a revolutionary stem cell transplant surgery could restore May's vision. It would allow him to drive, to read, to see his children's faces. But the procedure was filled with gambles, some of them deadly, others beyond May's wildest dreams. Beautifully written and thrillingly told, *Crashing Through* is a journey of suspense, daring, romance, and insight into the mysteries of vision and the brain. Robert Kurson gives us a fascinating account of one man's choice to explore what it means to see "and to truly live. Praise for the National Bestseller *Crashing Through*:

• "An incredible human story [told] in gripping fashion . . . a great read." • "Chicago Sun-Times" • "Inspiring." • "USA Today" • "[An] astonishing story . . . memorably told . . . May is remarkable. . . . Don't be surprised if your own vision mists over now and then." • "Chicago Tribune" • "[A] moving account [of] an extraordinary character." • "People" • "Terrific . . . [a] genuinely fascinating account of the nature of human vision." • "The Washington Post" • "Kurson is a man with natural curiosity and one who can feel the excitement life has to offer. One of his great gifts is he makes you feel it, too." • "The Kansas City Star" • "Propulsive . . . a gripping adventure story." • "Entertainment Weekly NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE"

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Customer Reviews

Robert Kurson swept me away with "Shadow Divers," his rousing, true-life WWII treasure hunt. He introduced us to real people with foibles and strengths; he gave appropriate, often hair-raising details; and he kept in focus the human element of relationships and desire. "Crashing Through" is a completely different type of story, and yet it captures those same elements--in much narrower focus. This time, Kurson leads us through the dramatic issues of sight, self-reliance, self-discovery, and the pleasures and pain of dreaming large. We find these things embodied in the story of Mike May, a man blinded at age three by a chemical burn. Mike has lived life on the edge, "crashing through" every obstacle in his desire to enjoy each day. His well-balanced, mostly normal life, is endangered by an exciting new opportunity: the chance to see again. The offer is not risk-free. Mike and his supportive wife, Jennifer, face emotional and health risks as he begins a harrowing journey back to the world of the sighted. The marriage they have built together for over a decade will be knocked off balance. Will he lose his friends and credibility within circles of the blind? Could the overwhelming responsibility of sight become a millstone around Mike's neck? What if his business can't withstand his temporary absences? Even more foundational: Will Mike May discover he is not who he thought he was, who he's proclaimed himself to be? With inimitable touch, Kurson takes us through this scientific, emotional, and thoroughly fascinating story. He gives intimate details of the world of the blind, and even more intimate looks into Mike May's journey back to sight. There are moments of heartache and fear, as well as scenes of understated rapture.

This is quite simply the most amazing book I have read in years. From a purely superficial perspective, the book is a great read, it is intense, gripping and entertaining. But "Crashing Through" is more like an onion than a book. Though I just read and finished it over the last three days I can see myself reading this book many, many more times in the future and drawing fresh insights from it. Among the layers: It is a fascinating exploration into the science and psychology of vision, extremely complicated material that I felt was delivered masterfully in layman's terms without oversimplifying the material, and with a variety of illustrations to further explain complicated processes. Another reader commented that it is a sort of self-help book and I agree, one can certainly see the motivational speaker at work in many parts of the book. I don't mean that as a detraction though, on the contrary I found the way that Mike May has quite literally "crashed through" life to be rather challenging to me personally. The moral, ethical, and spiritual facets of blindness, vision, and vision restoration are extremely engaging. Normally I just tear through books, but this one took me some time to finish because I had to stop frequently to think about the words

on the page, not to comprehend them but to really contemplate the message. Beyond the mechanics of vision, what does it mean to truly "see" -- and which is more valuable? Vision or "seeing." Last, as another reviewer also mentioned, it's a great parenting book...and I'd add marriage manual to that as well. I highly recommend this book, I think it would be great for a book club as there is no shortage of discussion topics.

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