



Hell-Bent: Obsession, Pain, and the Search for Something Like Transcendence in Competitive Yoga

Benjamin Lorr

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Author Benjamin Lorr wandered into a yoga studio—and fell down a rabbit hole

Hell-Bent explores a fascinating, often surreal world at the extremes of American yoga. Benjamin Lorr walked into his first yoga studio on a whim, overweight and curious, and quickly found the yoga reinventing his life. He was studying Bikram Yoga (or "hot yoga") when a run-in with a master and competitive yoga champion led him into an obsessive subculture—a group of yogis for whom eight hours of practice a day in 110-degree heat was just the beginning.

So begins a journey. Populated by athletic prodigies, wide-eyed celebrities, legitimate medical miracles, and predatory hucksters, it's a nation-spanning trip—from the jam-packed studios of New York to the athletic performance labs of the University of Oregon to the stage at the National Yoga Asana Championship, where Lorr competes for glory.

The culmination of two years of research, and featuring hundreds of interviews with yogis, scientists, doctors, and scholars, *Hell-Bent* is a wild exploration. A look at the science behind a controversial practice, a story of greed, narcissism, and corruption, and a mind-bending tale of personal transformation, it is a book that will not only challenge your conception of yoga, but will change the way you view the fragile, inspirational limits of the human body itself.

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