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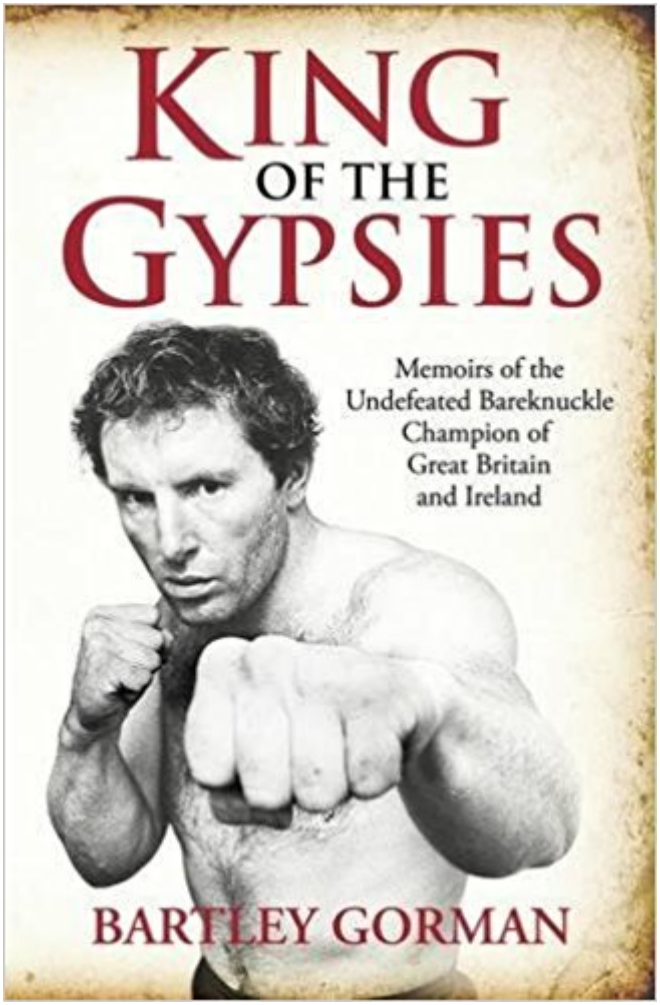
King Of The Gypsies: Memoirs Of The Undefeated Bareknuckle Champion Of Great Britain And Ireland



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Synopsis

Bartley Gorman was a legend in the brutal world of illegal prize-fighting, and this long-awaited auto-biography, with many unique photographs, lifts the lid on a secret sub-culture.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The current lineal heavyweight champion of the world is a chap who dresses like Batman at press conferences and also chooses to live in a mobile home rather than a mansion, or even in a house. He is a traveler, or in the vernacular of some, a gypsy. Now was as good a time as ever, then, for me to dive into the story of the prior "King of the Gypsies," an honorable and sad old soul named Bartley Gorman.His formal education ended early and he spent his youth painting barns in the summer (no mean feat for a redhead) and learning to be a bare-knuckle brawler. He fought for pride, money, and sometimes because when two men have high testosterone and high blood-alcohol content, that’s what they do. He also found God after seeing too many of his friends and family members die, and his main insight at the end of his own life was that love eventually conquers hate. It would be trite coming from almost anyone else, but like a bare-fisted version of Muhammad Ali, Bartley Gorman has a way of taking what should sound like a nursery rhyme and making proper poetry out of it.The story of the travelers is one that few know firsthand, and I’d wager that secondhand accounts (like the Guy Ritchie movie "Snatch") don’t even really begin to scratch the surface on a way of life in which fighting is critical, but no more important than any number of interesting folkways, beliefs, and traditions revealed throughout the course of this book.

Yes, the brawls described are graphic and fascinating (nipples twisted off, biceps bitten off, eyeballs and teeth lost), but it's all the other details that really surprised me and should make it required reading well outside the circumscribed borders of boxing fandom. Recommended.

I didn't live this guy's life, and I don't know how honest he was, but some of this is pretty far-fetched. Here is my rough impression:1. About 1/3 B.S.2. About 1/3 honest and excellent storytelling3. About 1/3 insight into Romani and Traveller lifestyles.Just the pictures are worth the price of entry. I will say this for the narrative, too: I couldn't put it down.

I enjoyed the book. It is not full of violence and nor is it gratuitous. Yes there are plenty of tales of violent encounters and stories of brutal bare knuckle fights, but not told with violent relish, or self gratification. In no way does it glorify the brutality of this age old human endeavour but in fact in many ways discourages it. Bartley Gorman comes across as a man from an era long since gone. He seemed a man who had accepted his destiny as one of the great bareknuckle fighters. He believed, it seemed, in honour, trust, loyalty and the right to live a free, happy life. He chose, via his gypsy family upbringing to carry on the family name and be one of the great bareknuckle fighters. But never to be cruel or vicious. He did it with a degree of self respect. It was something he seemed proud of. The old rules and the old ways. However he comes across as a man not like other violent men. He comes across as a humble man, with a great love of family, tradition and fairness. Never the bully, nor the coward. Never one for mindless violence but if you chose to challenge him, he would rise to the occasion and with every last ounce of his spirit defeat you in combat. He denounces the violence, almost wishing he had taken a different course and in many ways is the melancholy champ who on reaching his goal of being the very best, is unhappy with the journey or the position he is in. Saddened by the violence it brought to him and the never ending challenges of violence even as he got older and wished to chose a peaceful retirement. I liked this book as it seemed an honest, simple account of a tough man with a big heart who lived his life in the way he thought best having been dealt the hand he was. I think I would have liked Bartley if I met him. He had principles.

Outstanding story, very well written. A good read.

This book was interesting to me for two reasons. The first reason being that I love biographies/autobiographies about fighters and the way they live so this book was no exception.

The second reason I found it interesting was because it opened my eyes to a whole culture of people that I never even knew existed. All I knew about Gypsies were the old lady Meleva from The Wolf Man and Brad Pitt's character Mickey from Snatch. Well it turns out that the way Guy Ritchie depicts the gypsies in that movie is pretty dead on. Anyway, I have sort of a spoiler so if you don't want to know how the book ends do not read any further. I was pretty sad when i got to the end of the book. By the time you get to the end you feel like you've known the author Bartley Gorman, his family and his friends. Bartley became very ill shortly before finishing the book and talks about it. He died not long after finishing the book, so you get the feeling like you were sitting next to him listening to his life story right before he passed away. For me that was pretty sad. So anyway if you like to read true stories about fighters and fighting you will probably like this book, because practically every page talks about someone fighting. In fact the only thing I didn't really like about it was at one point he went on about all these old time fighters and it was just like "and this guy fought that guy and that guy fought this guy who fought the great fighter Joe smith who fought..." for a few pages. Other than that it wa a good read for me.

Once I started I couldn't put it down! I grew up around the areas described in Bartley Gorman and it brought backs lot of memories.Only wish we could learn more about Bartley himself and not just about how good a fighter he was!R.I.P Bartley Gorman V " King of the Gypsies

Great read and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

I saw this in the suggestion part when i was buying another book and i have heard of the main guy from a documentry on netflix called knuckle. Good book read it all the way through. I would recomend if interested in the sport.

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