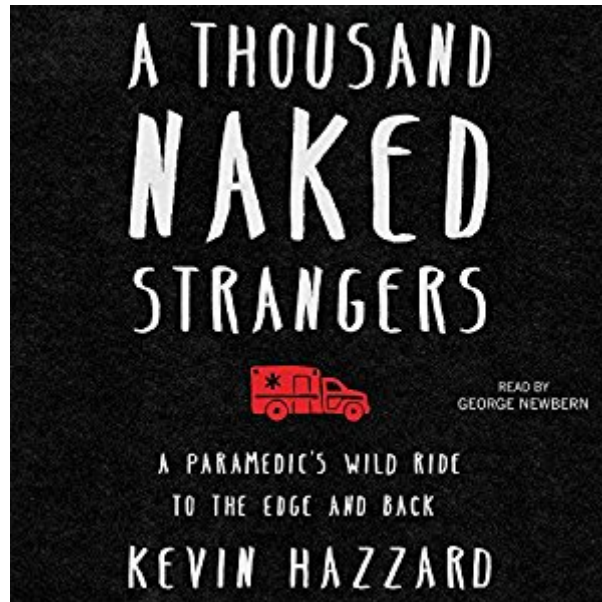


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A Thousand Naked Strangers: A Paramedic's Wild Ride To The Edge And Back



Synopsis

A former paramedic's visceral, poignant, and mordantly funny account of a decade spent on Atlanta's mean streets saving lives and connecting with the drama and occasional beauty that lies inside catastrophe. In the aftermath of 9/11, Kevin Hazzard felt that something was missing from his life - his days were too safe, too routine. A failed salesman turned local reporter, he wanted to test himself, see how he might respond to pressure and danger. He signed up for emergency medical training and became, at age 26, a newly minted EMT running calls in the worst sections of Atlanta. His life entered a different realm - one of blood, violence, and amazing grace. Thoroughly intimidated at first and frequently terrified, he experienced on a nightly basis the adrenaline rush of walking into chaos. But in his downtime, Kevin reflected on how people's facades drop away when catastrophe strikes. As his hours on the job piled up, he realized he was beginning to see into the truth of things. There is no pretense five beats into a chest compression or in an alley next to a crack den or on a dimly lit highway where cars have collided. Eventually, what had at first seemed impossible happened: Kevin acquired mastery. And in the process he was able to discern the professional differences between his freewheeling peers, what marked each - as he termed them - as a "tourist", "true believer", or "killer". Combining indelible scenes that remind us of life's fragile beauty with laugh-out-loud moments that keep us smiling through the worst, *A Thousand Naked Strangers* is an absorbing listen about one man's journey of self-discovery - a trip that also teaches us about ourselves.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Nonfiction > Social Science

Customer Reviews

Kevin Hazzard, having already held positions in sales and journalism, decided in 2004 to take an Emergency Medical Services course at a local technical college. He passed the National Registry Exam and was hired as an EMT; later he would get the additional training needed to become a paramedic. Hazzard gives us a taste of the nine years he spent in Atlanta "running calls" in *A Thousand Naked Strangers*, a grisly, darkly humorous, profane, and at times poetic look at what it is like to live on the edge. Why would anyone willingly rush to pick up the pieces in the aftermath of violent domestic disputes; drug overdoses; horrific traffic accidents; and attempted suicides? Even if an individual were desperate for employment, why settle for a low-paying and sometimes thankless job that is stressful and potentially dangerous? The author sheepishly admits that, for him, altruism had very little to do with it. What kept him going was the camaraderie he developed with his partners and the challenge of dealing with crises successfully. Some EMTs get a high out of bringing men, women, and children back from the brink of death following a horrific car accident; delivering babies whose mothers go into labor sooner than expected; and knowing exactly what to do in situations that require experience, know-how, and the ability to act quickly under pressure. Hazzard's energetic, colorful, and punchy writing style (he makes excellent use of sentence fragments) has an intensity and immediacy that is electrifying. This is an unsettling work of non-fiction that will appeal to readers who want to see what an EMT sees and feel what he feels when the worst occurs.

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