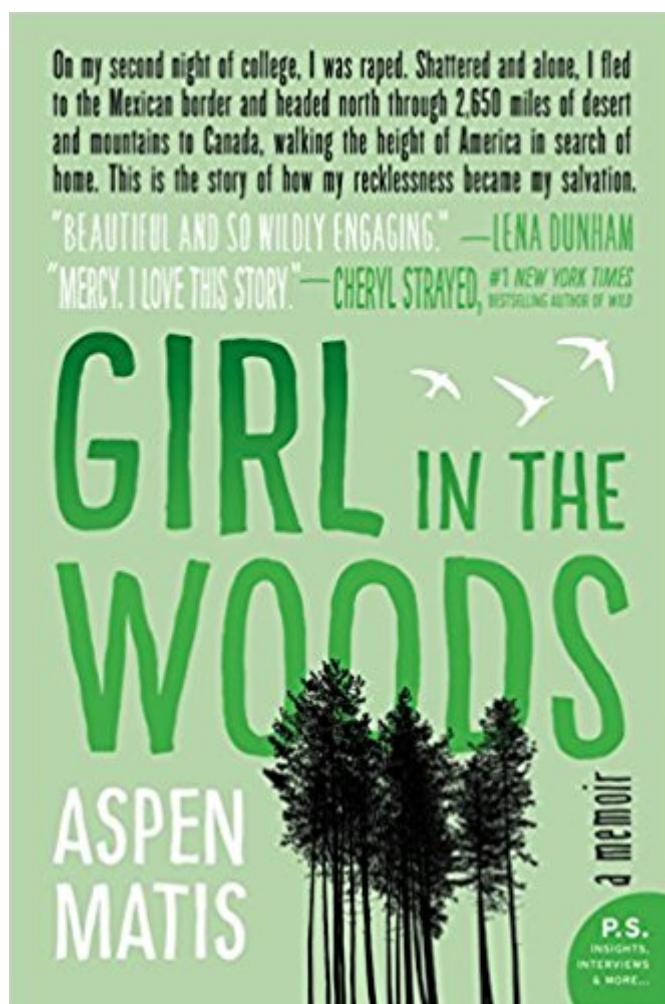


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Girl In The Woods: A Memoir



Synopsis

Girl in the Woods is Aspen Matis' exhilarating true-life adventure of hiking from Mexico to Canada—a coming-of-age story, a survival story, and a triumphant story of overcoming emotional devastation. On her second night of college, Aspen was raped by a fellow student. Overprotected by her parents who discouraged her from speaking of the attack, Aspen was confused and ashamed. Dealing with a problem that has sadly become all too common on college campuses around the country, she stumbled through her first semester—a challenging time made even harder by the coldness of her college's "conflict mediation" process. Her desperation growing, she made a bold decision: She would seek healing in the freedom of the wild, on the 2,650-mile Pacific Crest Trail leading from Mexico to Canada. In this inspiring memoir, Aspen chronicles her journey, a five-month trek that was ambitious, dangerous, and transformative. A nineteen-year-old girl alone and lost, she conquered desolate mountain passes and met rattlesnakes, bears, and fellow desert pilgrims. Exhausted after each thirty-mile day, at times on the verge of starvation, Aspen was forced to confront her numbness, coming to terms with the sexual assault and her parents' disappointing reaction. On the trail she found her strength, and after a thousand miles of solitude, she found a man who helped her learn to love and trust again—and heal.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Beautiful and so wildly engaging." (Lena Dunham)
"Brave and poetic. Aspen Matis is one of the few genetic writers." (Ben Folds, frontman of Ben Folds Five)
"A

lovely tribute to the healing power of wilderness. (Nicholas Kristof, winner of the Pulitzer Prize) "This is a very brave book" •because there is an open wound in Girl in the Woods, and it never really closes. It becomes a new organ •of doubt, questioning •that remakes both the body and the mind. (Greil Marcus, Rolling Stone rock critic and New York Times bestselling author) "Aspen Matis reveals wisdoms that are gems" •bright and inspiring. This book will astonish you. (Shelly Oria, author of New York 1, Tel Aviv 0) "Soulful, heartfelt, and transcendent. Girl in the Woods teaches us that writing is a way to heal, empower ourselves, and turn our worst experiences into beautiful art." (Kenan Trebincevic, author of The Bosnia List) Mercy. I love this story. (Cheryl Strayed, #1 New York Times bestselling author of Wild) "Girl in the Woods is a breathtaking, gorgeous and profoundly wise book. I cried my way through it. Every young woman, old woman, man and boy should read it." (Bonnie Nadzam, author of Lamb, winner of the Center for Fiction's First Novel Prize) "A mesmerizing journey from tragedy to triumph. Aspen shows us how any girl •even the once lost and disempowered •can transform herself and become the director of her own life." (Caity Lotz, actress, award-winning AMC show Mad Men) "Told with exceptional beauty and extraordinary confidence. Matis is a once-in-a-generation talent." (Bryan Hurt, author of Everyone Wants to Be an Ambassador to France) "Compelling and intense... should be essential reading in dorm rooms across the country." (Interview Magazine) "Gripping...a must-read." (Cosmopolitan) "Matis writes vividly of the culture of the PCT •the special treats the locals put out for hikers to find, called trail magic, or the angels •who host hikers in small towns along the way •and she is bold in her willingness to expose her psychic wounds." (Kirkus Reviews) "Engrossing...suspenseful....rewarding." (Booklist) "A brave book by a brave wild child writer. Matis' journey is more than a riveting trip up the Pacific Crest Trail, it's a story of a young woman who won't let anything -be it rattlesnakes or ignorance about the trauma of rape- stop her from rediscovering her own power." (Leigh Newman, author of Still Points North) "Rebirth is palpable." (Library Journal) "An important book of hope and healing." (Abby Sher, author of Amen, Amen, Amen) "With the pacing of a page-turning novel, Matis has written an emotionally honest, poignant and poetic debut memoir." (Alice Feiring, author of The Battle for Wine and Love) "Girl In The Woods is eminently compelling, and taken as a whole is a valuable portrait of an actual human" •experience that hides in a rape statistic. (AV)

Club) " [An] excellent memoir." (Dover Post) " ...a triumphant journey that ELLE readers found "beautifully written, gripping, and brave." (Elle) " ...a story about the power to overcome a crippling emotional trauma..." (Pop Sugar) " ...a bold story of a woman finding her strength and self-reliance that is told with honesty and intensity." (Bust Magazine) "Matis writes with a rawness that refuses to hold back...filled with small moments of awe...I was struck by how far she had come" (she seemed years more mature than the young woman at the start of the journey. Girl in the Woods is a touching memoir that...unleashes clarity." (Ms. magazine)

In 2008, Aspen Matis left behind her quaint Massachusetts town for a school two thousand miles away. Eager to escape her childhood as the sheltered baby girl of her family, Aspen wanted to reinvent herself at college. She hoped that far from home she'd meet friends who hadn't known her high school meekness; she would explore thrilling newfound freedom, blossom, and become a confident adult. But on her second night on campus, all those hopes were obliterated when Aspen was raped by a fellow student. The academic year commenced; Aspen felt alone now, devastated. She stumbled through her first college semester. Her otherwise loving and supportive parents discouraged her from speaking of the attack; her university's "conflict mediation" process for handling sexual assaults was callous and ineffectual. Aspen was confused, ashamed, and uncertain about how to deal with a problem that has disturbingly become common at institutions of higher learning throughout the country. Her desperation growing, she made a bold decision: she fled. She dropped out and sought healing in the freedom of the wild, on the 2,650-mile Pacific Crest Trail leading from Mexico to Canada. In this important and inspiring memoir, Aspen chronicles an ambitious five-month trek that was as dangerous as it was transformative. Forced to survive on her own for the first time, squarely facing her trauma and childhood, she came to realize that the rape was not the only shameful burden she carried with her as she walked. She found herself on a new expedition: to confront and overcome the confines that had bound her since long before her second night at college. A nineteen-year-old girl alone and adrift, Aspen conquered desolate mountain passes and met rattlesnakes, bears, and fellow desert pilgrims. Among the snowcaps and the forests of America's West, she found the confidence that had eluded her all her life. After a thousand miles of solitude, she met a man who helped her learn to love, trust, and heal. Then from the endless woods she blazed a new path to the future she wanted and reclaimed it. What emerges is an unflinching portrait of a girl in the aftermath of rape. Told with elegance and suspense, Girl in the Woods is a beautifully rendered story of

emotional and physical boundaries eroding to reveal the truths that lie beyond the edges of the map.

--This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

I was interested in the topic of walking the Pacific Coast Trail, and this book fed my interest, but also proved to be a great fascinating profile of a young woman's personal growth. It is rare that I am so sorry when I finish a book, but this was one of those rare occasions. The book was an easy read with beautiful use of the English language describing the author's growth, time on the trail, and meeting of great real people who were easy to see via Matis beautiful descriptions. I felt like I had been on her journey with her, loved her finding herself, and in general the beginning to the end was so absorbing I stayed up all night to finish the book! Wonderful, inspiring read! Probably one of the best books I have read it will stay with me always! Thank you Debby, Wild Child, and Aspen Matis. Your husband was right you have a genius of a gift!

This book takes through all the emotions you have, which, is probably all the emotions one would expect to experience on any long-distance trek. It was a great representation of struggles unique to females, a little bit of 19-year old ignorance, and true grit. It helped me process some of the reasons why I am attempting to hike the Appalachian Trail in 2017 and gave me hope needed to complete my hike. It gives a good description of the daily struggles (much better than Wild if you are looking for an accurate description of trail struggles for a more experienced hiker) but also has a great narrative voice. If I remember correctly, she really did her homework in regards to previous female thru-hiker writers on the PCT which I appreciated.

A true story that many women can relate too..The author does a great job capturing her time coping with being a victim of rape while hiking the PCT. As a victim of rape, who happens to love the outdoors, I realllly related to her experience. She has inspired me to speak to a professional about my experience and get outside more!If you are a victim of rape, know it is not your fault, and there is help if you need it!Here is the number to the National Sexual Assault Telephone Hotline (800-656-HOPE (4637))

Such a brave girl for both taking on such a challenging hike and for speaking so candidly about rape. Love that proceeds from the sale of the book go to help others. Aspen's descriptive writing makes you feel like you are there. I had no idea the PCT existed let alone trail magic and trail angels. I carry more in my purse than Aspen carried on that trip!!

Compared to other trail memoirs this book contrasted heavily. She shared her most intimate moments with the readers. It almost seemed that she hadn't even "lived" yet until she started her journey on the trail. I have my personal opinions about her trek but overall the descriptive writing allowed me to understand where she was coming from and what she was looking for

I didn't know what to think when I started reading this book. Some of the reviews were good but some friends weren't really crazy about it. As I began reading about the mother over protecting the daughter (doing essentially everything for her to the point where the girl couldn't even comb her own hair), I feared I had made a grave mistake in starting this book. Then I quickly found that I couldn't put the book down. 70% of it I finished on the final day of reading. The first 30% was just before sleep. Being a walker, I loved the story itself. I slept on this review and book last nite & just couldn't get it out of my head. Oh, how I wish I had heard of the PCT when I was younger. I'm lifting the score to a 5. It deserves it in my personal opinion.

This story is about an inexperienced mother over mothered teenage girl. The PCT (PACIFIC CREST TRAIL) hurls challenge after challenge at her. She gains confidence in herself becoming a self reliant young woman. This is not a story about the PCT as much as it is her transformation.

It is not often you read someone's memoir and appreciate them fully for their growth, struggle, mistakes and breakthroughs. This book - this story - is one of those times you can give your whole heart to a story and know that this person became what they were destined to despite overwhelming adversity. I will be recommending this to anyone and everyone I know. ☺

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