

(Free read ebook) Mack the Life

## Mack the Life

*Lee Mack*

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**Lee Mack : Mack the Life** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mack the Life:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Mack's Mix of Anecdotes and Analysis By Jaime Nelson When Lee Macks autobiography, Mack the Life, arrived in the post, I thought What the hell kind of editor let a comedian get away with his first book clocking in at 415 pages? I was recently the editor of a comedy memoir, and one thing I

learned from researching the genre was that readers don't want more than 250 pages of listening to you. Even Lee Mack says he only does one half of a standup show (meaning no intermission) because that's more than enough to ask of people to sit through listening to one person. However, despite my initial reaction, the 415 pages flew by, and when I got to the end, I wished there were more pages because I was sad it was over. Mack the Life is a chronological telling of Lee Mack (ne McKillop)'s life from growing up in a pub to today's status of one of Britain's best liked comedians. It's strictly a how I got into comedy with a bit of psychoanalysis thrown in book, and so does not go into family life or much else. This is a self-aware book. You get the sense that Lee Mack has a first-time-author glee, as he will sometimes purposely leave in typos because he found them amusing when coming across them in the proofread. He will footnote certain marker points, like 70,000 with a Jaffa Cake reward. He doesn't do research and admits his ignorance if he forgets someone's name or has made something up because he doesn't actually know how it works. He's also a comedian who likes to second-guess his audience, as you'll know if you're familiar with his 'some wanker always says comedian t-shirt routine, so in the book you'll find gags like this one: "Comedians don't go round seeing funny things, they see things that they can make funny. There's an important difference. In fact, some comedians do the almost impossible and see funny things that they then make unfunny, but enough of \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in your own name according to who you dislike. And if you're thinking of putting my name in there, count the dashes. I'm ahead of you.)" Although there are a lot of interesting pre-showbiz stories riding Red Rum, being fired from the bluecoats for calling the audience the C-word, training to be a professional darts player, the book really peaks once Mack starts to break into the industry. That first moment he was ever in a comedy club and got to see the likes of Eddie Izzard and Steve Coogan, how his career kicked off with a live sketch show he did with Catherine Tate, how Steve Coogan later offered him a TV gig based on those sketches, how he was cast in the American remake of that show opposite Kelsey Grammer, and the agonizing scenes of his So You Think You're Funny performance going horribly wrong from inside a prop wardrobe. Mack's analysis of showbiz is thorough (and largely what I was hoping most to read about). He talks about the differences between actors and comedians who act, sitcoms vs. realism comedy dramas, and American sitcoms vs. British sitcoms. If there's anything missing from this section, it's characterization. Although he seems to have liked a lot of people, you get no sense of what it was like to work with Catherine Tate? for example. You get very little real-time scenes, except for the wardrobe scene, of course. It's hard to tell if this is something he could have improved upon or if it was a conscious decision because he thought characterization wasn't relevant or it was dangerous from a legal standpoint. In the same way that Hot Fuzz highlights paperwork because it takes up most of police officers' time yet is never mentioned in films and TV, Mack the Life highlights the writing process because a key to comedy success is making the jokes look effortless, which means it's easy to forget (and yet essential to forget) that most of a comedian's time is spent writing. We see in detail the thought process that went into creating the characters, situation, and plot of the Not Going Out pilot, as though we are experiencing his brainstorm in real time. One of the best parts of the book is when he gives us a bunch of his awful early one-liners. Picking up a rubber snake and doing a deliberately bad ventriloquist act saying "One plus one is two, two plus two is four, four plus four is eight. Then, looking at the audience, I would say 'He's an adder.'" Creating Not Going Out is personally my favorite part of the book. In many ways, the British sitcom (as a genre) was dead by the time Not Going Out started shooting, but that's why they did it. Mack talks about his research in creating the sitcom, how he'd been directed that there needs to be a joke a page, but when he looked at American sitcoms, which have a big team of writers instead of just one like British sitcoms, he realized they needed a lot more than just one joke per page. He goes on to talk about casting and how he preferred working with comedians who could act rather than actors who could deliver a joke. His original co-star left after one season, which he blames on himself for being difficult to work with as a control freak, but also recognizes an underlying problem of cultural differences (her being American and him being Lancastrian). In fact, if you are American, this may be a very good bio for you to read because of the occasional musings on the differences between British and American comedy/showbiz/psyches. Mack has nothing but wonderful things to say about his current co-stars and talks about how happy he is that his cast are all normal people. This is something else I like about the book: He recognizes the difference between telly people and normal people. He's annoyed that telly people are all yes-men who will tell you that your ideas are great even if they aren't, when all he wants, as a writer, is some proper, truthful feedback. He's also a comedian who has said that his real friends (save perhaps Sean Lock and Catherine Tate) are not comedians. I like that he's able to take a few paces back from showbiz and recognize that it isn't how the rest of the world functions and it isn't a world he wants to be completely consumed by. Although this book isn't about his family, you definitely come away from it understanding that his wife and three kids are his priority and he looks forward to retiring early so he can potter about the house and eat chocolate in the shed. Finally, each chapter ends with a transcription of meetings he had with a psychologist who read an earlier draft of the book. He hired her in hopes of adding some depth to the book (which he says he did go back and retool the book some after meeting with her). Toward the beginning of the book, she diagnoses him with ADHD and explains his self-preservation, likely built up in reaction to his father walking out on his family. Mack's distracted thoughts intermingle with the dialogue. After these initial sessions, the later psychologist segments just serve as devices for gags, such as admitting he changed something she said to make him look better. I wish these sections went more into depth, but what I found most interesting was his

own self analysis. He recognizes that he (as well as many comedians) value the trait of being funny as more important (and sometimes it is the only important trait) than anything else, like being kind or loyal. I can relate to this. I was recently asked how my job interview went. I replied, I made the HR person laugh a few times. I thought nothing strange about my response until I read Mack the Life and realized that that is not the traditional response to someone asking how a job interview went. Usually people talk about the questions or their answers, showing up on time, whether they were asked back. I realized that I responded to the question in the way I did because coming across as funny was really the only thing I valued. Before I read Mack the Life, I'd heard that Lee Mack had written the book completely on his own, no ghostwriter (possibly no developmental editor either?), so as a developmental editor myself, I was wary to the quality of the writing. There were definitely things that could have been edited, as he does that thing that comics do where they write the same thing two or three times but in different ways. I think this must come from writing for the stage because if you can get three consecutive laughs by saying the same thing in three different ways, that's three times the laughs you would have gotten by saying it once. The book medium doesn't have the same rules because it's not about quantity of laughs but about moving the story and giving the reader new information. This is a minor point and something other comedian book writers do sometimes. Overall, the book is well-written. He doesn't get in the way of his writing more than he needs to, he manages to address the reader directly without turning the reader off, and he keeps the prose lively with surprising gags that will make you laugh out loud in a crowded train. As much as he dances around the ending, discussing the difficulties in ending a book (so difficult, in fact, he wanted to do two books so that he could put off writing the ending), it actually has the perfect tone. It's slowed down. It's slightly reflective but mostly opinionated, conversational. You can almost hear the fasten seatbelt sign ding on as the plane gets ready to relax into its final descent. I know, not a good metaphor as Lee Mack is afraid of flying. I reviewed this book on Across the Pond TV: [...] 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I enjoyed reading this book as I am a great fan ... By origami I enjoyed reading this book as I am a great fan of Lee Mack. I liked the first half of the book more than I liked the second half - that is, the part where he recounts of his time before he found fame. I would have really liked him to talk about his colleagues in Would I Lie to You, but they are not mentioned. I would recommend this book for fans of the quick wit of this charming comedian. I appreciated the honesty and humility with which this book was written. The author did not mince his words when he described the gruelling writing process - that it is really hard work. I think that aspiring artists would appreciate this recount - he puts it plainly that to establish oneself one needs to work hard. He also admits that making it into TV was by coincidence and that he considers himself a comedian first and foremost. A truly inspiring book. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Pretty good story By Customer Pretty good story, with perhaps some more of his personal inner thoughts needed. I liked the interchange between Lee and the psychiatrist, and found that to be the aspect that lifted the book out of the ordinary. Lee should try writing a fictional book, which would allow him to freely express his wacky and brilliant sense of humour.

A brilliant, heartfelt and hilarious insight into the life of one of our most popular comedians. Lee Mack is not just another comedian with a book. He is one of the UK's most recognisable and celebrated stand-ups. His energy, finely crafted one-liners, and lightning quick ad-libs are second to none, and his solo tours sell out wherever he plays. Autumn 2006 saw the successful launch of Lee's own sitcom Not Going Out on BBC 1 with the first series winning both the Break-Through Award at the RTS Awards and the Gold Rose D'or award for Best Sitcom. This hugely popular show is now on its fifth series with a 6th series scheduled for filming this autumn. It's regularly watched by over 4 million viewers. So what's the story? Lee's early life after leaving school involved time working in a bingo hall and as a stableboy. After working at the stable for three days he asked if he could try and ride a horse; the trainer, Ginger McCain, agreed and the first horse he ever rode was Red Rum. Lee went on to have various other jobs (including a Bluecoat at Pontins and a dog whisperer), and did his first open mike slot in 1994. So far so good. But as anyone who's seen Lee's stand-up will attest, Lee is a natural story teller. He is widely loved and his book will be an absolute corker. And you can bet your bottom dollar that it will be at the very top of Xmas present wishlists up and down the country this autumn.

"A first-class comic. His autobiography, Mack the Life, has all the cheerful candour of one of his barnstorming shows. Mack has polished this narrative until it shines, and his book is a joy to read, full of homespun wisdom and hilarious asides." Independent About the Author LEE MACK is one of the UK's most recognisable and celebrated comics. His relentless determination to have fun is marvellously infectious, and leaves his audiences exhausted by laughter. His energy, finely crafted one-liners, and quick ad-libs create an elusive star quality. Lee is a team captain on returning series Would I Lie To You (BBC One) appearing alongside David Mitchell and Rob Brydon. He has also won a BAFTA for his contribution to The Sketch Show (ITV1) and was host of They Think It's All Over (BBC One) and two series of The Lee Mack Show on BBC Radio 2 (nominated for a Sony Award). Lee has frequently appeared on Have I Got News for You, Never Mind the Buzzcocks, Live at The Apollo, QI, Friday Night with Jonathan Ross and The

Royal Variety Performance.