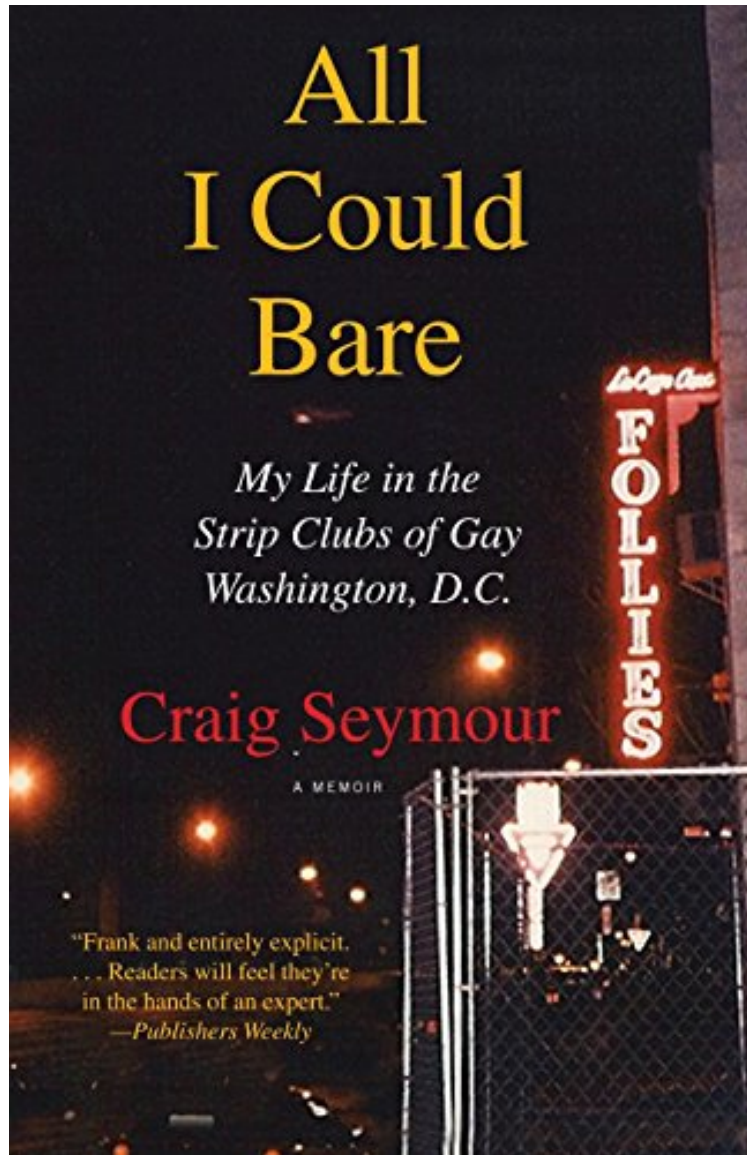


[Mobile library] All I Could Bare: My Life in the Strip Clubs of Gay Washington, D.C.

All I Could Bare: My Life in the Strip Clubs of Gay Washington, D.C.

Craig Seymour

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Craig Seymour : All I Could Bare: My Life in the Strip Clubs of Gay Washington, D.C. before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised All I Could Bare: My Life in the Strip Clubs of Gay Washington, D.C.:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A quick readBy Michael T.All I Could Bare is a light-hearted

coming-of-age story in tube socks. Craig Seymours masters thesis at University of Maryland led him first to visit the citys strip clubs for research and ultimately to get on stage himself. He paints an endearing portrait of a seedy 90s Washington, where he found himself and learned skills that would later aid him as an entertainment journalist. Its a quick, entertaining read probably of most interest to those that appreciate Washington as a city. Though fun, nothing in the book is particularly shocking.5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Authentically revealing, but . . .By Danniray99On the surface, Craig Seymour's "All I Could Bare," is simply a coming-of-age chronicle of his adventures as a gay stripper in the late 80's and early 90's, in the notorious, no-holds-barred gay nightclubs of downtown Washington, D.C., a scene which had flourished in plain sight for more than two decades. The book briefly traces the neighborhood's historical development and notoriety as a gay mecca and offers up some interesting, if not entirely original, composites of characters. These range from (gay and "straight") chiseled poster boys--who gleefully profited from the attentions (and the hefty tips) of their rapturous admirers--to the largely diverse and self-aware crowd of "sugar daddies" who avidly sought, paid for and indulged in sexual fantasies elsewhere denied them. But "All I Could Bare" is actually a time-honored search for self, identity, a sense of place and community, the quest to make sense of it all. In contrast to the work of the controversial "gay" author John Rechy, there are no kernels of nihilism here: Seymour inevitably manages to wean himself from the nightclubs (though never quite entirely), gradually morphing into a skillful entertainment journalist and, later still, forging a successful career in academia (Rechy also parlayed his vast experience--and his existential angst--as a gay hustler into a profitable academic sideline). All told, Seymour's journey is a bona fide--albeit improbable-- success story told with a great sense of humor and insight. For all its merits, however, the memoir is not faultless. Despite his frankness, Seymour is pathologically selfish, as when he describes the painful break-up of a long-term relationship and scarcely pauses to acknowledge the shattering effect that his obsession with stripping had on his partner. I also wish Seymour had been more forthcoming about the minefield of race relations within the gay community. As a Black man light enough to pass as Latino or "other" than Black, Seymour himself appears to have been exclusively attracted to Whites. For all his self-examination, he offers little to explain his obvious compulsion to seek White (beauty-standard) validation--something that no amount of nurturing from his attentive Black family could assuage. Moreover, his tendency to skim over the persistent problem of gay racism begs the question of whether he would have had such a rewarding run as a stripper if he had not often been assumed to be any other nationality. Indeed, a less amiable writer might have challenged or at least pondered this unsavory aspect of the culture more deeply. These foibles matter, especially in a book that literally and figuratively proclaims full-frontal disclosure. And yet in all other aspects, "All I Could Bare" feels authentic and true. The book is so engrossing that I could not put it down, and it took only a few hours to read. For better or worse, this is one memoir that offers a relatively sunny tour of a very peculiar fun-house that is never less than fascinating.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A very fun read!By mtaabqThis is an easy breezy read and it's a lot of fun. There's enough "backstage dish" to satisfy anyone who has wanted to know what goes on behind-the-scenes at male strip clubs that cater to men. Seymour talks about his customers and the other dancers in a frank, candid and friendly way. He obviously has no axe to grind with the owners or operators; simply put Seymour took up stripping as a topic for his master's thesis but found he was good at it and, at times, made good money. I found the depictions of the other dancers and the customers fascinating. I tore through it in about a day and a half and now I'm going through it again. A light read but a hell of a lot of fun.

Now in paperback, the frank, funny, explicit, and inspiring memoir about how dancing naked in gay clubs in the nations capital helped a college professor discover his true self. All I Could Bare is the story of a mild-mannered graduate student who took the road less clothed, a decision that would change his life forever. In the 1990s, when Washington, D.C.s gay club scene was notoriously no-holds-barred, Craig Seymour embarked on his incredible journey, all the while trying to keep his newfound vocation a secret from his parents and maintain a relationship with his boyfriend, Seth. Along the way he met some unforgettable characters: the fifty-year-old divorced man whos obsessed with a twenty-one-year-old dancer; the celebrated drag diva who hailed from a small town in rural Virginia; and the many straight guys who were gay for pay. Seymour gives readers both the highs (money, adoration, camaraderie) and the lows (an ill-fated attempt at prostitution, a humiliating porn audition). Ultimately coming clean about his secret identity, Seymour breaks through taboos and makes his way from booty-baring stripper to Ph.D.-bearing academic, taking a detour into celebrity journalism and memorably crossing paths with Janet Jackson, Mariah Carey, and Mary J. Blige along the way. Hilarious, insightful, and touching, All I Could Bare proves that sometimes the wrong decision can lead to the right place.

From Publishers WeeklyIf an account of one's tour of duty as a stripper and sometimes prostitute in seedy downtown Washington, D.C. gay clubs could ever be called "breezy," Seymour's achieved it. Sure to please the hedonistic gay man in (almost) all of us, Seymour is frank and entirely explicit as he chronicles his journey from diligent Masters' candidate (developing a thesis on gay strip clubs) to onstage talent working every night to make a living. Unafraid to bare it all, in person and in prose, Seymour details his brief foray into prostitution as well as the (very) personal stories

of his fellow dancers. Seymour can dissemble, first pinning his stripping career on low self-esteem, but later admitting to some early success with more traditional dancing and acting; it becomes clear that the author is a bit of a narcissist, but a charming one. The last fifty pages, accounting for his subsequent work as a celebrity interviewer, are pure filler; when he sticks to the clubs, though, readers will feel they're in the hands of an expert. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "Part sexy parable, part witty reminiscence, part informative history lesson, *All I Could Bare* is a captivating introspective into a world we all have pondered. Unflinchingly honest, Seymour shows that there's far more to being naked than taking off one's clothes." -- Josh Kilmer-Purcell, author of the New York Times bestseller *I Am Not Myself These Days* and *Candy Everybody Wants* "A clever and candid look into the world of gay male stripping that is infectious, irreverent, and ultimately inspiring." -- Stewart Lewis, author of *Rockstarlet* "Witty, humorous, and filled with the guilty indulgence of an unadulterated insider's view...a cunning memoir of what most gay men search for -- to be desired, and hot boys." -- Terrance Dean, author of *Hiding in Hip Hop* About the Author Craig Seymour is a professor of journalism at Northern Illinois University. A contributing writer for *The Washington Post*, *Entertainment Weekly*, and other publications, he lives in Providence, Rhode Island.