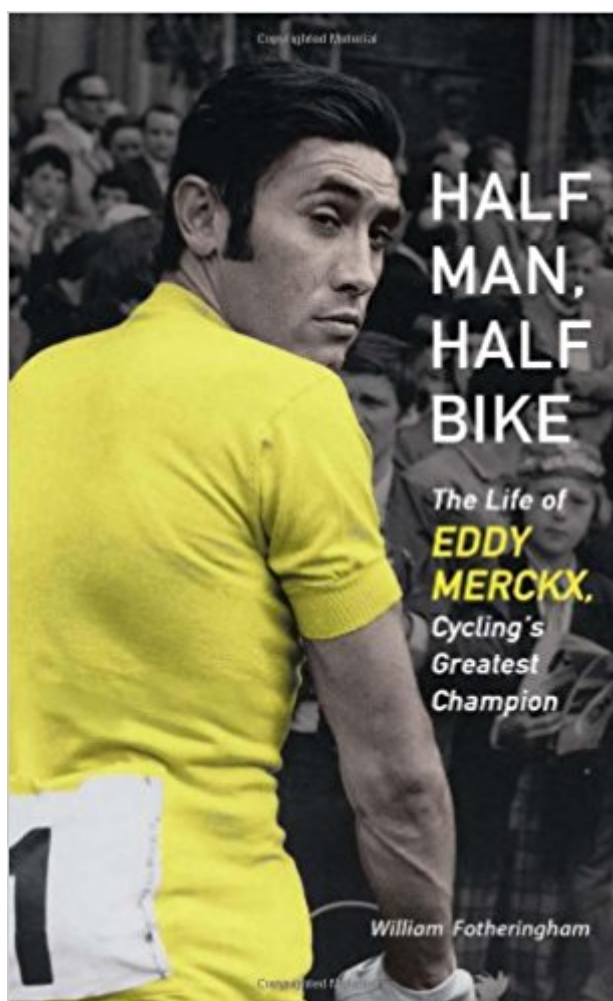


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# Half Man, Half Bike: The Life Of Eddy Merckx, Cycling's Greatest Champion



## Synopsis

Eddy Merckx is to cycling what Muhammad Ali is to boxing or Pele to soccer: He simply the best there has ever been. Merckx amassed an astonishing 445 victories. Lance Armstrong, by comparison, managed fewer than 100. Merckx didn't just beat his opponents; he crushed them. But his triumphs only tell half a story that includes horrific injury, a doping controversy, and tragedy. He was nicknamed "the Cannibal" for his insatiable appetite for victory, but the moniker did scant justice to a man who was handsome, sensitive, and surprisingly anxious. A number-one bestseller in the United Kingdom, *Half Man, Half Bike* is the definitive story of a man whose fear of failure drove him to the highest pinnacles before ultimately destroying him.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Within the world of professional cycling, no name conjures such complete dedication and domination of the sport than that of Eddy Merckx – “the Cannibal” – Merckx, dubbed for his voracious appetite for winning. Fotheringham expertly traces Merckx’s career from his early races in Belgium to his successes at the Tour de France, painting a nuanced portrait of a man best described by his wife as “driven on by a power that was unique to him.” The power behind this account is Fotheringham’s skill in bringing Merckx’s races alive on the page. Woven throughout is a thoughtful discussion of the impact of Belgium’s ethnic divide between Flemish and French and its affect on Merckx’s career, as well as insightful

analysis of how Merckx's quiet and introverted personality helped to build his mystique. While Fotheringham clearly holds Merckx in high regard, he avoids the sycophantic tone of many sports biographies by placing Merckx within the wider cycling world at the time. This approach gives a rich depth to the book while still paying tribute to a remarkable athlete. --Eve Gaus

"Stirring." *The Guardian* •Graham Robb, author, *The Discovery of France and Parisians*, in *The Guardian*"Incredible reading. . . . A fascinating account." *Bike*

*Radar*"Fotheringham expertly traces Merckx's career from his early races in Belgium to his successes at the Tour de France, painting a nuanced portrait of a man best described by his wife as 'driven on by a power that was unique to him.' The power behind this account is Fotheringham's skill in bringing Merckx's races alive on the page." *Booklist*"The research is meticulous, the recapitulation of Merckx's races sweet reminiscences for those who witnessed them and things of wonder for those who did not. . . . To read about his feats is like reading of the labours of [Hercules]. . . .

Marvellous." *The New Statesman*"Superbly timed, researched, and written. . . . Fotheringham has authored more than a few excellent biographies of cycling's greats, but I think it only fair to say that he has excelled himself with this volume. Every now and again along comes a book that is well nigh impossible to put down. . . . Fotheringham's writing has surely reached its own apogee in this truly superb book." *The Washington Post*"Fotheringham, one of the most entertaining of cycling writers, provides interesting historical and political background. . . . This book is yet another quality title from Fotheringham; a fascinating story of, by any measure, the greatest competitive cyclist of them all." *Cyclo*"Extensively researched with insightful views of the man and athlete from fans, mentors, family, and rivals."

*London Cyclist*"A fascinating, often bleak portrait of a remarkable athlete and an unnerving man." *Sunday Times*

Too much details , kinda boring. Doesn't completely tell full stories, as if we knew the ending. It gives all this detail about a race and the final km's, then jumps to a new story without saying who the winners were.

I enjoyed reading this book. I had heard of Merckx like almost anyone that follows cycling even a little but I didn't know much more than him being praised as the greatest cyclist of all time. I wanted to know a bit more about him, his origins and his personality and his exploits during his racing

career. This book covered all those elements well. I left with a good overview of his career and of his style as a cyclist. The writing was clear and concise. I would recommend it to anyone who is interested in Merckx and his racing career.

This book was thoroughly entertaining and I actually learned a few things about the world of professional cycling. It's one that I will read again. Eddy was a real badass!

Plenty of interesting insight, but hundreds of pages of race results gets boring quickly

This was a birthday gift from my daughter who knows how much I love bicycling. I was skeptical when I started reading the book because I have read other biographies that were poorly written or I didn't care for the attitude of the cyclist (Lance Armstrong). If I were to find fault with this book it would be the lack of information about his wife. She needs a medal. I bought copies for my bicycling relatives.

I was an early teenager living in Belgium (live overseas now) when the Merckx era started. He certainly had a good influence on our generation. We didn't have time for naughty stuff, all that mattered was jumping on our bikes after school or during Holidays, race friends, pretending to be Merckx (I did). The writer reveals a lot of details of Merckx's career in his book. The drive, the ambition, the struggle of the Man. Details I was never aware of. My admiration for Eddy Merckx remains the same after all those years and it was nice to be able to look back at all the achievements of his. If you are a cycling fan or a Merckx fan, certainly worth reading.

I actually bought this book for my husband and he says that while it is interesting, he prefers books about professional bicycling that are written by the star of the book (for instance, a recently read book BY Laurent Fignon). I'm just pleased that he is back into reading again. Now I'm searching for more Tour de France riders personal accounts for him to read. Wish Bernard Hinault would write a book, also Miguel Indurain. Recommendations requested!

I am not and have never been a "bike rider" and know next to nothing about "the Tour de France" or other such events, but reading this book was amazing! What this guy accomplished during his career is staggering! I have read many books about different athletes but have never come across such a career in any sport! Quite amazing....I'm now looking for a bike!

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