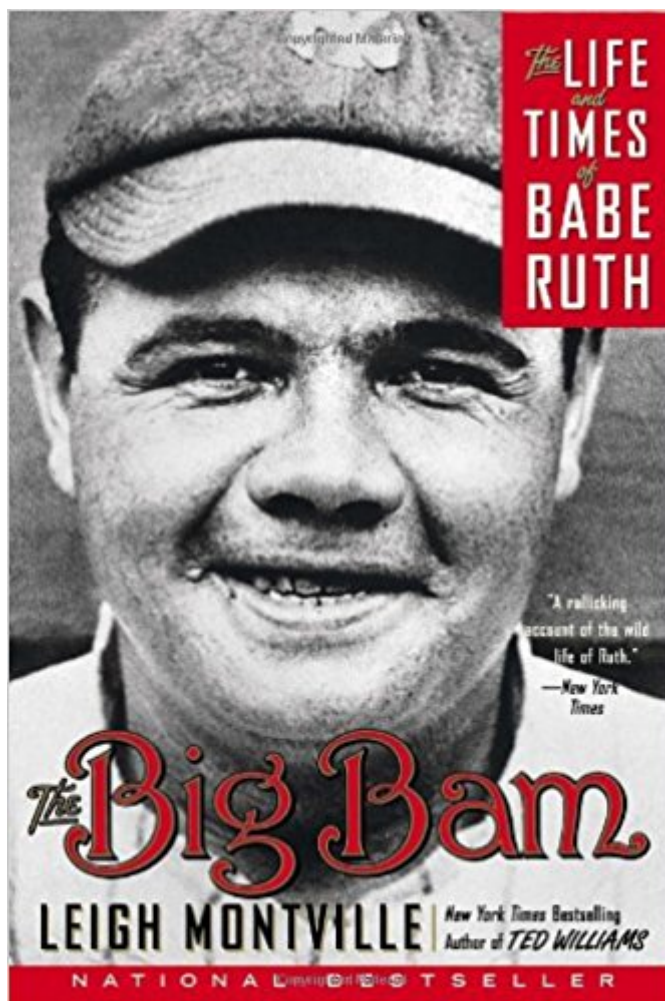


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The Big Bam: The Life And Times Of Babe Ruth



Synopsis

National Bestseller He was the Sultan of Swat. The Caliph of Clout. The Wizard of Whack. The Bambino. And simply, to his teammates, the Big Bam.™ Babe Ruth was more than baseball's original superstar. For eighty-five years, he has remained the sport's reigning titan. He has been named Athlete of the Century . . . more than once. But who was this large, loud, enigmatic man? Why is so little known about his childhood, his private life, and his inner thoughts? In *The Big Bam*, Leigh Montville, whose recent New York Times bestselling biography of Ted Williams garnered glowing reviews and offered an exceptionally intimate look at Williams's life, brings his trademark touch to this groundbreaking, revelatory portrait of the Babe. From the award-winning author of the New York Times bestseller *Ted Williams* comes the thoroughly original, definitively ambitious, and exhilaratingly colorful biography of the largest legend ever to loom in baseball—and in the history of organized sports. Based on newly discovered documents and interviews—including pages from Ruth's personal scrapbooks—*The Big Bam* traces Ruth's life from his bleak childhood in Baltimore to his brash entrance into professional baseball, from Boston to New York and into the record books as the world's most explosive slugger and cultural luminary.

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Customer Reviews

In this day of overamped salaries, statistics, and physiques, it's useful to be reminded of the singular talent and impact Babe Ruth brought to baseball during his career (1914-35). He owned most of the

hitting records for decades, including single-season and career home runs--and all this during the "dead ball" era. Even now, the baseball fan can only be awed by what Ruth accomplished, not to mention the adulation he engendered. And if Robert Creamer's highly readable Babe (1974) is still the benchmark biography, Montville (Ted Williams, 2004) brings fresh observations to his subject, one being that Ruth probably suffered from attention-deficit disorder, which accounts for his inexhaustible energy for everything from baseball to food to alcohol to sex, not necessarily in that order. And in his vivid account of the years Ruth spent at St. Mary's orphanage in Baltimore, Montville gives readers the measure of what made the man. Montville has also carefully sifted the factual from the hearsay, leaving us with a volume that's reliable, readable, and deserving of a place in the sports or American culture collection. Alan MooresCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“A comprehensive look at a gargantuan life.”
• People
“Montville is refreshingly nonjudgmental about his superstar subject.”
• First-rate biography.
• Los Angeles Times Book Review
“Crisp analogies and astute observations, combined with a fluid writing style, are Leigh Montville’s strengths in this definitive biography of the Splendid Splinter.”
• Montville’s writing is rich and full, like a Ted Williams swing.
• He connects solidly. A raw, no-holds-barred view of [Williams’s] life.
• Tampa Tribune
“An engaging, fascinating read.”
• San Diego Tribune
“Ted Williams is not only a first-rate sports biography, but also a first-rate biography, period.”
• Baltimore Sun

Leigh Montville provided us with the definitive biography of Ted Williams, and has now provided us with another masterpiece on Babe Ruth. I have several biographies of Ruth, but this one is the best. Montville does a wonderful job in describing how a crude individual from the city of Baltimore's St. Mary's Industrial School who was denied many things in his younger years was like a beagle turned loose in a swamp when he got out on his own to become a baseball player. The nocturnal delights of the big city were beckoning Ruth to burn the candle at both ends. Oh, but what a wonderful glow! Marriage proved to be a failure for Ruth since he didn't have the self discipline to live up to the vows. The trade to the Yankees to begin the 1920 season provided The Babe with more of the nighttime prowling he enjoyed, but the statistics he garnered proved he was in a league of his own in regard to battering a baseball. The 1925 season was a low point for Ruth as he fought with manager Miller Huggins, and was out of shape due to his off the field activities. He turned over a

new leaf to start the 1926 season, and with Lou Gehrig now batting behind him Ruth had his best years still ahead of him. Montville does a masterful job describing the sad decline of Ruth in his post baseball life when no job opened up to him of any consequence with the Yankees or with any other team. Hunting, fishing, bowling, and golf were his passions once his baseball career was over, but he never lost his longing to return to the diamond in a meaningful capacity. That chance, however, never came. The Babe was only 53 when he died on August 16, 1948. On page 355 the author lists Ty Cobb, Honus Wagner, and Christy Mathewson as the first inductees to the Baseball Hall of Fame in addition to Ruth. Walter Johnson should also have been listed. This book on Ruth in addition to the recent book entitled "Clemente" by David Maraniss have to be two of the very best biographies on baseball or any other individual for this year.

What an excellent book. I've read several books on the life of this baseball legend. So, why did I not give this a 5-star rating? I understand why Leigh Montville needed to use Ruth's nickname of "N...r Lips" when he was in the Baltimore orphans' home - for accuracy. This is understandable. However, Montville uses it repeatedly, throughout the early parts of the book, and again throughout the rest of the story. I believe that this was just for either shock value, or as a little kid would use it - "because he could". As for the actual book, Montville tells the story in fine fashion. He notes that much of Ruth's early life (and some of his later life) is a mystery. Rather than speculate what happened, as other writers have done), he simply notes that "the fog again covers this part of his life, and we don't know". Good for him! Ruth's life was an amazing story. Yes, he lived and played in an era when sportswriters didn't scrutinize players' lives as they do today. But, Ruth was one of a kind. A great story, if marred with his overuse of the slur.

I do not read a lot of sports books, but could not pass up this one after reading the many favorable reviews. I was not disappointed and agree that it is a fun, interesting and well researched look at the life of one of baseball's greatest stars. I can recall the many vivid tales of Babe Ruth from my father and uncles, although I never saw him play. This book brings his personality and talent to life in a way that does not judge, but simply lays out the facts of his life in a most engrossing way. The author does an excellent job of placing Ruth within the context of his times and the development of baseball as America's "national pastime," enabling the reader to understand clearly the impact of Ruth on both the game and American society. Even if you are not into sports, you should find the story of George Herman Ruth fascinating.

I have read other biographies of Babe Ruth, and I saw the movie where he was portrayed by William Bendix (awful, in the sense of accuracy). This book appears to capture the true life and times of the greatest baseball player of all times. Someone said when you start ranking the best baseball players you start with Babe Ruth and go from there. How did he get to be that ballplayer? And what did he do along the way? This book tries to answer those questions. Some will never be answered, and the writer acknowledges that, and he does it in a way that makes the story interesting. The book is well written, and flows very well. I found it to be one of those books that I hate to finish, because I enjoyed reading it so much. If you enjoy biographies or a fondness for baseball history I think you will enjoy this book. JRLinTN

While this book is very readable, it does not give the kind of info about Ruth I wanted. A lot of it is just retreading old ground done by other authors. Where this book fails is where the great majority of sports bios fail: it never really tells you why Ruth was so great....it reveals little of the baseball Ruth. Similar to a recent much publicized book about Joe DiMaggio, the book tells a lot about the non-sports/off the field life of the subject and very little about the reason the subject was great: his accomplishments on the field. What was it like to pitch to Ruth? I'm sure quite a few of the hundreds of pitchers who had to pitch to Ruth had stories to tell. You won't find any of those stories here. How did Ruth generate his great power? The author gives little or no insight. It's getting to the point where I don't want to read any more sports bios. Virtually all of them are failures at explaining to the reader why the sports hero was so great. Montville's book is just another forgettable sports bio. Read Bill Jenkinson's "The Year Ruth Hit 104 Homers" to get a better idea of the Ruth who was a great athletic hero.

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