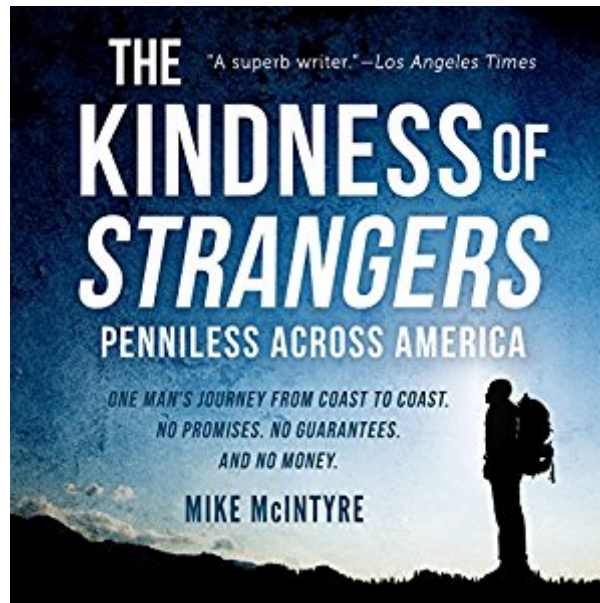




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The Kindness Of Strangers: Penniless Across America



Synopsis

A Wall Street Journal bestseller. Stuck in a job he no longer found fulfilling, journalist Mike McIntyre felt his life was quickly passing him by. So one day he hit the road to trek from one end of the country to the other with little more than the clothes on his back and without a single penny in his pocket. Through his travels, he found varying degrees of kindness in strangers from all walks of life-and discovered more about people and values and life on the road in America than he'd ever thought possible. The gifts of food and shelter he received along the way were outweighed only by the touching gifts of the heart-the willingness of many he met to welcome a lonely stranger into their homes...and the discovery that sometimes those who give the most are the ones with the least to spare. Audiobook includes an interview with author Mike McIntyre.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 8 hours and 54 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Mike McIntyre

Audible.com Release Date: December 9, 2014

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B00PWMNFBW

Best Sellers Rank: #226 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Nonfiction > Travel #641 in Books > Travel > Reference > General #671 in Books > Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Writing > Travel

Customer Reviews

This is one of the most outstanding, memorable books I've encountered in a long life of manic reading. That's why I was flabbergasted when the man came out flat-footed and admitted that the idea of traveling in the South terrified him. Starting in the Northwest (home to numerous serial killers AND Bigfoot!) he trusted his life to strangers without regard to race, creed, color, or teeth-to-tattoos ratio, but the prospect of crossing the Mason-Dixon Line made him go weak in the knees. His reception in Kentucky was the epitome of Southern hospitality and friendliness, yet he high-tailed it to the coast so fast we wouldn't have been able to lynch him if we wanted to! After months of travel and hardships designed to expose and dispel stereotypes, he fell victim himself to the oldest

American stereotype of all - the vicious Southern red-neck. Oh, he made all kinds of excuses. He was worn out. His girlfriend missed him. His feet hurt. NOBODY was fooled, Bubba! There is only one way to rectify this insult to the South. You must repeat your journey, starting in Charleston and traveling west. Of course, by the time we've plied you with biscuits and gravy and corn likker, you may not be able to get all the way back home, but you may be like a lot of other folks who visit the South with an open mind. We might not be able to get you to leave!

Journalist is an unsettled journalist who suddenly quits his job one day and begins planning a journey that will take him across the United States. He travels on foot or hitchhiking from California to Cape Fear, North Carolina, with just a pack and without money of any type. He's not trying to find himself or lose himself as much as he is grasping to overcome his fear of life. Even when one has a good life that appears successful and fulfilling to those around him, that life can be fraught with fear. Fear of failure, fear of success, fear of staying the same, fear of, change, on and on. Mike McIntyre sets off on foot in hopes of hitchhiking across the country on nothing except the kindness of strangers. In his pack he carries a piece of cardboard, a Sharpie, and a sheaf of paper, seemingly. He writes the name of a city destination on paper and affixes it to the cardboard, over and over, and over again until he does indeed reach Cape Fear, North Carolina, by the proverbial banana route, I might add. He learns many lessons of hitchhiking travel, scavenging for food, and the dreaded night time task of finding a safe and dry place to sleep. His meals and lodging places run the gamut from fine homes to hovels, to park lawns in pouring cold rain. His survivalist journey begins slow, cold, and hungry, but he observes and learns as he goes along. One example, it is easier to get people to stop if he writes the next city on his sign instead of somewhere in the next state. The places and conditions in which he slept made me shudder! The wide socioeconomic and mental health, or lack of it, of his drivers and hosts were both daunting and bizarre. Throughout all of this upheaval and uncertainty, Mike retains his dry sense of humor. It was a fun read and I was sad when the end of the epic journey was within grasp. There is a little course language included, to make points, I guess, but adults might want to read first before encouraging their middle schoolers to read this. What Mike teaches us in this book is that there are still many, many kind people in the United States, and one might indeed be able to hitchhike its span, ocean to ocean, purely on guts, fortitude, and "The Kindness Of Strangers."

Mike McIntyre depends on the kindness of strangers for food, shelter, and transportation on a cross-country trip. His voluntary vulnerability leads to an open, intimate book. Many of his

benefactors return his trust and open up about their own lives. It's always interesting to meet people with Mike. As readers, we get to know them much better than if Mike were travelling conventionally. On the other hand: McIntyre doesn't appear to grow or change during or after his trip. He makes a lot of points about how nice other people are to support him during his journey, but has he done anything to pay it forward? Does he pick up hitch-hikers himself, now? Does he start conversations with strangers in public parks? Share his food with them? Or pay it forward in other ways, to any other people in the world who could use his support? Put another way, I'd like a longer epilogue, with more about how Mike grew as a person. As it is, the book has a flavor of free-riding on the kindness of strangers.

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