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As one of the biggest stars to burst into U.S. theaters, Jackie Chan has wowed audiences with death-defying stunts. But who really is this lightning-fast Charlie Chaplin of martial arts moviemaking? Now, in *I Am Jackie Chan*, he tells the fascinating, harrowing, ultimately triumphant story of his life: How the rebellious son of refugees in tumultuous 1950s Hong Kong became the disciplined disciple of a Chinese Opera Master. How the dying art of Chinese opera led Jackie to the movie business. And how he broke into Hollywood big time by breaking almost every bone in his body.

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From Reader Review I Am Jackie Chan: My Life in Action for online ebook

Brandon Miller says

For an action star, the dude can write. Also there's pictures of him shirtless in it, so that's worth the admission price alone.

Hans says

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a world-renown celebrity in possession of a book deal, must be in want of a co-writer. There is usually a reason that celebrity autobiographies do not have a lot of literary street cred. However, I proclaim that there is a deep vein of ore to mine from Jackie Chan's entry into the genre. The life and fortune of Jackie Chan turns on historic forces that broke up his father and mother's first families, as they escaped from China to Hong Kong. Another turn of history brought Jackie Chan to be part of the last generation to grow up in the exacting world of the Chinese Opera schools. The cultural shift of movies taking over the traditional arts brought Jackie Chan to the world of film. From there it was a bit of personal drive, luck, and help from his opera school brothers and sisters that finally turned Jackie Chan into the international film star. Beyond the historic, cultural, and economic forces, there is an interesting vein about what makes someone part of your family and how you build a family when you are traveling most of the year. It seems like some sharper edges are sanded down in Jackie Chan's wilder days, but it is interesting to read about the story that Jackie Chan wants to tell the world.

Why this?/Why now?: A good friend recommended this book after he saw that I read Bruce Campbell's first book. I'm not shifting towards celebrity autobiography, though I can say that this was an entertaining journey.

Thejas says

DO OR DIE - An ugly Chinese kid failing in school (can that really happen?), struggling to get decent food for survival becomes the biggest movie martial arts sensation of the world. Other than rags to riches story, the inspiring idea is about risk taking. If you do not take risks, you remain a nobody. And that is what all his movies are about....

Carlyn Brody says

I AM JACKIE CHAN: MY LIFE IN ACTION – BOOK REVIEW

My family and I love to watch Jackie Chan films. I bought I am Jackie Chan: My life in action as a Christmas present for my brother. Jackie Chan's autobiography was first published in 1996 and my brother and I wanted the book but we were kids and couldn't afford it. As I grew up I couldn't find the book anywhere and it's only now as an adult, that I purchased the book off Amazon. I have the updated edition of the biography which contains new information and was released during the time when Jackie was making the

first Rush Hour movie.

The biography is a rare insight into Jackie's life. He recounts his childhood, love life and film career. Jackie was born on April 7th 1954 to Charles and Lee-Lee Chan in Hong Kong. Both his parents were servants to the French ambassador in Hong Kong. Charles Chan was the cook and Lee-Lee was the housekeeper. They named their son, Chan Kong Sang.

Jackie was enthusiastic and energetic child. He got up to mischief and had fights with the neighbourhood children. At school, he could never sit still. He found school boring and was often in trouble.

School was the place where the neighbour's kids wasted all the best parts of the day. It meant dressing up in sissy clothes, spending hours in stifling classrooms, and learning things that were of no use to anyone. I could learn everything I needed to right here at home.

.....Actually, now I regret not having paid more attention at school. You can't ever go back again, and I'll never know the pleasures of the classics, or higher mathematics, or the great lessons of history.

Excerpt from I am Jackie Chan: My life in action p. 15 and 16.

Life at the academy was tough. We would call it child abuse. Master gave Jackie a new name, Yuen Lo. All the children were given new names so that they left their old identity behind. All the boys were Yuen something, such as Yuen Ting, Yuen Lung etc. The students had a vigorous routine of singing, dancing, acting, acrobatics and martial arts training. Everything had to done perfectly or the master would whip you. There was a hierarchy among the children according to age, Biggest brother and big brother were in charge of discipline as well. Jackie had an antagonistic relationship with his "big brothers" and they frequently fought and teased him.

Although the work was hard, the students were motivated to keep going. Jackie felt that he couldn't run away or quit because he had worked too hard. He wanted the chance to perform in front of an audience. Jackie got his chance when he was chosen by master to be a part of the Seven Little Fortunes, a travelling troupe comprising of the best students.

The popularity of Chinese Opera started to wane with Hong Kong cinema on the rise. Opera schools started closing and the Seven Little Fortunes were getting less bookings. Master hired the students out to film studio to act as extras and stunt men to pay the bills. Students started to leave the school and eventually Jackie left the school at seventeen.

Jackie was all alone in Hong Kong as his mother had joined his father in Australia. He lived in a tiny flat with no furniture and worked in films as a stunt man. Whenever he was free he would visit his first love, Oh Chang. Oh Chang was an opera student at different school. Jackie loved her kind and gentle nature. The young couple, use to sneak out at night to sit at the park and talk (yes just talk no funny business). All Jackie wanted was someone to talk and share his sensitive side. He respected her and saw her as a delicate flower so he didn't want to take advantage of her.

Unfortunately Oh Chang's dad found out about the relationship and forbid his daughter from seeing Jackie. Oh Chang's family didn't approve of her dating a poor boy.

"Goodbye," she said. "Will I ever see you again?" Stuffing my hands in my pockets, I turned and began to walk." "No", I said, my voice flat. "Not like this."

No the way I am today, I thought to myself, as I turned the corner and began to run. When you see me again- If you see me again –it will not be as Yuen Lo, the poor stunt boy.

I hated Yuen Lo. I had nothing but contempt for him-lazy, good-for-nothing, loser Yuen Lo. He would have to die, I realised. For me to be what I wanted to be, I would have to kill Yuen Lo. And become someone else. Excerpt from I am Jackie Chan: My life in action p. 147.

Jackie became determined to work hard to become a stunt coordinator. He also got a few acting roles in some action movies. He even worked on a Bruce Lee movie! When Bruce Lee died 1973 everyone was devastated. The public didn't want to see action movies so it was hard for Jackie to find work. So, Jackie moved to Australia briefly to live his parents.

When Jackie came to Australia, he tried to learn English at school. He found school boring and English was hard to learn. He decided to work instead and it was at work, that he got his name Jackie. The Australians

found it hard to pronounce his name, Chan Kong Sang or Yuen Lo. His father got him a construction job with his friend Jack. When they went to work, the other workers asked what his name was and Jack replied that his new Asian friend's name was Little Jack. Eventually, he became Jackie.

Jackie wasn't happy living in Australia. He missed his old life in Hong Kong. So, his parents made a deal with him that he could go back to Hong Kong and try to make a career in the film industry for two years and if that didn't work, he had to come back to Australia.

When Jackie did come back to Hong Kong he was signed to the Lo Wei Motion Picture Company. He did not get along with Lo Wei. Lo Wei wanted Jackie to be the new Bruce Lee and he asked that Jackie copy his style. Jackie just wanted to be himself. In those days, actors didn't have managers and agents. They were controlled by the studio and the studio decided what films they did. In the book, Jackie is very candid about his time with Lo Wei. Lo Wei died in 1996 so I guess, Jackie must have waited till he died because he doesn't say very flattering things about him.

After a costly ordeal, Jackie managed to be released from his contract and signed to another film company called Golden Harvest. At Golden Harvest, he was able to do films his way. He wanted to show that Kung Fu movies didn't always have to have an intense lead burning for revenge. That is why most Jackie Chan films has him playing an easygoing fellow. He also thought Kung Fu didn't have to be set in a historical setting and have so much wirework. Jackie wanted to show that when you fight, you always get hurt whether you win or not.

As he became famous, he met and dated Chinese singer, Theresa Teng. The two broke up after Jackie became a big jerk and let fame get to his head.

I would hit the town wearing short pants, a t-shirt, and as much gold as my wrists and neck could carry. She was a wonder of politeness, a miracle of manners. I thumbed my nose at authority, laughing in the faces of hotel managers and haughty waiters, putting my feet up on the tables.

And, while she was content to go out alone, with no one but me as her gentleman escort-not that I was much of a gentleman- I refused to be seen anywhere without my boys: a gang of stuntmen in glasses.

Excerpt from I am Jackie Chan: My life in action p. 269.

Fortunately he realised he was arrogant jerk when she dumped him and the movie that he directed had flopped. He was only a young man at the time and had come from a poor background so I can understand how he got carried away by fame and fortune.

He later met Taiwanese actress Lin Feng-jiao (also known as Joan Lin) at a party. The two had a long distance relationship with Jackie flying from Hong Kong to Taiwan on the weekends. He knew that Lin Feng-jiao wanted a more stable and traditional relationship. So one day he surprised her during the middle of filming to reassure her of his commitment.

Feng-jiao, "I said, taking both of her hands again. "Marry me." She let out a gasp. I went down on one knee. "Marry me!"

Excerpt from I am Jackie Chan: My life in action p. 293.

Jackie also writes about his attempts to break into the American film industry. He was frustrated when they wanted him to be the next Bruce Lee. All his American movies had little success until he made Rumble in the Bronx which was more to Jackie Chan's style. The book ends with him mentioning that he was currently filming the first Rush Hour movie. Fortunately for him, it was a huge hit, with two sequels made afterwards. There are rumours that there will be a Rush Hour 4.

I recommend this book to all Jackie Chan fans. It was easy to read, humorous, touching and insightful. I wished that the book included Jackie's charity work and music career but maybe in the future he'll have another biography. The book also features lots of lovely old pictures of Jackie growing up as well as some pictures of his films. At the back of the book, there is a filmography of all of Jackie Chan's movies and his thoughts on them. He also has a list of top ten stunts and injuries. I like to look at that lists when I watch a Jackie Chan movie to gain a greater insight into the making of the film.

So are you a fan of Jackie Chan? What is your favourite Jackie Chan movie?

Philbertha Leung says

I picked up this Jackie Chan autobiography randomly at my mom's house when I realized I had nothing fun to read while I was doing laundry. To my surprise, I was immediately sucked in, and didn't stop reading until I was done with the entire book a day later. Now, kung fu / martial arts movies are not even remotely close to being my favorite movie genre, but I have to admit, once I finished this book, I was ALMOST itching to rend a Jackie Chan movie. I have now added Drunken Master to my netflix list.

Jamesatkinson says

When Jackie Chan was 8 his parents sold him to the chinese opera where they beat the shit out of him and he learned to do backflips. And he met Sammo Hung who ate all his food. Then later he made kung fu films while fighting triads and also he fought al his producers and established his own character as a goofy unlikely hero guy. awesome.

Brian Burhoe says

I'm a great reader of Memoirs, especially of creative men and women. In just the past few months, I've read Willie Nelson, Pete Townshend, Kieth Richards, Neil Young, Jann Arden...

And I've just re-reread I AM JACKIE CHAN: My Life in Action.

And entered young Chan Kong-sang's life. Listen:

I remember a frightened seven-year-old walking into the dark and musty halls of the China Drama Academy, holding his father's hand. Inside, he sees young boys and girls leaping and tumbling and screaming. Paradise—

“How long do you want to stay here, Jackie?”

“Forever!” answers the boy, his eyes bright and wide. And he lets go of his father to clutch at the hem of his master's robe...

And that Chinese Opera Master, with “the legal authority to train his students even to death,” a man Jackie came to hate and fear and love, would indeed teach Jackie all the skills of ancient arts.

It's an unfamiliar world to us Westerners, like something out of Dickens of long ago. And Jackie's telling of those years is truly fascinating. Through the chapters, he grows into a young disciplined man of the full range of operatic skills — from kung fu to clownish pratfalls to singing and dancing to character acting. And we meet his fellow students, his “brothers and sisters, big and little, with whom I ate and slept and fought and argued and grew and learned.”

I AM JACKIE CHAN then takes us out into the world of Hong Kong movie-making in the 60's and 70's, a

career of stumbling and some success and stumbling again. And ends in 1989, just when “I finally got a deal started on a movie that should be out in theaters right now, Rush Hour...”

And that was two decades ago.

In that time, dozens of films, including Shanghai Noon, Around the World in 80 Days (as Passepartout), The Forbidden Kingdom, The Karate Kid have lit our screens. And the voices for others, like Kung Fu Panda. As of this writing, Shanghai Dawn is in production for a 2018 release. And Jackie has said, “Rush Hour 4 is happening!”

Twenty years to catch up on. Time, Jackie, for I AM JACKIE CHAN 2!

TO SEE MY COMPLETE POSTING ON JACKIE CHAN, Including the Latest on RUSH HOUR 4, Go To <http://www.CivilizedBears.com/Jackie-...>

- Brian Alan Burhoe

Claire says

This autobiography does read **exactly** like one of the books I had to review for my professor Dr. Chien's courses in Chinese history (in fact, it might have been an option in the Modern Chinese History class), so I liked it as much as I did for the clarity of the memory it invoked.

(P?obù, I think, is swim! I checked here to find it is run, while swim is yóuy?ng. Physical activity. I mix it up.)

I could also strongly identify with this action-and-adventure man regarding sustaining head injuries, which is the other reason I did not outright dislike this literature.

But, honestly, even after reading this, you could not tie me down to watch a kung fu film, no matter how much scrumptious Asian cooking was surrounding it.

I am sorry.

I've tried! But every time it made me uncomfortable.

D.A. Cairns says

A refreshing change of pace from the last auto-biography I read, Schwarzenegger's Total Recall. I am Jackie Chan was fast, funny and entertaining, much like Jackie's films. It was easy to read, not overly detailed, and unlike Total Recall, it reeked of humility and honesty. Reading I am Jackie Chan gave me a very good sense of the man and what has driven him to such international heights of fame and admiration.

At the end of the book, Jackie lists his top ten stunts and top ten fights, and he is full of praise for the people who helped him become the man he is. I liked this book a lot, and reckon I will have to have a Jackie Chan film binge.

Phillip says

Jackie Chan's autobiography is written with an easy conversational style, one that allows an occasional comment to drop that reveals a twinkle in the author's eye.

This is a surprising story of a young boy raised in an incredibly strict environment of the Peking Opera Dramatic Academy; of a youth trying to survive as a stuntman in the glutted Hong Kong film market; of a young man trying to develop his own cinema persona in an industry committed to molding him into the style of the most recent celebrity.

Beyond sharing the story of his successes and failures, I found that this narrative also provided me a renewed perspective of how to meet my challenges and maintain my integrity.

Jim says

This is vastly superior to the typical celebrity biography. The last third of the book, about Jackie Chan's rise to success, is interesting. The best part of this book, however, covers his years of struggle. And, wow, did he struggle.

Jackie Chan was the son of poor, refugee parents in Hong Kong, who fostered him to a Chinese Opera school, a place like a Dickensian orphanage, but with flying spin kicks. His teacher was manipulative and abusive. Chan was beaten a lot, hungry most of the time, and always lonely. Yet, he credits his teacher and the school with giving him the abilities that would eventually make him a success.

There was a lot of interesting stuff in this book, including the development of the Hong Kong action movie industry, from the cheap Shaw Brothers operation to the higher budget Golden Harvest studio. Shaw Brothers, dominant early on, were notorious for cutting corners and cheating employees out of wages. Golden Harvest would later displace them. Golden Harvest was willing to spend money to make better movies; plus, they had Bruce Lee.

Bruce Lee's untimely death left the industry reeling. Studios tried advancing various actors, including Chan, as "the next Bruce Lee," but audiences weren't buying it. Chan was given roles, none of which were successful, until he was allowed to craft his own style. Where Bruce Lee was the invincible hero, Jackie Chan would make his mark as an underdog character, an average guy forced to confront stronger adversaries. The formula worked, and Jackie Chan became wildly successful.

Also of interest is Chan's account of his struggles to break into the American film industry. While Chan is stoical about it, it's evident that there is a great deal of latent prejudice in Hollywood. Asian actors were not (and often still aren't) cast as leading men or women in their own right by the major studios. Jackie Chan would become the top star in Asia, with a fan base that numbered in the billions, but for a long time American studios were fairly condescending toward him.

The heart of this book, the best part of it, is where Chan talks about his personal development. Everyone says that Jackie Chan is a really nice guy, but Chan tells how success went to his head, how he became an

arrogant jerk. He tells how setbacks in his personal life humbled him. However, the factor that had the biggest effect in shaping Jackie Chan is hard work.

The incredible work ethic of the man is the unifying theme of this book. Work was his response to hardship and a source of solace; it was his means to success. He speaks of how lucky he was, but really his luck was a matter of persistence. It was also a matter of taking risks and trying new things. Some people may dismiss martial arts movies (and some of them are pretty bad); however, Chan speaks eloquently about his craft, about how much thought and choreography go into action scenes, and the responsibility he feels toward his fans.

I've always liked Jackie Chan, but this book made me a fan.

Kim-Lost-In-A-Book says

What a good memoir. I really enjoyed reading about the Hong Kong movie industry which is very different from Hollywood apparently. I liked seeing a side of Jackie Chan that I wouldn't expect to see. I enjoyed his humility along with his confidence, the fact that he can admit his failures while still celebrating his successes is refreshing to see in a "superstar". Mr. Chan has certainly come a long way in his life and he's done so with grace and style, even with a few bumps in the road. This memoir makes me want to go rent all of his movies! I also realized that if I'm seeing some crazy action stunt being done in an American film, it's probably already been done in one of Mr. Chan's Hong Kong films! Another reason to see his earlier work.

Gaurav Yadav says

I found this book coming straight from the heart. A classic underdog story that can win thousands of hearts!!!!

The book starts with a jump that Jackie is about to take and which reminds him of the struggles that he has undergone to achieve his place in the world. And the book grows on you from there!! Its an inspiring tale of a man's (rather a family's) fight to make a living. A saga of discipline and a story of ups and downs of a hero not willing to accept his fate. On one hand you get to know how Jackie was made an on another, how a whole industry evolved in China and took the world by storm.

Another beautiful part of this story is about sacrifice. First, the sacrifice that the parents make for their kid. And then the one that the teacher (Master Yu) makes for his disciples. There are many touching quotes in the book but my best pick would be the one when Jackie is about to leave the School of Arts and visits Master Yu for one last time. He expects some deep emotions and possibly anger during the scene, but what he gets is this pure gold : WHEN THE MIND IS MADE, THE BODY MUST FOLLOW!!

My rating : Absolutely mindblowing!!!

Loralee says

Can't believe how much I enjoyed this, when I have only ever seen one Jackie Chan movie in my life. Maybe two. With a talented coauthor, Chan tells the story of his childhood in a school for Chinese opera (beatings and 19-hour-days were common), breaking into the movie business as a stuntman, going broke, getting called back into the movies to act for a director who tried to turn him into Bruce Lee, finally getting the freedom to make his own movies, which became blockbusters, and trying to show ignorant America that he was already a huge star worldwide, even if Americans hadn't heard of him. The stunts: crazy! (like jumping off a 100 foot building to honor his childhood teacher, or failing to jump off a 50 foot clock tower 6 days in a row, so that on the 7th day he told his helper to help him hang from the hands of a clock and then leave, so there was nowhere to go but down.) The message: you achieve success through hard work and originality.

Amy "the book-bat" says

Very interesting look at how Jackie Chan got his start. The problem is, the book is 20 years old and there is a whole lot more to his story now. I would love an updated version of the book.
