



When I Was a Young Man: A Memoir by Bob Kerrey

J. Robert Kerrey

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Bob Kerrey grew up outside Lincoln, Nebraska, in the 1950s, and in his trademark style-serious, sometimes wry-he tells of his journey from that heartland to the dangers of Vietnam, to the hospitals where he recovered from his grievous injuries, and finally to the Nixon White House where he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Inspired by the stories of biblical heroes and thrilled by the cowboy serials he saw at the movies on Saturday afternoons, Kerrey grew up in a world as safe and quiet as anywhere you could find on Earth. When he went off to college he knew or cared little about what lay beyond Nebraska, though soon his life would be changed forever. Bob Kerrey comes from a family of soldiers, and so, when the Vietnam draft loomed, he volunteered for the elite Navy SEALs, hoping for adventure and the honor of serving his country. After his arrival in Vietnam, he had to face the brutal reality of the war. In his first firefight, women and children died. His second encounter cost him part of his leg. In his year at the Naval Hospital in Philadelphia, he drew strength from his fellow patients, some more disabled than he, and he learned to walk again. But he had turned against the war and could no longer find solace in his religion.

A quest begins and ends this book. When his father was dying, he asked Kerrey to find out how his Uncle John had really died in World War II. It is this quest that inspires Bob Kerrey as he narrates his own personal odyssey in this remarkable and powerful book.

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