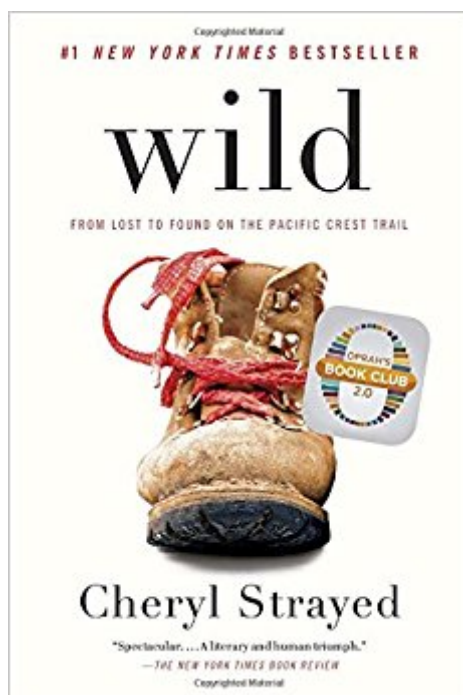


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# Wild: From Lost To Found On The Pacific Crest Trail



## Synopsis

**#1 NATIONAL BESTSELLER** At twenty-two, Cheryl Strayed thought she had lost everything. In the wake of her mother's death, her family scattered and her own marriage was soon destroyed. Four years later, with nothing more to lose, she made the most impulsive decision of her life. With no experience or training, driven only by blind will, she would hike more than a thousand miles of the Pacific Crest Trail from the Mojave Desert through California and Oregon to Washington State—and she would do it alone. Told with suspense and style, sparkling with warmth and humor, *Wild* powerfully captures the terrors and pleasures of one young woman forging ahead against all odds on a journey that maddened, strengthened, and ultimately healed her. **NOW A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE** One of the Best Books of the Year: NPR, The Boston Globe, Entertainment Weekly, Vogue, St. Louis Dispatch

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Best Books of the Month, March 2012: At age 26, following the death of her mother, divorce, and a run of reckless behavior, Cheryl Strayed found herself alone near the foot of the Pacific Crest Trail—inexperienced, over-equipped, and desperate to reclaim her life. *Wild* tracks Strayed's personal journey on the PCT through California and Oregon, as she comes to terms with devastating loss and her unpredictable reactions to it. While readers looking for adventure or a naturalist's perspective may be distracted by the emotional odyssey at the core of the story, *Wild* vividly describes the grueling life of the long-distance hiker, the ubiquitous perils of the PCT, and its peculiar community of wanderers. Others may find her unsympathetic—just one victim of her

own questionable choices. But *Strayed* doesn't want sympathy, and her confident prose stands on its own, deftly pulling both threads into a story that inhabits a unique riparian zone between wilderness tale and personal-redemption memoir. --Jon Foro From Author Cheryl Strayed

Oprah with Cheryl Strayed, author of Book Club 2.0's inaugural selection, *Wild*. I wrote the last line of my first book, *Torch*, and then spent an hour crying while lying on a cool tile floor in a house on a hot Brazilian island. After I finished my second book, *Wild*, I walked alone for miles under a clear blue sky on an empty road in the Oregon Outback. I sat bundled in my coat on a cold patio at midnight staring up at the endless December stars after completing my third book, *Tiny Beautiful Things*. There are only a handful of other days in my life--my wedding, the births of my children--that I remember as vividly as those solitary days on which I finished my books. The settings and situations were different, but the feeling was the same: an overwhelming mix of joy and gratitude, humility and relief, pride and wonder. After much labor, I'd made this thing. A book. Though it wasn't technically that yet. The real book came later--after more work, but this time it involved various others, including agents, publishers, editors, designers, and publicists, all of whose jobs are necessary but sometimes indecipherable to me. They're the ones who transformed the thousands of words I'd privately and carefully conjured into something that could be shared with other people. "I wrote this!" I exclaimed in amazement when I first held each actual, physical book in my hands. I wasn't amazed that it existed; I was amazed by what its existence meant: that it no longer belonged to me. Two months before *Wild* was published I stood on a Mexican beach at sunset with my family assisting dozens of baby turtles on their stumbling journey across the sand, then watching as they disappeared into the sea. The junction between writer and author is a bit like that. In one role total vigilance is necessary; in the other, there's nothing to do but hope for the best. A book, like those newborn turtles, will ride whatever wave takes it. It's deeply rewarding to me when I learn that something I wrote moved or inspired or entertained someone; and it's crushing to hear that my writing bored or annoyed or enraged another. But an author has to stand back from both the praise and the criticism once a book is out in the world. The story I chose to write in *Wild* for no other reason than I felt driven to belongs to those who read it, not me. And yet I'll never forget what it once was, long before I could even imagine how gloriously it would someday be swept away from me. --This text refers to the Preloaded Digital Audio Player edition.

Echoing the ever-popular search for wilderness salvation by Chris McCandless (*Back to the Wild*, 2011) and every other modern-day disciple of Thoreau, Strayed tells the story of her emotional

devastation after the death of her mother and the weeks she spent hiking the 1,100-mile Pacific Crest Trail. As her family, marriage, and sanity go to pieces, Strayed drifts into spontaneous encounters with other men, to the consternation of her confused husband, and eventually hits rock bottom while shooting up heroin with a new boyfriend. Convinced that nothing else can save her, she latches onto the unlikely idea of a long solo hike. Woefully unprepared (she fails to read about the trail, buy boots that fit, or pack practically), she relies on the kindness and assistance of those she meets along the way, much as McCandless did. Clinging to the books she lugs along—Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor, Adrienne Rich—Strayed labors along the demanding trail, documenting her bruises, blisters, and greater troubles. Hiker wannabes will likely be inspired. Experienced backpackers will roll their eyes. But this chronicle, perfect for book clubs, is certain to spark lively conversation. --Colleen Mondor --This text refers to the Preloaded Digital Audio Player edition.

If I had known that every few pages I would have to see passages underlined by Oprah I would not have bought this edition. Not only does it bump me out of the narrative, but it deprives me of experiencing the book on my own; instead forcing me to think Oprah's underlines are the important parts. It makes what could otherwise be a beautiful story feel like a cheap used textbook. I should at least be able to hide the obnoxious underlining and get to experience the story on my own. I love the story, and I love Oprah, but I hate having her perspective forced on me as I read. I'll never buy an Oprah digital book again.

Wild is an excellent read. Once again, the book is even better than the movie. It delves into Cheryl's feelings, frustrations, and thoughts, something the movie can't do as well. Cheryl's determination is admirable, yet not well thought out before she begins her journey.

This book came my way at a perfect stage in my own life. Anyone on their own journey through bitter life experiences will identify with Cheryl's feelings at the time of her expedition. Her feelings are expressed in a way in which they still seem to be an open and raw wound. Her trek across the PCT seemed so real to me that I almost felt like I was there being cleansed by nature and away from all of the superficialities of this mechanical life. I am grateful that I came across this book and I recommend it to anyone who'd enjoy or needs some intense emotional feelings.

Reading this I get the sense that the writer, Cheryl "Strayed", was trying to prove to herself that she

could throw together a book. She even briefly mentions in the book that she had always dreamed of writing a novel because of being such an avid reader. Props to her. But just because someone wrote a book doesn't mean they necessarily can write one. Throughout the whole book you are left with a sense of unfulfillment, constantly waiting for some kind of resolution, thread, or something. This relief never comes. Instead you get a character with a personality that was unrelatable, and at times, frankly, highly irritating. Cheryl has spurts of great writing, throwing back to her miserable childhood or scenes of her dying mother and her pathetic drug episode with Joe - it will make you shed a tear or two. But to me, the book was pointless. There are people that have done much crazier stuff than hitchhike half a trail and barely make it to each supply station before blowing all their money on Snapple and burgers. I mean for goodness sake, just pretend like you're trying to actually walk this trail and get something meaningful out of it. 75% of her "hardships" came from buying boots that didn't fit her. So you end up realizing how stubborn she is, the same mindset that led her to cheating on her husband with multiple nobodies. I found myself skimming through countless paragraphs of describing how tired she was, or how her backpack was rubbing her, or laying there naked with her blistered sweating body, which is not something I want to fill my mind with to be honest. At least make up something a little more exciting to read and give us some kind of life altering lesson at the end. If I was a college, or even high school, essay grader, I would say it was rambling and redundant. On that note, Cheryl has potential as a writer, but maybe she can write about someone else next time.

There are so many great things I could say about this book and how much I loved it, but I'll leave you with this: Cheryl Strayed paints an emotional, visceral portrait of life on the Pacific Crest Trail that appeals to more than just long-distance hikers. It is a painful and grueling experience (and the trail itself isn't even as much of a challenge for the narrator and the reader as the memories that it unearths), and you're along for the ride every step of the way. The question becomes not so much if she will achieve her goal at the end, but what kind of person she will be when she does. Gripping, heartwrenching, and the most profoundly human I've read in a long time. Can't recommend enough.

I thoroughly enjoyed the film "Wild" starring Reese Witherspoon so much that I felt a need to read the book. The highlight of the book is truly the story. Strayed has an incredible story to tell and her life experiences make up for her lack of a strong writing voice. The book has a much more "raw" feel to it than the movie did, a little more literal and a little less spiritual, this may attract those seeking the more traditional "found myself in nature" story than the film offered. Both are worth your time as

they offer the same story, but completely different experiences.

I started this book at that one moment that no reader should ever have to start a book: After you've already seen the movie. As should be expected, the book was better, but I will say the movie helped me to appreciate the book more, and vice versa. This book makes me want to go hiking, but it also reminds me of how much junk we are carrying around inside that doesn't add any value to our lives. This book is about the struggle to move forward as much as it is about the Pacific Crest Trail. Highly recommend it.

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