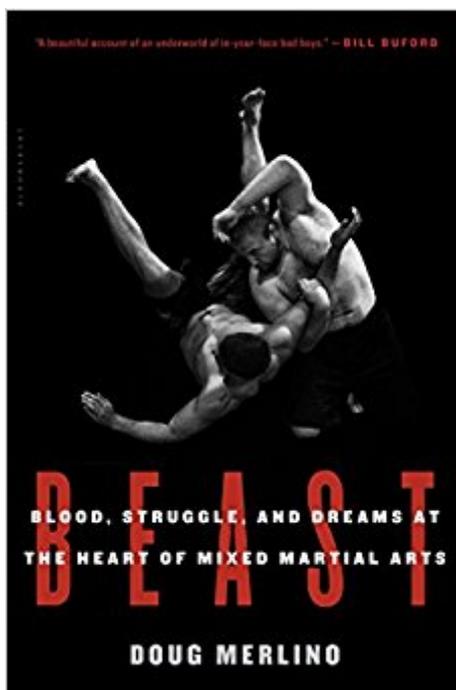


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# Beast: Blood, Struggle, And Dreams At The Heart Of Mixed Martial Arts



## Synopsis

The first book to bring readers deep inside a top mixed martial arts gym, *Beast* shows exactly what it takes to reach the top of this exacting sport. Doug Merlino spent two years at Florida's American Top Team, living, eating, and training alongside some of the world's best fighters, and traveled with them to fights around the world. The result is the most unvarnished look at the sport yet, with its electrifying highs and devastating lows. For both the uninitiated and for hardcore fans, *Beast* offers an intense journey into an often misunderstood world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

They say it takes years of work to be an overnight success. This book takes us behind the curtain into just how much work and sacrifice it takes to follow your dream. It is also a stark reminder that for everyone we see who "makes it", there are countless others working their butts off just to have that shot. I also enjoyed the author's own journey into a subculture he had not experienced before and how it changed some of his preconceived notions. The example I liked best was how much fighting, and learning it was more about discipline than violence, helped him deal with the BS his family was putting him through after his father passed away. Who would have thought that learning to fight would help be a path to inner peace? A great read.

I'm not a diehard mma fan, but I enjoy good sports writing and liked Merlino's first book about a middle school basketball team in Seattle. So I picked this up and couldn't put it down. It's filled with vivid portraits of hungry young men from middle America towns fighting to stay off the streets, to

support their families or to take one last shot at athletic glory. Merlino obviously had lots of access and is able to describe these guys at their highs and lows, all of it unvarnished and very revealing. He even takes a spin at fighting himself and wisely decides to stick to writing. I'd recommend this both to fans of MMA and to people who are trying to figure out what it's about and enjoy a well-told tale.

There might be only a handful of books that capture the essence of MMA, and *Beast* is at the top of this short list. Doug Merlino spent years detailing the glory and pain of a very misunderstood sport and its athletes. Perceived by the general population as a barbaric blood sport, readers will discover fighters who are highly intelligent, and will likely be surprised at the level of sensitivity and compassion they possess. Whether you are an MMA fan or just an avid reader, this book will expose you to courage only found in fictional movies. Much more than a book on sports, readers will be inspired by ordinary people who have accomplished extraordinary things through sacrifice and hard work. Truly a showcase on the potential of the human spirit.

This is a very compelling book, giving the reader a vivid glimpse into the lives, trials and tribulations of 4 fighters from American Top Team, one of the premier Mixed Martial Arts gyms in the world. This is an absolute must read for any true MMA fan or those interested in what it really takes to be an elite and professional athlete.

*Beast* covers the lives and personalities of four MMA aspirants, each with a different background and goals in their desire to achieve success in a brutal sport. The sacrifice, hard work and dedication it takes to achieve even a modicum of success in the sport is revealed through the four men whose lives he follows. It's also clear one has to be wired a little different to train so assiduously for a sport that is brutal and physically debilitating. I also liked the interludes where the author fills those not as familiar with MMA on the history of the sport dating back to the Gracie family and jiu jitsu in Brazil to the early days of the no-holds barred and controversial rise of the sport. A very interesting read.

I liked this book. I've followed MMA for years, and although not a meathead (as the author refers to some fans) I'm definitely not just a casual observer. I enjoyed the concept of the book, and the fighters that the author chose to follow were diverse and interesting. There were candid insights on the struggle of what it takes to participate in a very violent sport. The last third of the book the author

chose to do a little history lesson on the UFC which seemed just slightly out of place, but I understand the perceived need to include it. Overall I would say this book is probably better suited for the more hardcore fan, but it is definitely well worth the read.

I picked up *Beast* because I really enjoyed the author's other two books. I have watched some MMA fights but was not a big fan. I was expecting an entertaining book, but this really opened my eyes to how hard it is to succeed in this sport and the level of extreme dedication these fighters must have. Merlino became very close with these fighters and shows how each is not only trying to become a better fighter but also using fighting as a means to transform themselves into better people, even though the method happens to be fighting into the cage. Merlino also provides a great history of the sport and a lot of insight into how the business side of fighting really works. I highly recommend this one.

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