

CHRIS CRUTCHER



• IRONMAN •

CHAPTER 1

TO: *Larry King*

RE: *Exclusive rights to an hour-long interview immediately prior to publication of the soon-to-be highly-sought-after memoirs of our country's future premier Ironman, Beauregard Brewster, in the year of his quest to conquer the field in Yukon Jack's Eastern Washington Invitational Scabland Triathlon.*

OCTOBER 10

Dear Larry,

At 4:30 each morning I awaken to your voice. I lie transfixed until five—when I haul my aching body out of the sack for another in a series of infinite workouts—

listening to the wise men and loons of yesterday's airways deliver opinions on everything from the hole in the ozone layer (it covers an area larger than the United States) to antidepressants (Dick Cavett and Patty Duke swear by them; Scientologists swear at them) to racism (you smell out racial prejudice like my father smells out Democrats) to the most effective methods to forever rid oneself of fat globules and cellulite (there aren't any) to the whereabouts of Elvis (Jeffrey Dahmer ate him). What I like about you is, you listen. You interview politicians and movie stars and musicians and every kind of hero and villain. And authors. When you are finally accorded the privilege of reaching across the mike to shake my sweaty hand, I'll be one of those. It's gonna be a career-making interview, Larry, and to give you full opportunity for the preparation it deserves, I've decided to leak the memoirs to you as they happen.

I am aware from your numerous comments that you have not long been such a prudent caretaker of your physical self (your heart attack set you in the right direction) and may not know that a triathlete (AKA Ironman) is a swimming, bicycling, running lunatic, willing and able to cover great distances at high speeds while enduring extreme physical pain. That's me, Lar, and you shall be privy to the circumstances surrounding my voyage beyond human physical limits in my crusade to finish Yukon Jack's E. W.

Invitational Scabland extravaganza alive, and well ahead of all competitors under voting age. You should know that Yukon Jack's is not your run of the mill, rapid-stroll-through-hell event. Distances in a normal, Olympic-length triathlon are such that participants spend approximately twice as much time cycling as they do running or swimming, giving a definite edge to the good bikers. But Yukon Jack, AKA Jack McCoy, is a two-time English Channel swimmer and a three-time finisher of the Western States 100-mile ultra-marathon, and he's the first person to tell you he thinks most cyclists are more interested in displaying their tight, multicolored costumes than they are in "gettin' down to some real physical exercise," so he shaved their edge off this particular event by doubling the swimming distance and halving the biking distance. All that works to my advantage because I love to train swimming and running, but whenever I ride a bike more than three blocks, I feel the need for major surgery to remove that skinny little seat.

Unfortunately, to reach the physical, spiritual, and emotional heights required to conquer this event, I must also endure my regular life and the mortals who would stand in my way. One of those mortals, not the greatest nor the least, would be Keith Redmond, my English teacher and the head football coach at Clark Fork High School.

“A potent, well-knit story.”

— *Kirkus Reviews*

Bo has been at war with his father for as long as he can remember. The rage he feels gives him the energy as a triathlete to press his body to the limit, but it also translates into angry outbursts toward his teachers.

Now dangerously close to expulsion from school, Bo has been assigned to Anger Management sessions with the school “truants.” With an eclectic mix of hard-edged students, Bo may finally have to deal with his long-brewing hatred for his father—before it eats away at him completely.

“Crutcher again demonstrates his genius for tackling big issues and thought-provoking philosophies.”

—*The Horn Book*

“*Ironman* is a combination of the psychological and the sports novel at their best.”

—*ALA Booklist*



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