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# The Long Program: Skating Toward Life's Victories



## Synopsis

In all of her roles -- athlete, wife, mother, role model, and cancer survivor -- Olympic gold medalist Peggy Fleming has relied upon the discipline she cultivated as a young skater. Now in this intimate memoir, she eloquently reveals her fascinating life story and shares her secrets to serenity and success. The long Program In the 1968 Olympic Winter Games Peggy Fleming not only captured the United States' only gold medal, but a country's collective heart as well. A young woman who embodied both stunning athleticism and magnificent grace, Peggy Fleming reluctantly became an instant celebrity. In the decades that followed, she also triumphed off the ice -- commentating for ABC Sports and nurturing a long-standing marriage while raising two delightful sons. But Peggy's toughest challenge came in 1998 when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. Here, Peggy candidly details her courageous physical and emotional battle. She also explains how she ultimately prevailed, and why she became an outspoken, highly visible promoter of breast cancer awareness. Most important, she relates how every person's life has its own version of the long program, those precious years that take little girls and turn them into wives, mothers, grandmas, and survivors. A compelling memoir that deserves the highest marks, *The Long Program* is both a portrait of a remarkable woman and a collection of inspiring lessons on how each of us can be our best.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Fleming has been in the public eye for some 30 years since she won the Olympic Gold Medal for figure skating in 1968. She went on to perform in the *Ice Capades* and also became a television

commentator. More recently, Fleming's appearances have been for a very different purpose: she's become a spokeswoman for cancer survivors. Here, Fleming discusses her entire life from her first skating lessons at age nine, touching on her disciplinarian father and domineering mother, her long marriage, her skating career and her treatment for breast cancer. Fleming sees herself as competitive but very shy, and recognizes that it took years for her to stand up for herself. She's quite honest, even when discussing painful subjects. About letting her mother take charge of her wedding, Fleming recalls: "As with most things, she took the reins and produced the whole thing down to the last detail. I just let her do it. It was the price of peace.... Looking back though, I wish I had the self-assurance then that I have now, I wouldn't have let Mom totally run the show." Fleming describes her father: "My dad's way of dealing with this was to be as happy-go-lucky as possible with plenty of help from his buddies and the bottle." Unfortunately, the book proceeds not chronologically but by random recollections. Readers will learn about Fleming personally, but this autobiography offers few substantial insights into the competitive world of figure skating. (Oct.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Fleming's career was the beginning of the modern era in figure skating: as the 1968 Olympic champion, she was the first in a string of American ice princesses to capture the public's attention. Television coverage brought her wide public recognition not only as a skater but also, later (with Dick Button), as a television commentator for the major skating competitions. Now at 50, she reflects on both her accomplishments as a skater and on her recent bout with breast cancer. She dutifully recounts the events of her life, but although some amusing episodes are sprinkled here and there, this is basically a flat story without detail or depth. Gliding across the surface, this book lacks the emotion and drama that must certainly have been central to such a dedicated and successful life in the limelight. Still, until a better biography appears, this is recommended for larger public libraries.-ABonnie Collier, Yale Law Lib., New Haven, CT Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is Peggy Fleming. 'Nuff said. 100% class. Last chapter or so veers from breezy life story to "You can have success, too!" -Little late to get into the self-help inspiration stuff but I really was glad to read this.

Positive and upbeat, this delightful biography could only come from somebody like Peggy Fleming,

a skating icon and national treasure. Her writing is honest, candid, and refreshingly unpretentious. What I like about this book is that it is written in Peggy's voice--you feel as if she is actually talking to you. Even if you're not a skating fan, you'll enjoy this book enormously.

I liked this book a lot- it is an easy read and reminds you not to envy anyone because no one escapes this life without some trials and tribulations. Peggy Flemming's approach to her cancer diagnosis and her quest for physical fitness are compelling. Buy this book- it makes you glad to be healthy and alive!!!!

Too bland. While Peggy Fleming's skating style will always be my favorite, reading this book felt like an entertainer who never really connected with the audience. The book attempts to cover a smattering of events in the author's life but it was too superficial to hold my interest. Here's two examples:-- Peggy alludes to her mother's domineering personality and provides the example of taking control her wedding, but doesn't get into any of the details or how this made her feel. -- Peggy also mentions a favorite marinated pork recipe that she enjoys making for her family, and it would've seemed fitting that the recipe be included but it wasn't. I'm not sure what the focus or the purpose of this book was/is. Is it Peggy's philosophy? An instruction book? Her life story? I think if the author just focused on one of these things, it would've been more successful in both quality and sales.

Yes, we were hoping for something a bit more intense, and juicier. This book reveals Ms Fleming as the classy lady she always has been, but we can't help but be a little disappointed that there is never any dirt under her nails.

I love Peggy Fleming -- she was talented, unspoiled, and professional as an athlete. But folks who want to get to know Peggy in depth will need more than this autobiography. Fleming writes in a very impersonal tone, as if she is telling the story of another skater. While it is chockful of details about skating programs and locations, it lacks any real insight into what it FELT LIKE to be a 1960s Olympic athlete and her views on the skating world today. Fleming barely mentions the pressures that skating must surely have placed on her formative years, family life, social and personal development, and self esteem. The impact of the family's Peggy-focus on her siblings is only lightly mentioned in brief paragraph. Indeed, the most interesting struggle Fleming appears to have had was finding skating outfits that were both pretty and modest. There is also little indepth analysis of

the strengths and weaknesses of the skating world today. Her commentary about the Harding/Kerrigan incident could have easily been made by a nonprofessional spectator. Fleming comes across as a nice person who speaks well of others and the sport, but lacks (or chooses to suppress) any kind of a critical eye to the controversies that have surfaced in the skating world (e.g., excessive pressure to excel, anorexia/bulimia, inside politics, etc.). It is a "nice" book, but Ms. Fleming remains a very private person which is not what one expects when the personal account of someone's life story!

I met Peggy years ago when I was a journalist, she plopped on the floor of her dressing room (It was a major show) and told me of her life. The book reflects so much of what she said. She is the strongest influence on the sport and art of figure skating in our era. Enjoy!

THE LONG PROGRAM was a book I truly enjoyed, from beginning to end. I've always been a Fleming fan, and it was with great interest that I bought the book and began reading about Peggy's humble beginnings, her family's moving around, becoming an athlete, and growing into an Olympic champion. I feel that she was very honest in this book, sharing with the reader the good with the bad, and I felt it was refreshing that she gave her opinion on things like other the performances of other skaters, the Tonya Harding/Nancy Kerrigan incident, the changes in skating, etc. For such a private person to share her real struggle with breast cancer and also to include details of her personal life that others may have chosen to gloss over -- these things make for an exceptional autobiography, which I feel this is. She is a real person, and tells it like it is here in her own uplifting way. I recommend this book highly.

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