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Forward: A Memoir



Synopsis

"Forward" is the powerful story of an athlete who has inspired girls all over the world to believe in themselves. Abby shows us by example how to overcome problems and live a happier, braver life." — Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook COO, New York Times Bestselling author of *Lean In*

"This is the best memoir I've read by an athlete since Andre Agassi's *Open*. I could not put it down, and you will not want it to end." — Adam Grant, Wharton professor and New York Times bestselling author of *Originals* and *Give and Take*

Abby Wambach has always pushed the limits of what is possible. At age seven she was put on the boys' soccer team. At age thirty-five she would become the highest goal scorer — male or female — in the history of soccer, capturing the nation's heart with her team's 2015 World Cup Championship. Called an inspiration and "badass" by President Obama, Abby has become a fierce advocate for women's rights and equal opportunity, pushing to translate the success of her team to the real world. As she reveals in this searching memoir, Abby's professional success often masked her inner struggle to reconcile the various parts of herself: ferocious competitor, daughter, leader, wife. With stunning candor, Abby shares her inspiring and often brutal journey from girl in Rochester, New York, to world-class athlete. Far more than a sports memoir, *Forward* is gripping tale of resilience and redemption and a reminder that heroism is, above all, about embracing life's challenges with fearlessness and heart.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

An Excerpt from *FORWARD* by Abby Wambach I am five years old, my legs pinwheeling across a

soccer field, guiding the ball with my tiny cleats. My mouth is dry from catching the wind. I have only played the game a few times, but it already feels familiar, a task my body knows how to execute without much effort or direction, as though I'd been moving this way since the womb. The ball seems to be magnetically attached to my feet as I push past and through my opponents, looking for my mother in the stands, watching her watch me. When I am on the field I am her sole focus; I imagine myself as something so shiny and special she's unable to look away. Afterward she hugs me and tells me she's proud of my effort, my ability, my dedication. Silently I replay her words and will her to repeat them. Then she hesitates, curls her hands over my shoulders, and lowers herself to my level. "Abby," she says, "you scored a lot of goals today. Don't you think it's important that your teammates become part of it?" I look up at her, confused, and ask, "Isn't the whole point to score goals?" She thinks on that for a moment and admits, "It is." "Well, I am the best one to do that. So if that's the whole point, I don't see the problem." She laughs, trapped by my innocent logic, and I'm not able to articulate my next thought: If you weren't there to witness it, I wouldn't care about scoring at all. My six siblings and I are raised on competition. Tales of diligence and fortitude and success are passed down like cherished heirlooms. We hear about my great-grandfather, who bought a wooden stand, piled it high with colorful pyramids of fruit, and waved down each wagon passing through upstate New York. My grandfather improved upon the idea, trading in the wooden stand for a building and twenty-two acres of land, branding the business Wambach Farms. When he died he left everything to his only child, my father, who, upon his high school graduation, began working at the store seven days a week and has barely stopped since. My father pauses long enough for dinner, coming home at 6 p.m. sharp before heading straight back to the store. His nightly presence at the table is one of the official family rules, a list curated and lengthened by my mother over the years. Another rule is the mandatory head count, instituted after my brother Pat was accidentally left home alone, Macaulay Culkin style, during an outing to a local restaurant. Even manners are a contest. It is widely acknowledged that the Wambach kids are the nicest and best behaved in all of Pittsford, a conservative, suburban community just outside of Rochester. Pittsford is heavily Catholic and affluent, and we not only adhere to but improve on its unspoken code. It is mandated that we will be unfailingly polite to neighbors, strangers, and elders: we will send handwritten thank-you notes; we will hold open doors; we will not mouth off or cuss. We will attend Mass at St. Louis every Sunday, dressed in our finest, and sit erect in the front pew. "That priest up there?" my mom whispers. "He's watching your every move. God is watching, too, so no monkey business." We will behave when my parents go on their annual

vacation to Florida, leaving us with our grandparents, occasionally for months at a time since my dad's work was seasonal. We will listen. We will obey.

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