



In My Shoes: A Memoir

Tamara Mellon , William Patrick

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When Tamara Mellon's father lent her the seed money to start a high-end shoe company, he cautioned her: "Don't let the accountants run your business." Little did he know. Over the next fifteen years, the struggle between "financial" and "creative" would become one of the central themes as Mellon's business savvy, creative eye, and flair for design built Jimmy Choo into a premier name in the competitive fashion industry.

Over time, Mellon grew Jimmy Choo into a billion dollar brand. She became the British prime minister's trade envoy and was honored by the Queen with the Order of the British Empire—yet it's her personal glamour that keeps her an object of global media fascination. Vogue photographed her wedding. *Vanity Fair* covered her divorce and the criminal trial that followed. Harper's Bazaar toured her London town house and her New York mansion, right down to the closets. And the *Wall Street Journal* hinted at the real red meat: the three private equity deals, the relentless battle between "the suits" and "the creatives," and Mellon's triumph against a brutally hostile takeover attempt.

But despite her eventual fame and fortune, Mellon didn't have an easy road to success. Her seemingly glamorous beginnings in the mansions of London and Beverly Hills were marked by a tumultuous and broken family life, battles with anxiety and depression, and a stint in rehab. Determined not to end up unemployed, penniless, and living in her parents' basement under the control of her alcoholic mother, Mellon honed her natural business sense and invested in what she knew best—fashion.

In creating the shoes that became a fixture on *Sex and the City* and red carpets around the world, Mellon relied on her own impeccable sense of what the customer wanted—because she was that customer. What she didn't know at the time was that success would come at a high price—after struggles with an obstinate business partner, a conniving first CEO, a turbulent marriage, and a mother who tried to steal her hard-earned wealth.

Now Mellon shares the whole larger-than-life story, with shocking details that have never been presented before. From her troubled childhood to her time as a young editor at Vogue to her partnership with cobbler Jimmy Choo to her very public relationships, Mellon offers an honest and gripping account of the episodes that have made her who she is today.

As Mellon readies herself for her next entrepreneurial venture, *In My Shoes* is a definitive book for fashion aficionados, aspiring entrepreneurs, and anyone who loves a juicy true story about sex, drugs, money, power, high heels, and overcoming adversity.

In My Shoes: A Memoir Details

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Temi Panayotova says

<http://www.writingis.fun/%D0%B1%D0%B8...>

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Jane Stewart says

4 ½ stars. A Memoir. Fascinating story. I felt good at the end, but I wanted pictures.

This is the story of Tamara’s rise to fame (in the fashion world) and wealth. In much of the book I’m thinking “no, don’t do that” as she makes decisions that cause problems later. But the purpose of the book is to show her decisions, mistakes, consequences, her struggles through them, surviving, and succeeding. At the end of the book she is starting a new business and I am excited for her knowing she will not be making the same mistakes again. I am also excited because she is a creative fashion genius. She knows what is beautiful and what women will love - kind of like Steve Jobs in the tech field.

If you’re looking for something about celebrities and a fancy lifestyle, you may not want this. This is more appropriate for young entrepreneurs and/or women.

My feelings during the book varied. Many times I was suffering and frustrated at what she was going through. Private equity investors controlled 51% of the company and forced decisions against her wishes. She was forced to put up with a CEO who was verbally abusive and made decisions based on ego rather than the good of the company.

Tamara’s mother was a monster - a narcissist and sociopath. From childhood on Tamara suffered terrible abuse from her mother.

At times I felt like I was Tamara’s therapist, listening to her troubles and complaints. But she’s telling me her story. These are her words, her thoughts, her feelings. And that’s ok. This is a memoir, not a biography. A biographer would bring in a more balanced story with others’ opinions. So some readers might not be in the mood to listen that way, but I was fine with it.

Several times Tamara mentioned names of famous people and investment groups that I had never heard of before. It would have been helpful if she clarified parenthetically who she was talking about. But it wasn’t a big problem, I skipped through those.

Some things I found interesting:

In the beginning, Tamara wanted to be involved with quality fashionable shoes. So she approached Jimmy Choo a local shoe maker proposing they work together. She thought he would design and she would do the

administration, production, and marketing. But to her surprise, he was not a good designer. She threw out what he did and did the designs herself. As it turned out she was the amazing creative artistic genius, and others were hired to do what she thought she would be doing. So she didn't need Jimmy Choo. He did nothing. Yet he owned 50% of the business and would not agree to things like expansion. I think many of us have assumed we are not good at something, yet we've never tried it enough to know. I liked her comment "every mistake I made was from not trusting myself."

Tamara did not know until around age 40 that she had ADD (attention deficit disorder). She also learned she had PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder) from growing up under the abusive stress from her mother. It caused permanent hormonal imbalances, which medications later helped with. Tamara also suffered verbal abuse from the private equity investors and the company CEO. Regarding this she said "The relief I feel at avoiding failure or abuse is always more pronounced than any real pleasure in achievement or recognition."

I was intrigued with Tamara's inspiration trips which were her muse for her artistic creations. She started with flea markets and later traveled to locations throughout the world.

I wish the book included pictures. This is about Tamara's artistic creations. I wanted to see her first shoe designs and some of the more famous designs. The audiobook should have a pdf file for buyers to download.

DATA:

Narrative mode: 1st person Tamara Mellon. Unabridged audiobook length: 8 hrs and 31 mins. Swearing language: a couple words a couple times. Sexual content: none. Setting: U.K. and U.S. from around 1990 to 2012. Book copyright: 2013. Genre: memoirs.

Catherine says

The story of building the Jimmy Choo brand is interesting, and should be admired she started with 150,000 pounds, and sold it for 185 million. Tamara Mellon has built a relevant and compelling luxury brand that she was indeed pushed out of, which seems short sighted buy the company owners. All seemed to miss the fact Tamara Mellon in addition to being the creative force, was the brand, Without doubt she understood the customer, what they wanted, and how to stay relevant in the fickle world of fashion. She also deeply understands what a luxury brand should be in terms of quality.

Her tone and need to convey how mistreated she has been by her mother becomes a bit tiring. She clearly wants to be validated as the victim by the reader. Its an easy read, and worthwhile if this is an area of interest you. I did learn a fair amount about private equity, and the process of manufacturing a luxury shoe line. She has very valid points about private equity not understanding the creative process of fashion, and the whims of the customer.

I am curious to see what happens with her new line, from both a creative fashion standpoint, and as a business.

Adelina Genova says

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<http://christinnel.blogspot.bg/2015/1...>

Brita says

LOVED this book. It wasn't the easiest read...I found all the "mumbo jumbo" talk about the business side of things a bit much, mostly because it went WAY over my head. I also kinda of felt like Tamara was telling us a bit too much detail about the behind the scenes business dealings and her court cases (can't she get sued for telling that stuff?)...However, there was a lot of name dropping, which I find really fun. This woman obviously have lived a privileged life and hell, if she wants to tell me about THAT stuff, then who am I to skip those pages? The book was fun because her life is so very different than mine. A lot of it was very glamorous, but at the same time, Tamara really does let you in on all the struggles that she has gone through since basically, birth, dealing with her mother, her ex-husband, and all the horrible people she gets involved with in the business world. I found this made her a more sympathetic character. She did mention a few times as well, that she became the face of the business, so the parts about the parties and events and the hair and make up costs and private jets and all that, seemed to make sense to me. I'm not going to spend 500 bucks on a pair of shoes, when I see the designer/creative head, showing up to the Oscars in jeans and with limp hair. She had to play the part, and I respect that. There was definitely enough in the book to show that she is a hard working, focused and extremely driven woman that has been through a lot, so I think the negative comments about her on this site do seem a bit silly. She came from a family of money and she may have been given opportunities that us normal folk would never get, but she very obviously worked hard and overcame a lot to get where she is today.

As a side note, I am OBSESSED with magazines, any and all, not just fashion, so anytime she name dropped someone in the magazine world, I instantly Googled them and read everything I could. I loved this about the book.

Overall, the book was a good read, interesting, a bit glamorous and it's something you could easily read in a Saturday afternoon.

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Jessica says

Poooooooooooooor me. Poor little me. I am a pretty, smart girl, born into a world of priveledge.

That's me being harsh. She obviously has major family problems and from her perspective, her mom does sound absolutely wacko.

But there was A LOT of complaining in this book. Complain, name drop, woe is me. Complain, name drop, woe is me. My daughter! My daughter! My daughter!

Right. You don't have to read the book. You just did.

The BEST part about this book was her viewpoint on Jimmy Choo! He sounds creepy and crazy! Boy do I want to meet him. Oh, and how he had little to nothing to do with the brand.

Dear God,

I want someone to give me millions of pounds just because I have a nice name.

Amen.

RYCJ says

Enjoyable writing and easy reading; the sincerity being so frank that the account read candid to a fault. From the outset Mellon's innovative 'couture' fashion ideas and desire to grow the Jimmy Choo brand, figured at odds with Jimmy (the cobbler) Choo's interest to work in a more exclusive manner with his craft and clientele. This all sets the tone for events to come, the makings of one page-turning event. While it was hard reading about Mellon's many troubles, the energy behind her creative ideas was magnetic. I especially rooted for that ending...a sentiment that was with me at the start of the story. Recommended reading, especially for aspiring entrepreneurs, or shoe junkies like me.

Shelley Seddon says

Meh. Very "poor little rich girl". No one cared about her education so she ended up going to Swiss finishing school by default. She had to live in the basement of her parent's mansion because she couldn't afford a place of her own. She wasn't reimbursed for a \$40,000 private jet trip to St Barths. These are beyond first world problems. But there is no doubt Tamara is incredibly stylish and very business savvy.

I'm sure her mother IS bat-crap crazy and some of the people at Jimmy Choo were a pain-in-the arse to work with - but is EVERYONE in her life out to destroy her?

I admire her but she doesn't come across as particularly likeable and the book isn't even very well written, even with a ghostwriter. A little heavy on minute details of her court cases and business deals but a somewhat interesting read. I would love it if she would write a style guide. It definitely made me not want to buy anything from Jimmy Choo ever again.

Joanna says

Although I am not an obsessive shoe aficionado, this was a really interesting read about a woman making her way in the business world.

Tamara Mellon, as a narrator, can be a bit of a pill. But she is also a ferocious executive and a hell of a talented creative force. Sure, she name drops to the point of utter silliness, and she doesn't seem to see a lot of gray in the behaviors of those around her - they are either her supporters and good, or her enemies and bad - but that doesn't make her story a bit less interesting.

It's a personal narrative, and not intended to be a guide for All Women in Business. (Certainly, it is not much of a replicable path to be to the Nouveau Manor Born, and then marry one of the heirs to the Mellon fortune.) Nonetheless, you can't come away from this book not appreciating the fact that she worked like a dog for years, genuinely for the good of the company, valuing it much more highly than her own financial gains or emotional or physical well being. And she is never afraid to be brutally honest about making mistakes - sometimes big ones, like getting in bed with venture capital.

She sometimes compares her story to that of a Danielle Steele heroine, and if you like your stories of romance and struggle to involve shoes and high stakes drama, that's not too far from the mark. Of course, she does get a bit poor-poor-pitiful me from time to time, but I didn't feel that it was enough to mar my overall enjoyment of the book.

I do wish that she had gone into more detail at the end - her leaving the company, especially in light of all the years and all the care she had devoted to it - felt a bit sudden. Then again, when she talked about having to recover from post-traumatic stress for a year after making the break, I suppose that level of burnout makes it more understandable.

Tamara Mellon doesn't always come across as likable, but she does indisputably possess and indomitable bravery, sense of style, and enviable business savvy. I'm glad I picked this up, as it took me into a world of high fashion shoes and cut throat business that I would never have otherwise experienced.

Brittany says

How I Came To Read This Book: I received a review copy from the publisher.

The Plot: Tamara Mellon is best known as the face and co-founder of luxury goods brand Jimmy Choo. Despite living the life of a globetrotting socialite, this raw tell all reveals a far darker portrait of a woman fighting severe anxiety and stress brought on by her family, drug-addled husband, uncooperative business partners, and the general strain of being a female executive. While the book touches on Tamara's youth in America, the UK and Switzerland (or wherever her finishing school was), it's all really a frame for the rise of Jimmy Choo and the prices she's had to pay for climbing up the ladder with it.

The Good & The Bad: I can't even quite put into words what I thought about this book. For one thing, remind me never to get on Tamara Mellon's shit list. For another, I can say this: if you are looking for a TRUE tell all, this book is it. Every time I've picked up a story that promises to dish tons of juicy gossip, it's always fallen short or been just as easily accessed on the internet (key exception: Game Change). But this is a book that can really only have been written by Tamara Mellon. Talk about airing your dirty laundry –

virtually every ‘character’ in the story gets a pretty visceral tongue-lashing, which leads me to believe that while this was perhaps a therapeutic exercise for Tamara, it wasn’t necessarily the sagest of business moves.

Truth be told, I was only obliquely aware of who she was going into the book. My mom had mentioned to me a Vanity Fair profile or something that spoke to the brand’s crazy back story, but beyond that I went into the story pretty blindly, certainly aware of Jimmy Choo brand but not its creator (real or imagined). The book itself is relatively easy to follow, although the constant use of blatant foreshadowing (with frequent mentions of the ‘worse was yet to come’) becomes quite tired in the early chapters. I appreciated that Tamara’s childhood was really only explored to help explain some of the issues she grapples with as an adult – we don’t need a bio of this woman per se and she recognizes the salient parts of her life generally tie into her notoriety as the face of Jimmy Choo. From there, the book talks about Tamara’s unwitting business partner and brand namesake, coupled with the grind she went through in the early days of the brand. After that, things get a lot more complex and business-focused (and scathing) as Jimmy Choo enters the world of private equity – a match very much not made in heaven. From court cases to buyouts to misplaced shares, it can all be a little heady, but Tamara grounds the technical side of her story with pretty vicious character assassinations.

It’s hard to feel total sympathy for Tamara. Between the name dropping and endless stream of poor little rich girl anecdotes, she can be a little tiresome. Of course, I think she was very shrewd and savvy in releasing this book in advance of any of her nemeses stepping up to the plate – but she’s also the only person in the story that COULD have released a book period, given she’s the ‘name’ associated with the brand.

Although she gives herself a few knocks throughout, they feel almost perfunctory, as if to say “Well we all make our mistakes but clearly THESE people’s mistakes are SO MUCH WORSE THAN MINE.” Alongside these slightly self-deprecating remarks, of course, are plenty of proclamations of Tamara’s personal triumphs and numerous occasions where people simply wouldn’t listen to her brilliant ideas. I do acknowledge that some of the scenarios she paints clearly point to some poisoning in male-dominated business world. But given the overall angry, frustrated tone of the book, it does leave a kernel of suspicion in the readers mind as to how much of the story is skewed by the emotional lens Tamara is writing it through.

Still, I’m hard-pressed to really complain. I found the book surprisingly gripping and interesting, and also relevant to my career (of which I have to consider things like valuations) and personal interests (fashion!) It does teeter on the precipice of being a ‘trashy read’, but credit where it’s due: Tamara (and her ghostwriter) wrangle this circus of a story into something riveting from start to finish. If you go into this with an open mind that this woman is quite literally laying it all out there (and can get past the ego-driven overtones), it’s easily a good read. I really rated it based on the idea of being a true, rather unvarnished and kinda maniacal story. If you’re expecting high journalism, look elsewhere. But for what it was, I enjoyed it.

The Bottom Line: Although hyper-charged with emotion, the book easily hooks you, even during the murkiest business-focused components.

Anything Memorable?: Nothing specific, although I kept on going online afterward to track down the various successes and memorable moments in the Jimmy Choo story (the H&M collaboration, the ad campaigns, the first Sex & the City reference).

60-Book Challenge?: Book #56 in 2013

Alodie Feldhousen says

The theme of my reading has been female entrepreneurs. My whole life I've (somewhat ignorantly) found money, lawyers, stocks, shares, equity, entrepreneurs and startups to be beyond boring. Tamera Mellon repeats a theme I've heard again and again, it's a man's world babe and yet, it does not have to be.
