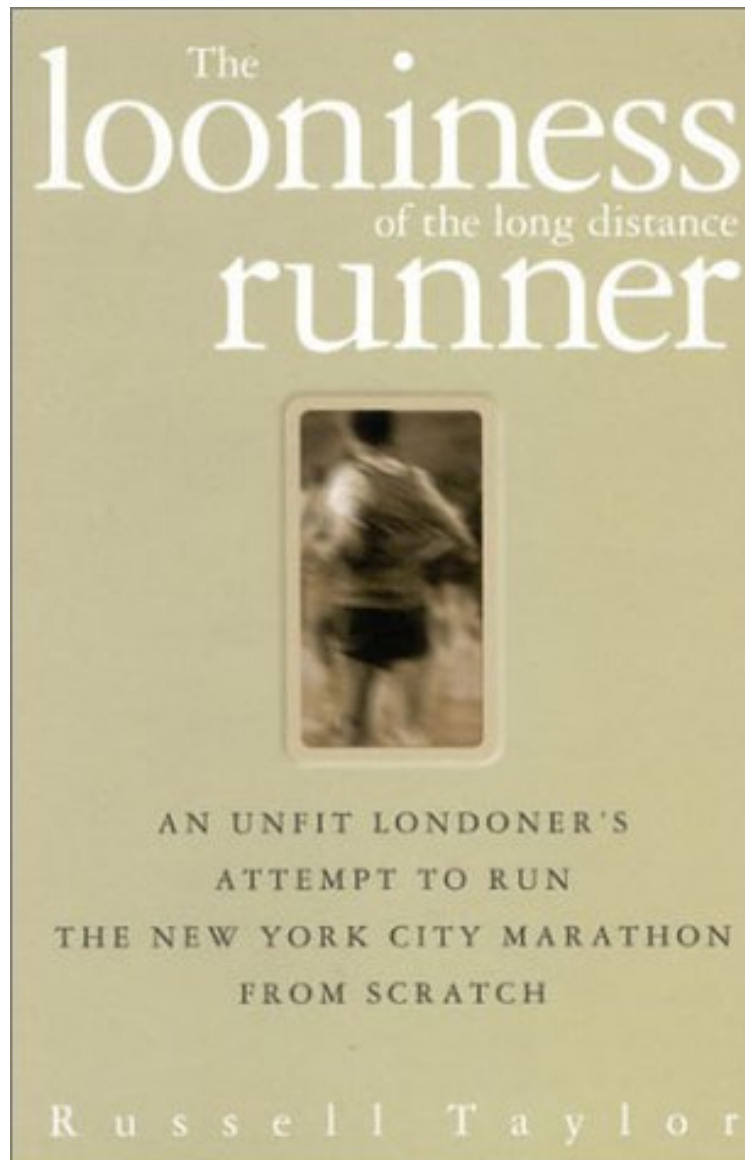


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The Looniness Of The Long Distance Runner

Russell Taylor

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Russell Taylor : The Looniness Of The Long Distance Runner before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Looniness Of The Long Distance Runner:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. sometimes funny, but overall not terribly interesting By Joe Sherry After agreeing to sponsor a friend of his for the NYC Marathon, Russell Taylor decides that he would like to run that marathon the following year. Taylor is nearly 40 years old and is not a runner. "The Looniness of the Long Distance Runner" is Taylor's account of training for the NYC Marathon. The subtitle for this book covers exactly how

crazy he is: "an unfit Londoner's attempt to run the New York City Marathon from scratch". Russell Taylor is, apparently a humor writer, and so this book is filled with humorous observations on running, training, races, and why exactly he is doing this. Some of it is actually quite funny and I honestly found myself chuckling out loud a couple of times. Unfortunately, when I wasn't chuckling I was reading and hoping that something interesting would be on the next page. Often enough there wasn't. As a runner I am drawn to books about running and about marathons so I figured this book would be a natural fit, but it was a struggle to get through this one. Taylor includes a section of his training diary and that section was the single least interesting part of the book. It just dragged on and on and on. Sort of like this review. Then Taylor gets to the races. As a part of his training Taylor ran several races and his racecourse descriptions and his feelings during the race (he made some interesting decisions as to which ones to run) were fascinating and funny. Once again I started enjoying parts of the book. The marathon itself seemed a little skimpy in the description. I just can't recommend "The Looniness of the Long Distance Runner" to anyone. There are far better books about one man's journey to race (try "To the Edge" by Kirk Johnson for a more interesting book about an ultramarathon), and unfortunately when the humor stops there isn't much here to hold my interest. Pass on this one. - Joe Sherry

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Very British humor but observations apply to US runners too

By Alex Stewart Taylor is a professional British comic writer, which shows: the book's well written, funny, and British. British in a P. G. Wodehouse, not a ribald way. Much of the humor derives from his observations of runners' everyday peculiarities, most of which may be seen in the new world as well. The book is also a bit sad, because (I think) Taylor tried to overcome middle aged unfitnes too quickly - to run the NY Marathon - and paid a price. The price was all post-NY so I'll not reveal details. But check his 1/2 marathon time and his NY time: the former predicts over 20 minutes better than he ran in NY. Check also his training heart rates: too high. It's fair to assume he ran the marathon before he was ready. But as he writes the "marathon" is a unique brand; who'd want to read about his travails trying to run merely 13.1 miles?

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Refreshing, humorous and just fun to read

By A Customer Well, there are lots of books nowadays in the market about how one swims, runs, bikesto regain lost championship, for his/hers lost brother.. to just almost everything and I have honestly read at least 15 of them. What makes this book different is that it is written by a British author and it is refreshing to read about the sarcastic British humor about being a runner, for example : the long distance runner is always the first one discovered dead body ... I kept giggling and laughing throughout the whole book. One problem - if you are an average american like me who masters the most between two to three thousands words, there are a lot of new words to be discovered in this book.

This book charts the attempts of a totally unfit 39-year-old Londoner to run the ultimate distance: the 26.2 miles of the New York Marathon.

From Booklist Who would guess that a book on training for a marathon could not only be highly entertaining but even howlingly funny? Taylor, a thirtysomething London journalist, decides to enter the New York City Marathon and write a book about it. Given that his most recent running experience was at a school sports day in 1971, he's got a long way to go. Taylor's self-deprecating, sardonic writing style turns what could have been tiresome descriptions of his training regime and his first few races into laugh-aloud prose. His transformation from novice jogger to hard-bodied marathoner wins him a 7,659th-place finish (out of 32,000) in the NYC Marathon and will have readers suffering (and laughing) right along with him through the preparations. Although it bogs down occasionally (there's not much that's funny about nutritional supplements or runner's nipple), Taylor's book is ultimately both amusing and eye-opening and will appeal to a wide range of readers--even those whose running experience is limited to sprinting for their morning bus.

Emily Melton Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved Taylor is a humor writer. . . and he puts his talent to prodigious use in documenting his odyssey-by-foot. . . -- New York Newsday, August 4, 2002

Who would guess that a book on training for a marathon could not only be highly entertaining but. . .howlingly funny? -- Booklist, October 1, 2002

From the Publisher In his months of inconsistent training leading up to the event inspired by a battle in 4th century B.C., Russell Taylor brings us: Inspiring words of encouragement " 'Only nine miles to go,' I find myself thinking. This wrenches me out of my reverie. Since when has the prefix "only" ever been applied to the predicate "nine miles" unless one is traveling in a jet aircraft?" Dramatic conflict "One man is running backwards. Please God, don't let him beat me." Empirically validated revisions to age-old coaching techniques "I am already starting to appreciate the inverse relationship that exists between alcoholic intake and successful visits to the gym the next morning. I know that I should give up booze. . .[but] stopping drinking all at once would give as big a shock to my system as trying to run 26.2 miles straight off."