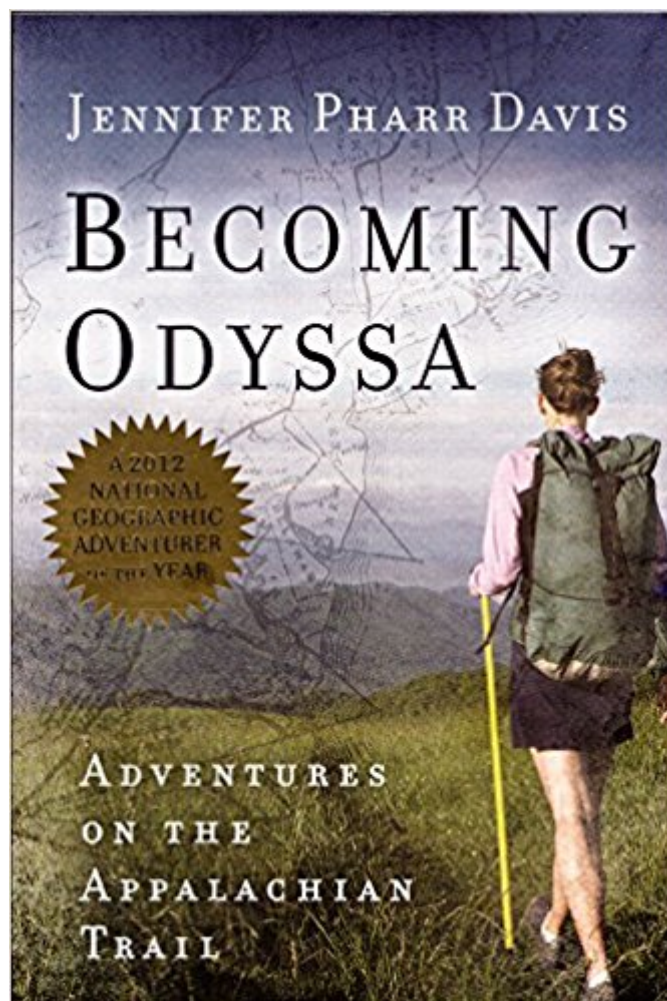


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# Becoming Odysa: Adventures On The Appalachian Trail



## Synopsis

After graduating from college, Jennifer isn't sure what she wants to do with her life. She is drawn to the Appalachian Trail, a 2175-mile footpath that stretches from Georgia to Maine. Though her friends and family think she's crazy, she sets out alone to hike the trail, hoping it will give her time to think about what she wants to do next. The next four months are the most physically and emotionally challenging of her life. She quickly discovers that thru-hiking is harder than she had imagined: coping with blisters and aching shoulders from the 30-pound pack she carries; sleeping on the hard wooden floors of trail shelters; hiking through endless torrents of rain and even a blizzard. With every step she takes, Jennifer transitions from an over-confident college graduate to a student of the trail, braving situations she never imagined before her thru-hike. The trail is full of unexpected kindness, generosity, and humor. And when tragedy strikes, she learns that she can depend on other people to help her in times of need.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Davis is the record holder for the women's supported hike (2,175 miles in 57 days, with someone carrying her supplies) in the Appalachian Trail, which runs between Mount Katahdin in Maine and Springer Mountain in Georgia. The A.T. is not only a hike, but a subculture: a community where everyone has a trail name, where there are well-placed hiker huts, trail-side towns whose main economy is supporting hikers, complicated trail etiquette, regular occurrences of trail magic, and a recurring cast of freaks and Christians, show-offs and loners, and experts and beginners. Though the book opens the night before Davis's record-breaking hike, this is actually the story of her first

thru-hike, undertaken as a new college grad who, despite limited hiking experience, felt "called." It's the story of her becoming "Odysa," her chosen trail name. These days, the word amateur is usually used disparagingly, and in some ways that applies here—•the book feels homemade, and the writing is often clunky—•but the root of the word is love: amateurs pursue activities for love, not money, and that's what shines through in Davis's record of a difficult, painful, and exhilarating world. (Nov.) --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"As the father of daughters, I enjoyed Jennifer's story. If you're the father of a daughter who's wondering if she can achieve big things - and everyone has doubts from time-to-time, you might want to get a copy for her- it might help get her on the right trail for great things in her life, too. - Jim Shepherd, The Outdoor World's refreshing. [Jen]'s very enthusiastic and she inspires other people. She's good for the outdoors. --- Gary Eblen, Diamond Brand Outdoors"Many books have been written by thru-hikers, but none measure up to Jennifer Pharr Davis' epic. The Appalachian Trail speed record holder describes her journey from college graduate to a student of the trail in stunningly beautiful detail. Her tales from the trail are full of adventure and inspiration, and her writing is as lyrical as her Odyssey-inspired trail name. She offers concrete, trail-tested advice for aspiring thru-hikers, and she candidly shares her failures and frustrations along with her successes. If you're searching for the one A.T. book that best captures the spirit of the trail, follow in the footsteps of Odysa." --Bro Staff, Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine"This is the best AT book I have ever read. It doesn't matter if you are male or female, skinny or fat, outdoorsman or couch potato, if you've ever thought about doing a long-distance hike, then read Davis' book. I would rate this book as more essential to the mental preparation for a long-distance hike than anything else you could do." ---Dr. David W. Powers, The Coffee Scholar blog

I do a lot of biking and day hiking. I say a lot but it's all relative. I'm reminded of that Ricky Gervais commercial where the company claims to be four times better. Better than what? Better than we used to be. Well that's me. I ride and hike four times better than I used to and I owe it to my family and friends who provide my support and motivation. Two of those very good friends told me about this particular authors accomplishments on the trail and her subsequent book. I promptly downloaded and started reading the book on their referral but... I could have and would have stopped reading if the book, on its own merits, was not a compelling page turner that drew me deeper and deeper into her relentless quest for personal challenge and growth. I highly recommend this book to hikers who dream of facing the ultimate test and to parents and friends of hikers who

wonder why?

I have been on a AT and PCT reading binge lately that started with "Wild". I thought this book was great. I feel that it was honest accounting of Jennifer's adventure on the trail. When Jennifer was feeling down or depressed she expressed her negative feelings in her writing. This seems perfectly normal to me, I'm sure there are a lot of times when you don't feel like smiling and skipping down the trail. While I'm not a religious person, the religion injected in the book didn't do me any harm and I don't fault her for it. I've noticed especially on these hiking books that reviewers want to rate the authors experience (or lack of), their gear choices, their methods and preparedness. (This gal was 21 on this hike!!) That is not what should be reviewed, they should be reviewing the book itself and the authors ability to relate their experiences and capture the readers attention and make them want to turn the page. I salute Jennifer and her long list of accomplishments!

"Becoming Odyssea" describes itself as "epic," and it really is a wonderfully adventurous account of Jennifer Pharr Davis's first walk as a through-hiker on the fabled and difficult Appalachian Trail (AT.) Along the way there were encounters of many kinds, "the good and the bad, the hard and the ugly," Davis says. Certainly the awful moment of arriving at a shelter and finding the body of a suicide still dangling from a rope was the hardest of all times for the author. On other days she experienced the rudeness of weekend hikers out from the big cities who spread out their belongings all over camping sites and who had no sense of sharing the limited facilities that the AT offers. At times there were snakes, bears, and some rather frightening people on the path, as well as good and generous people who would become lifetime friends. Often undernourished, sometimes in pain, illness, or physical danger, Davis was unknowingly preparing herself for her later record-setting walk which would beat not only the women's record but even the men's speed record for the AT. The author's personal faith was very important in keeping her going through good times and bad on this first walk of the Trail, as it would be in her later victory. "I sensed God's presence and felt very aware of all the blessings that filled my life," she says. I liked the author's genuineness and openness in sharing all her ups and downs, and I found the book uplifting as well as very interesting.

I just finished reading Jennifer Pharr Davis' account of a doing a thru-hike of all 2,175 miles of the

AT (Appalachian Trail) and I must say this is the best of the 5 books on the subject I've read yet!! I was intrigued to read an account written from a female perspective and I must say that her account exceeded my expectations ...It reads like a coming of age story, written with a surprising innocence and naïveté by the recent college graduate who sets out not just for an adventure, but to "find herself". If you appreciate a story about connecting with nature and / or self discovery this book will have you hooked from the first chapter! It's amazing what she had to overcome to complete the journey. Oh, and in 2011 she hiked the entire trail a second time in just 46 days! That's almost 50 miles a day folks! (Unbelievably, another dude bested that record 4 years later!) I look forward to reading more of Mrs Pharr's adventures in the future!

I don't read as much as I used to. Most books, I start, but don't finish. I feel like I "get the point" in the first few chapters, and then have no further interest. This one, I read in three sittings over three days. I probably would have read it straight through non-stop if I didn't have other things that I had to do. The third and final sitting I intentionally put off until the next day, so I could enjoy it more. This is an absolutely wonderful book. It is so raw, so real, so honest, and so meaningful. A journey that takes place on more than one level is a classic kind of story, and risks being trite. But this is the real thing, and beautifully told. It probably doesn't hurt that I'm a fellow North Carolinian (and Chapel Hill grad, and basketball fan). Or that I have hiked since I was a child, and spent my teens and 20's in Pisgah and Nantahala. Or that I have been somewhat obsessed with the AT my whole life. It may also be relevant that I consider myself a spiritual person, but that I experience God most clearly when I am furthest from "civilization". I think maybe I'm kind of a kindred spirit with Odysseus, although I have not had the courage to forge ahead into the kinds of challenges she has confronted. I will probably never thru-hike the Appalachian Trail. I spent my younger years buried in books and pursuing an academic career that I eventually traded for a professional one, and now my family and my work require me. Maybe I'll eventually be one of the gray-haired retirees Odysseus encounters on the trail. Either way, I'm grateful for people like her, who keep the dream alive, and help bring it into the lives of others. I highly, highly recommend this book, to anyone and everyone.

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