

Triple A:
Five Autobiographies in Audio Read by the Authors
by Tracy Larrabee

If You Ask Me (And of Course You Won't) by Betty White

I probably had you at *Betty White*, so all I need to say to you is, "Yes, it really is as funny and fun and sweet as you can imagine it would be!" This is a short little book at 2 hours and 16 minutes, but Betty is able to touch on all the things that mean so much to her; friendship, romance, love for animals, and her lengthy acting career. We feel like she is talking directly to us, giving us our own personal insight into what it is really like to be the beloved celebrity crush to so many, while remaining humble and joyful and appreciative of all the good fortunes in her life. Do you know her one biggest regret, though? Ms. White has several other autobiographies which she narrates including *Here We Go Again: My Life in Television*.

Let's Just Say It Wasn't Pretty by Diane Keaton

Keaton's book reads like a series of essays talking about various aspects of the author/actor's life. We learn about her feelings for aging, fashion, motherhood, romance, and how each has affected her personal style and emotional reactions to the ideal of beauty. The reader feels like they have known Diane all her life and we are welcomed in as intimate friends to the actress. But the best part of listening to the musings of our author is experiencing the humor and humility that we know and love from her many interviews over the years. At about 5 hours, this is another shorter book to fill a little time with some laughs. A prior autobiography called *Then Again*, and her most recent one called *Brother and Sister: a Memoir*, offer further insights into this actor's life.

A Girl Named Zippy by Haven Kimmel

Born in 1965 and growing up in small-town Indiana, Haven Kimmel recounts her childhood with belly-laughing humor and sweet and sentimental moments. The relationship between her and her parents ranges from their frustrations with the music blaring from her bedroom, to the fact that she never slows down, hence her nickname, Zippy. As a walk back through time for those of us from this era, some of the social behaviors do not seem so unusual, although it is difficult to experience her father's

drinking and anger management issues, and her mother's depression as a result of her situation. However, this is the life that Zippy remembers, and morphs into a funny and sweet account of her childhood. This audio is 6.5 hours long. The sequel to this book is called *She Got Up Off the Couch*, and many, like me, enjoyed it more than her first book. It tells the tale of her mother who makes a decision to take her life back. It is a success story that is almost too incredible to believe.

A Fine Romance by Candace Bergen

In Bergen's later-life autobiography, we once again find the comfort of listening to a voice we could recognize blindfolded. Most of us know many of the details of the actor's life, however, what we are given in this book is a glimpse into the emotions relating to her life's most important and significant events. The complicated relationship she had with husband, director Louis Malle, the unexpected joy she finds in motherhood, the controversy amidst the success of her television hit *Murphy Brown*, the loss of her husband to cancer, and a subsequent new love story, help us to feel like there is hope, redemption and success waiting for us, regardless of our age. Our longest book at 14 hours, it is certainly not a slow and boring book, by any means. Bergen's first autobiography, *Knock Wood*, was written in 1984 and does not have an audio version, but is available in print and kindle formats.

Following Atticus by Tom Ryan

It helps to either be from Boston, or to have an unusual affection for the Boston accent, to understand and enjoy Tom Ryan's reading of his autobiography. Based on his life with his Miniature Schnauzer, Atticus M. Finch, and their attempts to climb the famous White Mountains' 48 peaks over 4000 feet, it's a story that seems to be out of a fairy tale. The scary monsters are the vicious snow storms that come out of nowhere, and battle against man and dog. Surrounding the amazing physical story of bracing against the elements and the mountains, is a heart-wrenching tale of loss, family difficulties, political activism, and spiritual discovery. The gift of the story is to experience the perseverance of man and dog, and to fall in love with the little canine athlete that could. A hardcover edition as a side source provides a beautiful collection of glossy images from the tops of those peaks, as Atticus looks out over the mountain ranges, and ponders the glory of nature. This book is 9 hours of audio. A second book, recounting the life of a dog named Will, is equally as inspiring. The title is *Will's Red Coat*, and follows the life of a very senior dog, who comes to stay with Ryan for his last months of life, and ends up transforming himself and those around him for two years.