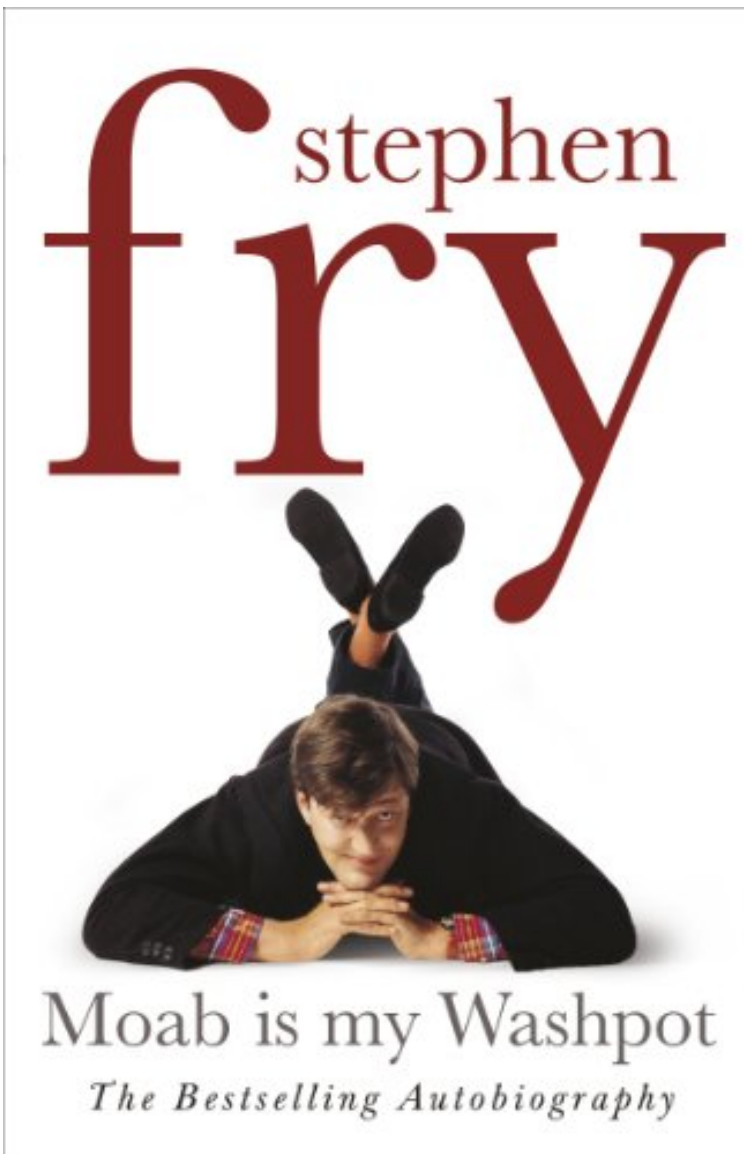


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# Moab Is My Washpot



*Par Stephen Fry*  
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**Description :** Description du produitA number one bestseller in Britain that topped the lists there for months, Stephen Fry's astonishingly frank, funny, wise memoir is the book that his fans everywhere have been waiting for. Since his PBS television debut in the Blackadder series, the American profile of this multitalented writer, actor and comedian has grown steadily, especially in the wake of his title role in the film Wilde, which earned him a Golden Globe nomination, and his supporting role in A Civil Action. Fry has already given readers a taste of his tumultuous adolescence in his autobiographical first novel, The Liar, and now he reveals the equally tumultuous life that inspired it. Sent to boarding school at the age of seven, he survived beatings, misery, love affairs, carnal violation, expulsion, attempted suicide, criminal conviction and imprisonment to emerge, at the age of eighteen, ready to start over in a world in which he had always felt a stranger. One of very few Cambridge University graduates to have been imprisoned prior to his

freshman year, Fry is a brilliantly idiosyncratic character who continues to attract controversy, empathy and real devotion. This extraordinary and affecting book has "a tragic grandeur that lifts it to classic status," raved the Financial Times in one of the many ecstatic British reviews. Stephen Fry's autobiography, in turns funny, shocking, sad, bruisingly frank and always compulsively readable, could well become a classic gay coming-of-age memoir.

Prsentation de l'diteurThe original bestselling autobiography by the comedian, novelist and national treasure, Stephen Fry. Moab is My Washpot is in turns funny, shocking, tender, delicious, sad, lyrical, bruisingly frank and addictively readable. Stephen Fry's bestselling memoir tells how, sent to a boarding school 200 miles from home at the age of seven, he survived beatings, misery, love, ecstasy, carnal violation, expulsion, imprisonment, criminal conviction, probation and catastrophe to emerge, at eighteen, ready to try and face the world in which he had always felt a stranger. Fry writes with the wit to which we have become accustomed, but with shocking candour too. In an age of glossy celebrity autobiographies, Moab is My Washpot sets the high standard to which others should aspire..com Stephen Fry is not making this up! Fry started out as a dishonorable schoolboy inclined to lies, pranks, bringing decaying moles to school as a science exhibit, theft, suicide attempts, the illicit pursuit of candy and lads, a genius for mischief, and a neurotic life of crime that sent him straight to Pucklechurch Prison and Cambridge University, where he vaulted to fame along with actress Emma Thompson. He wound up starring as Oscar Wilde in the film Wilde, costarring in A Civil Action, and writing funny, distinguished novels. This irresistible book, the best-written celebrity memoir of 1999, concentrates on Fry's first two tumultuous decades, but beware! A Fry sentence can lead anywhere, from a ringing defense of beating schoolchildren to a thoughtful comparison of male and female naughty parts. Fry's deepest regrets seem to be the elusiveness of a particular boy's love and the fact that, despite his keen ear for music, Fry's singing voice can make listeners "claw out their inner ears, electrocute their genitals, put on a Jim Reeves record, throw themselves cackling hysterically onto the path of moving buses... anything, anything to take away the pain." A chance mention of Fry's time-travel book about thwarting Hitler, Making History (a finalist for the 1998 Sidewise Award for Best Alternative History), leads to the startling real-life revelation that Fry's own Jewish uncle may have loaned a young, shivering Hitler the coat off his back. Fry's life is full of school and jailhouse blues overcome by jaunty wit, la Wilde. The title, from Psalm 108:9, refers to King David's triumph over the Philistines. Fry triumphs similarly, and with more style. --Tim Appelo Extrait Moab Is My Washpot "Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe." JOINING IN "Look, Marguerite . . . England!" Closing lines of The Scarlet Pimpernel, 1934 I For some reason I recall it as just me and Bunce. No one else in the compartment at all. Just me, eight years and a month old, and this inexpressibly small dab of misery who told me in one hot, husky breath that his name was Samuel anthony farlowe bunce. I remember why we were alone now. My mother had dropped us off early at Paddington Station. My second term. The train to Stroud had a whole carriage reserved for us. Usually by the time my mother, brother and I had arrived on the platform there would have been a great bobbing of boaters dipping careless farewells into a sea of entirely unacceptable maternal hats. Amongst the first to arrive this time, my brother had found a compartment where an older boy already sat amongst his opened tuck-box, ready to show off his pencil cases and conker skewers while I had moved respectfully forward to leave them to it. I was still only a term old after all. Besides, I wasn't entirely sure what a conker skewer might be. The next compartment contained what appeared to be a tiny trembling woodland creature. My brother and I had leaned from our respective windows to send the mother cheerfully on her way. We tended to be cruelly kind at these moments, taking as careless and casual a leave of her as possible and making a great show of how little it mattered that we were leaving home for such great stretches of time. Some part of us must have known inside that it was harder for her than it was for us. She would be returning to a baby and a husband who worked so hard that she hardly saw him and to all the nightmares of uncertainty, doubt and guilt which plague a parent, while we would be amongst our own. I think it was a tacitly agreed strategy to arrive early so that all this could be got over with without too many others milling around. The loudness and hattedness of Other Parents were not conducive to the particular Fry tokens of love: tiny exertions of pressure on the hands and tight little nods of the head that stood for affection and deep, unspoken understanding. A slightly forced smile and bitten underlip aside, Mummy always left the platform outwardly resolute, which was all that mattered. All that taken care of, I slid down in my seat and examined the damp shivering thing opposite. He had chosen a window seat with its back to the engine as if perhaps he wanted to be facing homewards and not towards the ghastly unknown

destination. "You must be a new boy," I said. A brave nod and a great spreading of scarlet in downy, hamstery cheeks. "My name's Fry," I added. "That's my bro talking next door." A sudden starburst of panic in the fluffy little chick's brown eyes, as if terrified that I was going to invite my bro in. He probably had no idea what a bro was. The previous term I hadn't known either. "Roger, Roger!" I had cried, running up to my brother in morning break. "Have you had a letter from--" "You call me bro here. Bro. Understood?" I explained everything to the broken little creature in front of me. "A bro is a brother, that's all. He's Fry, R. M. And I'm Fry, S. J. See?" The hamster-chick-squirrel-downy-woodland thing nodded to show that it saw. It swallowed a couple of times as if trying to find the right amount of air to allow it to speak without sobbing. "I was a new boy last term," I said, a huge and perfectly inexplicable surge of satisfaction filling me all the way from gartered woollen socks to blue-banded boater. "It really isn't so bad, you know. Though I expect you feel a bit scared and a bit homesick." It didn't quite dare look at me but nodded again and gazed miserably down at shiny black Cambridge shoes which seemed to me to be as small as a baby's booties. "Everybody cries. You mustn't feel bad about it." It was at this point that it announced itself to be Samuelanthonyfarlowebunce, and to its friends Sam, but never Sammy. "I shall have to call you Bunce," I told him. "And you will call me Fry. You'll call me Fry S. J. if my bro is about, so there won't be any mix up. Not Fry Minor or Fry the Younger, I don't like that. Here, I've got a spare hankie. Why don't you blow your nose? There'll be others along in a minute." "Others?" He looked up from emptying himself into my hankie like a baby deer hearing a twig snap by a water pool and cast his eyes about him in panic. "Just other train boys. There are usually about twenty of us. You see that piece of paper stuck to the window? 'Reserved for Stouts Hill School' it says. We've got this whole carriage to ourselves. Four compartments." "What happens when we get . . . when we get there?" "What do you mean?" "When we get to the station." "Oh, there'll be a bus to meet us. Don't worry, I'll make sure you aren't lost. How old are you?" "I'm seven and a half." He looked much younger. Nappy age, he looked. "Don't worry," I said again. "I'll look after you. Everything will be fine." "I'll look after you. The pleasure of saying those words, the warm wet sea of pleasure. Quite extraordinary. A little pet all to myself." "We'll be friends," I said. "It won't be nearly as bad as you expect. You'll see." Kindly paternal thoughts hummed in my mind as I tried to imagine every worry that might be churning him up. All I had to do was remember my own dreads of the term before. "Everyone's very nice really. Matron unpacks for you, but you've got to take your games clothes down to the bag room yourself, so you'll have to know your school number so as you can find the right peg. My number's one-o-four, which is the highest number in the school's history, but twelve boys left last term and there are only eight or nine new boys, so there probably won't ever be a one-o-five. I'm an Otter, someone'll probably tell you what House you're in. You should watch out for Hampton, he gives Chinese burns and dead legs. If Mr. Kemp is on duty he gives bacon slicers. It's soccer this term, my bro says. I hate soccer but it's conkers as well which is supposed to be really good fun. My bro says everyone goes crazy at conker time. Conkers bonkers, my bro says." Bunce closed up the snotty mess in the middle of my hankie and tried to smile. "In two weeks' time," I said, remembering something my mother had told me, "you'll be bouncing about like a terrier and you won't even be able to remember being a bit nervous on the train." I looked out of the window and saw some boaters and female hats approaching. "Though in your case," I added, "you'll be buncing about . . ." A real smile and the sound of a small giggle. "Here we go," I said. "I can hear some boys coming. Tell you what, here's my Ranger. Why don't you be reading it when they come in, so you'll look nice and busy." He took it gratefully. "You're so kind," he said. "I've never met anyone as kind as you." "Nonsense," I replied, glowing like a hot coal. From the Hardcover edition.