

# WWE Legends Superstar Billy Graham: Tangled Ropes

When it comes to professional wrestling, there have been countless legends who have graced the squared circle. However, there are only a few who have left an indelible mark on the industry and continue to be talked about years after their prime. One such legend is "Superstar" Billy Graham, a larger-than-life character whose persona, physique, and captivating storytelling ability made him a household name in the world of WWE.

From his incredible charisma to his memorable matches, Billy Graham solidified his place in wrestling history. But his journey wasn't all glitz and glamour; his rise to the top was a tumultuous one, filled with struggles, triumphs, and a fair share of tangled ropes. Let's take a deeper look into the life and career of this enigmatic wrestling luminary.

## The Early Years: From Wayne Coleman to Billy Graham

Born as Wayne Coleman on September 10, 1943, in Phoenix, Arizona, "Superstar" Billy Graham did not have an easy start in life. Growing up in a troubled family, Wayne faced many challenges that shaped his drive and determination. As a teenager, he turned to weightlifting to escape his difficult circumstances, and little did he know that this would set him on a path to greatness.

### WWE Legends - Superstar Billy Graham: Tangled

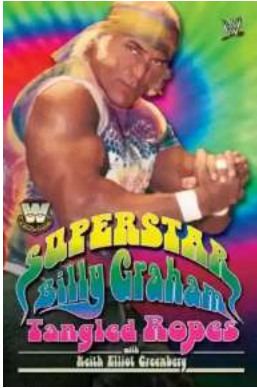
**Ropes** by Billy Graham (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 11634 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled



Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting: Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 352 pages



After years of honing his physique, Wayne Coleman adopted the ring name Billy Graham and began his wrestling career in the late 1960s. His muscular frame and charismatic personality quickly caught the attention of fans and promoters alike. Graham's unique look, with his bleached blond hair and colorful outfits, set him apart from the rest of the pack and made him an instant attraction.

## **On Top of the World: A Trailblazing World Champion**

It was in the 1970s that Billy Graham reached the pinnacle of his career. In 1977, he defeated Bruno Sammartino to win the WWWF World Heavyweight Championship, becoming the face of the company. Graham's reign as champion introduced a new era of flamboyant characters who pushed the boundaries of what was considered acceptable in wrestling.

But Graham's success came at a cost. His intense weightlifting regimen and the demanding nature of professional wrestling took a toll on his body. Vanity, as well as the pressure to maintain his larger-than-life image, led him down a dangerous path of steroid abuse. This addiction would haunt Graham for years to come, affecting his health, relationships, and overall well-being.

## **Tangled Ropes: Personal and Professional Battles**

The persona of "Superstar" Billy Graham may have been consumed by fame and success, but Wayne Coleman was struggling behind the scenes. His rampant steroid abuse eventually caught up with him, resulting in major health problems, including liver damage and frequent hospitalizations. Graham's personal life was also marred by failed marriages, strained relationships, and financial woes.

Throughout his career, Graham faced several professional and personal setbacks. He eventually left WWE in 1982, marking the end of an era for both the company and the wrestler. The subsequent years saw him bounce between various wrestling promotions, always attempting to recapture the glory of his past. However, his health issues often hampered his ability to perform at the level he once did.

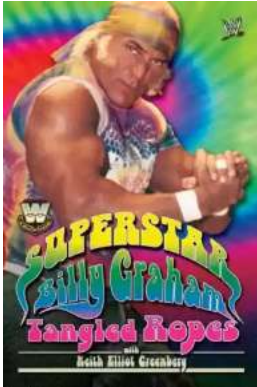
## **The Legacy of "Superstar" Billy Graham**

Despite the hardships, Billy Graham's impact on the wrestling industry cannot be denied. His charismatic promos and larger-than-life personality paved the way for future stars, including Hulk Hogan and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson. Graham's influence extended beyond the ring, as he became a mentor to many aspiring wrestlers and contributed to the growth and evolution of the sport.

Today, Billy Graham is recognized as one of the true legends of professional wrestling. Although his years of steroid abuse took a toll on his health, he remains an iconic figure in the hearts of wrestling fans worldwide. Graham's story serves as a stark reminder of the price one can pay for fame, but it also stands as a testament to the enduring love and admiration that the wrestling community has for its heroes.

"Superstar" Billy Graham's journey through the tangled ropes of professional wrestling is a captivating tale of triumph, tragedy, and the irresistible allure of

fame. From his humble beginnings to his rise as a trailblazing world champion, Graham's impact on the wrestling landscape cannot be overstated. The legacy he left behind continues to inspire generations of wrestlers and fans alike, reminding us of the thrill and spectacle that only professional wrestling can provide.



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"I'm the man of the hour," Superstar Billy Graham told his audiences, "the man with the power. Too sweet to be sour!"

Despite years of devastating health issues (a long history of drug abuse led to a liver transplant in 2002), the man regarded as one of the most influential professional wrestlers of the past thirty years still flaunts the same optimism that made his interviews as compelling as his matches. In *Tangled Ropes*, his autobiography, Graham remembers his victories -- and his setbacks -- on both the wrestling and the evangelism circuits in vibrant detail.

At his core, Graham is still Wayne Coleman, the artistic, curious boy who escaped the wrath of his disabled father in post-war Phoenix through painting, sports, and bodybuilding.

When his photo appeared in a bodybuilding magazine, the young man caught the attention of a family in Texas who began praying for his soul. Soon, Wayne found religion at a revival meeting, then mortified his parents as he left home to bend steel, rip phone books in half, and preach the Gospel on the back roads of America.

Because of his natural athleticism, Wayne held a series of jobs -- from bouncer to boxer, from repo man to football player. However, it was under the training of the "Mentor of Mayhem," Stu Hart, that the wrestler was revealed. Then the fading headliner Dr. Jerry Graham bleached Wayne's hair blond and transformed him into an in-ring "brother." Still reverent of men of faith, Coleman became "Billy Graham," after the preacher. Graham completed the package with his golden tan and enormous "pythons," a succession of color-coordinated outfits and jive-talking -- a persona imitated by countless wrestlers, including Hulk Hogan and Jesse "The Body" Ventura.

The Superstar's greatest wrestling achievement came in 1977, when he took the World Wide Wrestling Federation Championship from Bruno Sammartino. He held the prize for nearly a year -- the first wrestling villain to do so. But after he lost the title to wholesome Bob Backlund, Graham fell into a deep depression. He disappeared from the business, squandering his money and losing himself in a haze of drugs.

In *Tangled Ropes* -- co-written with Keith Elliot Greenberg -- Superstar Billy Graham tells a story that transcends his life in the wrestling profession, offering candor, nostalgia, inspiration, and humor. Graham's narrative is supplemented by anecdotes from personalities like Vince McMahon, Jesse Ventura, Ivan Koloff, Ric Flair, Dusty Rhodes, and California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.



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