



A Safe Place: The True Story of a Father, a Son, a Murder

Lorenzo Carcaterra

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"Dramatic, graphic and wrenching...The reader is left to wonder--at the devastation of Carcaterra's youth, at his survival to adulthood, and at the grace that allowed him to craft this piercing memoir."

THE WASHINGTON POST

Lorenzo Carcaterra grew up in Hell's Kitchen, New York in the 1950s and '60s in a confusing world of love and fear of his paradoxically violent and affectionate father. Then Lorenzo learned that his father had murdered his first wife. And he wondered how he could love his father again. Did he possess the same murderous fury; would he someday suddenly lash out at those he loved? As his father's physical abuse escalated, Lorenzo sought frantically for a safe place...a place where he could find hope and reconciliation and peace, where his father's terrible shadow no longer lingered. Now, decades later, Lorenzo has finally come to terms with the awful truth about his father. A SAFE PLACE is the brilliant result.

From the Paperback edition.

A Safe Place: The True Story of a Father, a Son, a Murder Details

Date : Published (first published January 4th 1993)

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Author : Lorenzo Carcaterra

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Genre : Nonfiction, Crime, True Crime, Biography, Mystery



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From Reader Review A Safe Place: The True Story of a Father, a Son, a Murder for online ebook

David Bonesteel says

Lorenzo Carcaterra has written a powerful memoir about his upbringing in the Hell's Kitchen section of New York and his difficult relationship with his monstrous father. It is an astonishing performance from start to finish. Whether he is writing about his mother's Italian birthplace or the neighborhood where he grew up, he presents very specific and detailed settings. He is no less meticulous with characterization. He details his mother with great sympathy and the frequent depictions of her abuse are difficult to read. However, he really shines when it comes to writing about his father. Carcaterra straddles a difficult line describing this complex relationship--he shows us how a young boy might have looked up to him as a strong male in a very macho culture without diluting or obscuring what a horrible human being he was. He dramatizes the gradual shift in their relationship believably. At the very beginning of the book, he makes us aware that his father murdered his first wife, and the son's inevitable uncovering of the truth behind that event is a source of suspense for much of the book. It is a further tribute to the author's skill at full-bodied characterization that I felt some pity for the old man at the end of his life, even while understanding that he had reaped exactly what he had sown.

Angie says

This is a really difficult book to read, as far as descriptions of abuse go. But it's a very good illustration of the tension between love and hate for an abusive parent (and the parent that stands by).

Badly Drawn Girl says

Safe Place is a very accurate account of the dynamics that fuel domestic violence. Lorenzo Carcaterra does an excellent job of showing the abuser as being more than just evil. His father is not a one dimensional man, but a man who would swear that he loved his wives and his children more than anything else in the world. And yet, this is not a romanticized story but a gritty, at times shocking portrayal of violence, secrets, hate, poverty and what the sins of the father really means. How does one cope with the information that their father murdered his first wife? Imagine the fear that would emerge as you watch that same man pummel his current wife, your mother... Lorenzo Carcaterra exposes us to the good, the bad, and the ugly in this moving memoir.

Barbra says

An unforgettable and remarkable book that is very good and will keep you gripped from page one.

Back Cover Blurb:

Before there was Sleepers, Lorenzo Carcaterra survived a very different kind of nightmare in his own home

in Hell's Kitchen, New York. For behind closed doors he and his mother survived the erratic, violent outbursts of his father. A powerful father who tempered his rage with affection. To a young boy he was a man both to love and to fear. Until Lorenzo learned a shattering fact that forever changed his life. His father was a murderer.

Claire says

Really enjoy Lorenzo Carcarerra's books, fiction and non fiction. This story is a bit of an eye opener at times, enjoyed this book.

Erinn Gillespie says

Ok so i just finished this book. I am really undecided how i feel about this one . the beatings in the book are very descriptive and harsh. the amount of hatred in the book is scary . It does, however make you see your life in another view, like maybe its not as bad as you think. i think i still need to let this one sit with me for a bit . All in all i did enjoy the read, it was one that i could not put down and has caused lack of sleep before work . i will need to read it again though .

I did enjoy the end though , it seems as though in some way your actions do have to be answered for .

Bobbi says

You've got to have a strong stomach to read this book. The descriptions of domestic violence in the author's house by his father are horrific. The reason I read this book was that the review said that the author was trying to break the cycle of violence in his family. Unfortunately, there wasn't much about how his life turned out, but was primarily about his experiences growing up. A disappointment.

Janet Green says

Intense story with a lot of uncomfortable moments involving extreme violence and a totally dysfunctional family. The author exposes the reality of the emotional conflict and damage caused by domestic abuse. Gripping and real.

Terri says

If there is a line between love and hate, it is not only thin, but blurred almost to oblivion. Some people cross it, weaving, some people straddle it, some choose a side. Even those with penchant for one side or the other cannot help but to drift once in awhile. Amazing, sad, hard to fathom story, painted so well with deep textures, many layers, fine details. I could hear these people talking in my head!

David B says

Lorenzo Carcaterra has written a powerful memoir about his upbringing in the Hell's Kitchen section of New York and his difficult relationship with his monstrous father. It is an astonishing performance from start to finish. Whether he is writing about his mother's Italian birthplace or the neighborhood where he grew up, he presents very specific and detailed settings. He is no less meticulous with characterization. He details his mother with great sympathy and the frequent depictions of her abuse are difficult to read. However, he really shines when it comes to writing about his father. Carcaterra straddles a difficult line describing this complex relationship--he shows us how a young boy might have looked up to him as a strong male in a very macho culture without diluting or obscuring what a horrible human being he was. He dramatizes the gradual shift in their relationship believably. At the very beginning of the book, he makes us aware that his father murdered his first wife, and the son's inevitable uncovering of the truth behind that event is a source of suspense for much of the book. It is a further tribute to the author's skill at full-bodied characterization that I felt some pity for the old man at the end of his life, even while understanding that he had reaped exactly what he had sown.

OMalleycat says

I really hated this book. I hated that Carcaterra chose a first person point of view and then cheated out by telling us other people's thoughts. I hated that he presented this story, his discovery as a teenager that his father had a criminal past, as a life-altering event. Yet if one computes the timeline of Carcaterra's memoir life, the events in *A Safe Place* must have taken place just after he was released from a horrific stay in a juvenile facility, as depicted in *Sleepers*. Wouldn't that also have something to do with the life alteration. And I especially hated the blow-by-blow, nearly loving, descriptions of Carcaterra's father's abuse of his wife. The boy Lorenzo is horrified by his father's abuse, so he says, but the way he writes it is just sick.

Bridget Holbert says

Awesome

Couldn't put this one down. An abusive father and husband and also a devoted father through the eyes of his son. Well written and very touching at the end.

Vicki Brunello says

Why would anyone write a book about such an arsehole??? I kept reading, hoping the story was going somewhere, but it didn't- miserable story about a horrible man, don't bother

Kate says

I read this because of how much I liked *Sleepers*, which was an easier read, although this one was a "true story" rather than "based on" (e.g. used people's real names, etc.). It was good, but I haven't really felt the need to read any of Carcaterra's fiction.

Tom Gase says

One of the worst books I've ever read. It's so bad, that it made me also not like one of the author's OTHER books (*Sleepers*) as much as I used to because due to this book, *A Safe Place*, I'm not sure it happened. Both timelines of true stories cross each other without mention of the other happening. This book is difficult to read and there are no characters you like. Well, you might feel sorry for the mom, but that's it. Basically this is Lorenzo Carcaterra's true story of how he he watched his father basically beat the crap out of his mom for years, after the father killed his first wife. The author doesn't really do anything about it until around the last 40 pages. Very violent. I like the author's other books, but I probably won't read any more of his stuff after this. Just avoid this one.
