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HIGH SCHOOL DANCE



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Starbuck O'Dwyer

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Welcome to High School Dance, the sequel to How to Raise a Good Kid. I'm glad you're here. This book is the culmination of a project that began shortly after my wife and I welcomed our son to the world. Like most first-time fathers, I felt a new and profound sense of responsibility and immediately became determined to pass along every lesson I believed was important. So even though my pride and joy was only drooling, pooping and sleeping at this point, and was years away from absorbing his dad's hard-earned wisdom, I refused to let any of those pesky details get in my way.

First, I made a list of the events of my childhood that taught me the most, the ones that made the biggest impressions, both good and bad. This exercise forced me to revisit many harrowing experiences such as batting zero in little league baseball, my chronic addiction to a blanket, my disastrously unsuccessful try-out for the role of Winthrop in The Music Man, and the time I mooned the entire sixth grade. I wanted to let my son know whatever hardship he might face; his father had already been there, learned something of value and survived. I also wanted to let him know about all the fun and joy I experienced as a child and the love my parents showed me.

After compiling my list, however, I realized it wasn't going to be enough. What if, God forbid, I wasn't around to tell him the full story behind each enumerated item? I couldn't bear the thought so I decided to turn the list into a book of stories about my childhood. Over time, the project evolved into two books: one about my grade school years, How to Raise a Good Kid, and one about my junior and senior high school years, High School Dance.

I truly hope you enjoy these collections. Few times in life are more memorable than our school years. Humiliation, heartbreak and failure are abundant, and that's on a good day. No matter who you are, coming of age is exciting, confusing and sometimes downright dangerous, and I've tried to capture both the agony and the ecstasy. My wife and I were fortunate enough to add a daughter to our family in the intervening years and my great hope is that she and her brother will someday read these stories, learn a few lessons, come to know their father even better, and above all, remember how much I love them.

High School Dance Details

Date : Published March 23rd 2016 by Green Chair Publishing

ISBN : 9780972162470

Author : Starbuck O'Dwyer

Format : Paperback 156 pages

Genre : Autobiography, Memoir

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From Reader Review High School Dance for online ebook

Peter says

So, you have read the first book and came here checking if the second one is worth it? Well, let us cover a few points and we will see where it stands.

To start off, it is nowhere near the first book in its core. While the first book was filled with humor right off the first page, this one is not. It has occasional funny moments, but is not nearly as humorous as the first book. That is not necessarily a bad thing. It shows author's mental development between writing the first and the second book. And the pick of the stories shows that too.

Stories are basically as good as before, only a bit more serious and a bit more "grown up". They still bring up values with which each individual should grow, so that is still present and still as good as before. You can find yourself in some of the stories and the book reaches you in a much better way than the first one.

I am giving it 4 out of 5, just because of the lack of humor. I know it is hard to keep writing book after book and make it funny each and every time, but I have met this author through the first book in a comedian way, so to lose that feeling in the second is kind of a let down. But I think the author will be able to bounce back with a book that will cast in shadow both of these books.

Crystal Hutchinson says

I did not expect this book to be an autobiography. It was funny and memorable. A young man growing up in what appears to be upper middle class. He talks about sports, his relationships with his parents, family and friends. For some reason I expected some advice for parents, but it is really the antics of a young teen growing up. Good story.

Edward Dwyer says

I liked it. It's witty and has some good life lessons, but not laugh out loud funny. But then again, the only thing I laugh out loud to is the "game show" @midnight on Comedy Central. Also, I think it's geared more towards a younger crowd. I'm in my 40's and it really didn't hold my attention, but I read it since I won it AND since we share the same last name. Most of it. And of course his first (middle) name reminded me of the gal from Battlestar Galactica.

Fajriy says

A good read with some lessons *and maybe nostalgia for older readers.*

After reading How to Raise a Good Kid, I expected a bit more from this book. But, true to its title, this book is mostly about the high school life and only a small part of the book concerns about the author's relationship with his family.

Though this book was written just after the author became the first-time father, each story presented in this

book has the spirit of a high school boy. The author has a way of taking the reader to his high school world. From the innocent, courageous boy to knowing and experiencing many first times while learning lessons of friendship, young love, trust, good vs bad, and others.

I voluntarily read and review a free copy of this book provided via Librarything Members Giveaway.

Ronald Keeler says

Starbuck O'Dwyer had a mission in writing High School Dance. In his preface, he writes that he had made, in list form, things he wanted his son to know. He wanted to share life experiences so that the younger one might not make the same mistakes. Good luck with that. Later, after looking at his list, he thought he could flesh out the list a bit and turn each of his thinking points into stories. Here is the result. Twelve chapters of reflection on surviving from grade seven through senior high school.

There are chapters on the music of the time, starting with Pink Floyd. There is more than one chapter on competitiveness, winning, and losing. Most of them revolve around tennis. There are tales of heartbreak, puppy love, crushes, and immense romantic disappointment. Refreshingly, there are no tales of initial sexual conquests. That is sort of logical if we remember he is writing a book for a son to read. Attempts at a first kiss don't count. There is a tale of an unusual after prom party. And one about trust. That chapter is about a parent's trust of a child. But the theme of parent-child trust runs throughout all chapters.

There are sample chapters of How to Raise a Good Kid at the end of this publication. Two chapters The Value of Fathers and Love and Marriage impressed me more than the novel they are attached to. Which means I have something else to purchase and add to the TBR list. Love and Marriage is especially poignant and could possibly bring tears to the eyes of many readers. I guess that is a warning.

There is a lot of understated humor throughout. No violence (except for throwing some tennis rackets). No vulgarity (maybe a few hints at words with things like %&*@ inserted). No sex (except the first kiss). No excessive obeisance to the PC police.

It was a refreshing read, something my son can read, and I liked it.

Kathy says

I received a free digital copy in exchange for an honest review.

High School Dance is the follow-up to O'Dwyer's How to Raise a Good Kid. This is also a book of essays, and while it is a sequel, it could easily stand alone. High School Dance centers more on O'Dwyer's adolescence, and I found it more vulnerable and raw than his previous book of essays. There is still humor and levity, but it is the universal moments of teen angst and disappointment that make this book shine.

Nikki says

I reviewed this book free from goodreads giveaways.

I had been wanting to read a book by Starbuck O'Dwyer for awhile and this book did not disappoint. It was laugh out loud funny at points and brought up memories of my own from that time in my life. I would definitely recommend.
