



Hidden

Cathy Glass

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From the author of Number One bestseller 'Damaged' comes the poignant and shocking memoir of Cathy's recent relationship with Tayo, a young boy she fosters whose good behaviour and polite manners hide a terrible past.

Tayo arrives at Cathy's with only the clothes he stands up in. He has been brought to her by the police, but he is calm, polite, and very well spoken, and not at all like the children she normally fosters. The social worker gives Cathy the forms which should contain Tayo's history, but apart from his name and age, it is blank. Tayo has no past.

Tayo is an 'invisible' child, kidnapped from his loving father in Nigeria and brought illegally to the UK by his drink and drugs dependent prostitute mother, where he is put to work in a sweat shop in Central London. When he sustains an injury and is no longer earning, he is cast out.

When Cathy takes Tayo to school he points out a dozen different addresses where he has stayed in the last six months, often being left alone. Tayo lies, and manipulates situations to his own advantage and Cathy has to be continually on guard. Tayo's social worker searches all computer databases but there is no record of Tayo – he has only attended school for 3 terms and has never seen a doctor. He and his mother have been evading the authorities by living 'underground'.

With his mother recently released from prison, Tayo is desperate to live with his father in Nigeria, but no one can track him down or even prove that he exists.

Hidden Details

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Noriko says

This is a thought-provoking, compelling non-fiction book that sheds some lights to the issue of 'undocumented immigrants.'

The author, Cathy Glass's writing is so gripping and read like fiction that I didn't feel like I was reading a non-fiction book, a genre I normally wouldn't pick up. (Yes, I seemed to have developed a kind of aversion to non-fiction.) But with this 'Hidden,' her solid writing reeled me in straight away and I didn't want to put it down. Each episode told in this book which Cathy, a foster carer and Tayo, a 10-year old Nigerian boy went through reveals a new issue and the fact that had been 'hidden' one after another and that made this book even more captivating and gripping.

This book (story) seems to go off to a promising start with Tayo being a polite, nice boy but it's soon come to light that Tayo may or may not be what Cathy first thought he is.

The revelations in this book took me by surprise, shocked me, and frustrated me at times. While I knew it was all due to the things that Tayo had gone through in the last 5 years living with his negligent and abusive mother, I couldn't help but feel a bit jarred by his behaviors and that strengthened my admiration toward Cathy for her thoughtfulness and fair judgement coming from her long experience as a foster carer. Honestly, I don't think I could ever be as sensible and level-headed as Cathy. Not only does she strive to provide Tayo with a safe, wholesome life but she also strives to instill moral sense in Tayo, telling him what is wrong and what is right. She is a strong, sensible and great woman and I have a high respect for her.

The issues dealt with this book are undeniably thought-provoking; I cannot give anything away but I personally found the title 'Hidden' is perfect for this book, beautifully illustrating the issues that I hadn't even realized up until I read this book.

The story of children brought in a country illegally and the repercussions that stems from being 'undocumented,' naive as I was, disturbed me as what the title actually suggests dawned on me.

I recommend going into this book without knowing much about it. I would just say this is a great book and I absolutely enjoyed following how Tayo and Cathy forges a strong bond and how Tayo becomes a member of her family as time goes by.

There are, of course, ups and downs in their paths; it's far from plain sailing, but each 'down' and how they overcome them was such a sight to behold.

As well as narrating a compelling, great story of Tayo and Cathy's relationship with him, this book also delineates all the emotions Cathy and Tayo experience during their 10 months relationship really well. The 'anger' that Tayo demonstrates is rather shocking and struck me hard. The execution describing the seething anger and pent-up rage was spot on and made me hold my breath.

The bittersweet feeling that Cathy and her family feel every time their foster child departs also resonates with me and left me feeling a bit sad. I felt as though as I were there, I felt I were a member of Cathy's family. Another testament that it's a well-written book. I definitely identified myself with Cathy while I was reading this.

As I mentioned earlier, I normally wouldn't pick up non-fiction, but I ended up enjoying this book a lot. It reads fast and Cathy Glass did a great job of narrating a gripping story that kept me on the edge of my seat. It's insightful and illuminating. Even if you know literally nothing about foster care system, you can totally

enjoy this book. I highly recommend it.

Kim says

I wasn't sure whether to read this one or not. I thought it might be too upsetting- and it's been sat on the bookshelf for quite a while. I picked it up last night and have read it in a day. I love her style and it was an insight into the 'fostering' world. The world is a much better place due to people like her- who provide a safe haven for children in need. Tayo was an interesting little character and he'd been through so much in his short life- coming over to Britain with his abusive mother. He wants to go back to live with his father in Nigeria- but without any details they are unable to start tracing him. He goes into care with no history at all. He tells his foster mother that he has lived in several houses on his way to school the next day- and they discover that his mother used to befriend families and abandon him with them for a week or more.

I think I have another book on the shelves and look forward to reading it.

Elizabeth Ray says

This book seriously touched my heart!! Tayo has memories of a wonderful life in Africa with his father and grandmother, but he has spent the last 5 years undocumented in England with his mother. His mother has badly neglected him, leaving him alone for days at a time or leaving him with people she barely knows. Tayo is a mystery, as he is well-spoken and intelligent, but there isn't much record of him having gone to school. He refuses to reveal too much about his past. His mother is a real mess and incredibly angry.

The longer he stays with Cathy, the more maladaptive behavior Tayo exhibits due to his history of needing to manipulate and lie to survive. As a result, this book is full of some great advice from Cathy for fellow foster parents. Tayo's story has a very wonderful ending. His story is going to stick with me for a long time.

Tylah Marie says

Wow. What a roller coaster of emotions. I cried, I laughed, I flipped pages in anticipation that this little boy would find his happy ending. I have only read one book from Cathy Glass before this book but I am very fond of her writing style. She has a way of making you feel like you're right there with her. I admire the way she describes such things in amazing detail without it also being too much. Little Tayo teared at my heart strings and I felt for him. His past has been nothing but awful for anyone to experience let alone a 10 year old boy.

Hidden is eye opening, emotional and extraordinary. I can't wait to pick up another one of Cathy Glass' books.

I hope Tayo is out there right now happy and healthy.

Monica Willyard says

This is a beautiful story of how love and faith can help a person overcome something truly horrific. It is also a tale of perseverance when everyone else is saying that it's time to give up. I enjoy all of Cathy's books. However, I have to say that this is my favorite. This is a truly remarkable story!

Daniel Stern says

Cathy Glass has done it again! She really is an angel, a saviour. In this book, poor little Tayo is a little boy of mixed heritage. However, virtually little is known about his background. Ms. Glass does her utmost best to uncover as much information as possible. She again provides a neglected child with a loving and stable home, which is not something just anyone would or could do. Furthermore, I fully admire her patience and composure when dealing with unstable parents, such as the violent and raging alcoholic Minty, who is poor Tayo's mother. My ghetto side would have lashed out at that wacko! This book also explores the horrors of child exploitation.

Nisa says

The story is based on a true life incident (in which the names and places have been changed) by a foster carer who was fostering a young boy with an astonishing tragic life.

A light and good read. I'm so happy to have bought this as a second-hand. :)

Shanon Russell says

The only thing that would have had to happen to make this a five star book for me would have been for it to have been set in the US. Having some experience working as a guardian ad litem in the foster system, I was amazed by the similarities between the US system and the UK system. It would be eye opening for someone outside of foster care.

Mary-jane Farrer says

A heart warming story about a lost boy who becomes found and experiences love and healing in a foster family

Eva Leger says

I'm reviewing this late. I try to review the books I read within a day or two of finishing and I finished this on

the 17th of this month. It's now the 29th. The reason I bring this up is because while this was my first book by Glass, I've since read two others, *Damaged* and *Cut* and will be starting another one, *Mummy Told Me Not to Tell* shortly.

I'm fairly well read in the mis-lit genre and there have been books that are very well written that, even with the horrendous subject and details, I've sailed through. Very few have come close to matching the writing that comes from *Cathy Glass*.

I read my non-fiction as truth unless there is a reason to do otherwise. For me there's no other way - or reason - to read non-fiction. And from the books I've read about this woman I think she's borderline ready for sainthood. I love children more than life. My one dream in life was to become a mother to a little girl.

*Mission accomplished. :)

But there is no way I could deal with what this woman has dealt with. I'm just not built for it. So I'm all the more happy that there are women like Glass who *are* built for it and who do step up to the plate.

My one and only complaint - and it's sort of a small one yet true with all three books I've read so far - is the cover portrayal. Why are the kids so young on all three covers when they're far older in the story? I started wondering if it was to get the reader thinking about the children previous time spent in abuse but I don't believe it's that. I think it's a marketing ploy. Obviously it's upsetting to learn of anyone cutting themselves but it's far more upsetting to hear of a child doing it. And it's far, far, far more upsetting to think of a young child cutting themselves. (This is just an example.) That doesn't sit well with me. In this book the boy is 10 years old and the boy on the cover is clearly nowhere near ten, even if he was tiny for his age. I'm picky about my covers so this bothered me.

But the writing is well done and I've seen a few reviews here and there mentioning typos so I want to say that I haven't caught many at all. Editing mistakes usually jump right out at me and I don't remember any from this or *Damaged*. That means there either are none or very few. I did notice a few in *Cut* but no more than five, tops. Definitely not the worst out there as any avid reader can attest.

I think her books flow so nicely, even with the brutality of the subjects, because she seems like she's 100% honest. She gives the good with the bad and doesn't go through any false motions. She doesn't hesitate to condemn Social Services when she feels the need and she also doesn't hesitate to praise them when praise is due. It's not the authors fault the latter happens less.

I'd recommend any of these books for anyone who reads the genre and if anyone is looking to find a good one I'd choose one by Glass. (To be more specific I felt *Hidden* and *Damaged* were better than *Cut* but that's just me.)

I have no doubt that I'll get the rest of the books she's written - with the exception of the self-help book - and I have no doubt that the writing will be up to par.

Den says

Another harrowing book. Kathy Glass and all the other foster careers out there are saints. They care for such damaged children and try their hardest together them back on the right track. These children haven't asked for the lives they have led and need a lot of love, care and attention to help them choose the right pathways. This book is about a young boy Tayo, who it is discovered is in the country illegally after his mother kidnapped him from his school. His mum is totally unsuitable - into drink and drugs and associating with all the wrong people - and is constantly moving around. Tayo was one of many children in the country illegally who had been set to work in a sweat factory ... Yes they do exist in the UK and I couldn't believe how many children are actually 'hidden' in this country ... It is frightening to know so many children are unaccountable for. Despite this lifestyle Tayo is extremely polite although on occasions his anger does spill out. His mum continues to either not turn up or turn up late for contact sessions and shout at him when she does. He continues to believe his dad will turn up for him and despite extensive searches nothing can be found about

his dad. Then one day Cathy gets a phone call to say Tayo's dad has been in touch. He had been searching for over five years and hires the best lawyers etc to try and win the custody of Tayo. Here mum, Minty tries to win him back by deciding to hire lawyers too Tough she still doesn't contact or phone him. Thankfully she puts the nail in her own coffin by turning up to court late on many occasions and drunk on another. Custody goes to dad and a couple of days later a delighted child goes back to the family who love and cherish him. A wonderful ending to this true tale. It is a pity that they all don't end so happily.

Books says

What I love most about returning to one of Cathy Glass's books about her experiences as a foster parent, is the familiar setting (her home) and the close comfort of her family. I know this might sound strange, but Cathy has a magnificent way of letting the reader into her home and the lives of her family and the foster child whose story she's sharing.

Having only read two of her books before, I couldn't wait to start with *Hidden*. I knew beforehand that I had to steel myself for what I was going to read and the many emotions I'd be feeling. Needless to say, the last few chapters of Tayo's story had me crying buckets of tears. Cathy, and every person involved in helping Tayo and countless other lost/abandoned/abused children, are heaven sent.

If you're a parent, or someone who cares greatly for the well-being of others – and if you haven't read any of Cathy's books yet – please do so. It's shocking to see what some parents would do to their own flesh and blood. It's also wonderful to discover these angels in the foster care system – such as Cathy, and many others – who open their homes and their hearts to these little, defenseless people. It makes me appreciate my children and my parents a million times over.

Churin says

Another amazing book by Cathy Glass.

Hidden is about a boy who lived in the same world we live in but in another part we don't know the truth of. Young Tayo was a multiracial boy who lived in 21st century London, but have never been written as it's citizen.

He somehow was hidden from the public and social services.

A very intriguing read and no doubt a great book for children and adult discussions.

Demi says

The actual story is fantastic and I'm glad it had a good ending. But the way the book is written is to blunt, it feels like the author is going from incident to incident without really creating a story. I understand that this is real life and that the author probably looked back at her log to help remember everything but it could have a bit more of a descriptive nature and it could flow a lot better.

Cary Yanny says

A very interesting book about a very normal lady who opens here heart and house to desperate children. this story of a young boy who has been through terrible times. How one family love a determination can help a young boy survive.
