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Hope's Boy



Synopsis

From the moment he was born, Andrew Bridge and his mother, Hope, shared a love so deep that it felt like nothing else mattered. Trapped in desperate poverty and confronted with unthinkable tragedies, all Andrew ever wanted was to be with his mom. But as her mental health steadily declined, and with no one else left to care for him, authorities arrived and tore Andrew from his screaming mother's arms. In that moment, the life he knew came crashing down around him. He was only seven years old. Hope was institutionalized, and Andrew was placed in what would be his devastating reality for the next eleven years--foster care. After surviving one of our country's most notorious children's facilities, Andrew was thrust into a savagely loveless foster family that refused to accept him as one of their own. Deprived of the nurturing he needed, Andrew clung to academics and the kindness of teachers. All the while, he refused to surrender the love he held for his mother in his heart. Ultimately, Andrew earned a scholarship to Wesleyan, went on to Harvard Law School, and became a Fulbright Scholar. Andrew has dedicated his life's work to helping children living in poverty and in the foster care system. He defied the staggering odds set against him, and here in this heart-wrenching, brutally honest, and inspirational memoir, he reveals who Hope's boy really is.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In this memoir of a decade spent in foster care, Bridge illuminates the horrors of a system that, in its clumsy attempts to save children, he argues, all too frequently condemns them to physical and emotional abuse. The child of a teenage mother who divorced her abusive husband soon after Bridge was born, he watched helplessly as his mother disintegrated under the impact of isolation

and poverty. At the age of seven, Bridge was dragged away from his mother, literally, by police and warehoused in an enormous California juvenile facility patrolled by armed guards. The state eventually transferred him to a foster family dominated by an obese, bullying Estonian woman who had survived imprisonment in Dachau as a child. At 17, as he prepared to leave foster care for college and freedom, Bridge finally had a reunion with the mother he never stopped missing. In his narration of this unending nightmare, Bridge shows particular skill in portraying his isolation and the defenses he constructed to survive it. He also has a talent for grotesques, particularly that of the monstrous foster mother who revisited the misery of her upbringing on her foster children. Bridge's obsessive focus on his loneliness and his two mothers is so intense that a more balanced picture of his life fails to emerge and his attachment to another foster child remains unexplained. Yet Bridge, a Harvard Law School graduate who has devoted his career to children's rights, has provided remarkable insights into a dark corner of American society. (Feb.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Andrew Bridge has written an affecting, moving memoir which in the end is a poignant cry for rethinking our foster care system. Hope's Boy will stay with you long after you've put it down." •Alex Kotlowitz "His story is shocking, inspiring, unforgettable." •People

Andrew Bridge is a survivor. So many children who found themselves placed into Los Angeles County's MacLaren Hall 'for their own protection' grew up to become troubled adults. MacLaren Hall's intent was good, to provide a safe haven for abused and dependent children who were taken away from their homes for their own protection. Unfortunately, the lines are often blurred in the Los Angeles County child welfare system, and truly bad kids, some of them with violent criminal histories, are mixed in with innocent victims like Andrew Bridge. MacLaren Hall is now closed, and that part of Hope's Boy is only a small portion of this moving and emotional true-life story. Without revealing the heart of the story, in a way Andrew was lucky, because the safety net today has far more holes than it did back when he was a child caught up in the system. As deplorable as Andrew's childhood experience was, it's even worse today for children who are taken away from their parents. The eventual closing of MacLaren Hall didn't change the situation for Los Angeles' dependent children. Today a social worker would work more diligently to keep the Bridge family together, because a mentally ill mother is often a better choice than the disinterested foster parent who is only in it for the money. It's also a numbers game. There aren't enough beds in group homes or private

foster homes within Los Angeles County to provide for the needs of dependent kids after they're taken away from their parents.

This was another Kindle bargain. It's a true story written by a man who succeeded in life despite a lousy experience being brought up in foster care after being failed by his parents. I know there are good, decent professionals working in social services because I have known some of them who truly cared about the families they served. Having said that, they also spoke of those professionals who were short on compassion and more concerned with their own climb up the ladder within the system. I pray there are compassionate foster parents as well. But the book is kind of an indictment on the whole system including the justice system. There should not be room for those who don't care about the children they are supposed to look out for and not do their very best looking out for the interests of families. Love the Kindle bargain books! Keep them coming, . It's an opportunity to find books one has overlooked for one reason or another.

A wonderfully written book. I could hardly put it down. I enjoyed the book from the beginning until the end. This book has a message that isn't only about foster children, I think seniors should take heart. As I read the book I started to realize that my 90 year old mother who passed away last year experienced similar treatment by the social worker profession and it was a great challenge for me to deal with them over my mother's care. I think this book should not only be read by those interested in a very good read, or about by those who want to understand the plight of foster children, but also should be read by children of advanced age seniors to see how the social worker group functions. A must read!

Andy Bridge is a true American hero! His life story should teach us all about the priceless need for love. The idea in America that satisfaction can be bought is shameful. Yet the lie continues. We all yearn for love and acceptance. Poverty is not the enemy we perceive it to be. A loving home and environment is what we should be seeking to achieve for our children and adults as well. I learned a great deal from this author and his story.

this man is an amazing writer with an amazing story

What a truly valuable, praiseworthy memoir. Loved the title. The story is impressively detailed and passionately written. The attention Andy dedicates to recalling the people coloring his memory stand

out. The love he held out for his mother and her return I as well admire and respect. So of course their meeting (Andy & Hope in the final chapter) moved me to tears. But what is most moving... and outstanding, is the way Andy opens his memoir; arms raised, palms flat, facing outward...surrendering a credible advocate for children in foster care. A humbling memoir of extraordinary integrity and reliability.

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