



Beautiful Boy: A Father's Journey Through His Son's Addiction

By David Sheff

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Sheff's story is a first: a teenager's addiction from the parent's point of view a real-time chronicle of the shocking descent into substance abuse and the gradual emergence into hope. Before meth, Sheff's son Nic was a varsity athlete, honor student, and award-winning journalist. After meth, he was a trembling wraith who stole money from his eight-year-old brother and lived on the streets. With haunting candor, Sheff traces the first subtle warning signs, the denial (by both child and parents), the three A.M. phone calls (is it Nic? the police? the hospital?), the attempts at rehab, and, at last, the way past addiction. He shows us that, whatever an addict's fate, the rest of the family must care for each other too, lest they become addicted to addiction. Meth is the fastest-growing drug in the United States, as well as the most addictive and the most dangerous wreaking permanent brain damage faster than any other readily available drug. It has invaded every region and demographic in America. This book is the first that treats meth and its impact in depth. But it is not just about meth. Nic's addiction has wrought the same damage that any addiction will wreak. His story, and his father's, are those of any family that contains an addict and one in three American families does.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Amazon Best of the Month, February 2008: From as early as grade school, the world seemed to be on Nic Sheff's string. Bright and athletic, he excelled in any setting and appeared destined for greatness. Yet as childhood exuberance faded into teenage angst, the precocious boy found himself going down a much different path. Seduced by the illicit world of drugs and alcohol, he quickly found himself caught in the clutches of addiction. *Beautiful Boy* is Nic's story, but from the perspective of his father, David. Achingly honest, it chronicles the betrayal, pain, and terrifying question marks that haunt the loved ones of an addict. Many respond to addiction with a painful oath of silence, but David Sheff opens up personal wounds to reinforce that it is a disease, and must be treated as such. Most importantly, his journey provides those in similar situations with a commodity that they can never lose: hope --*Dave Callanan*

From Publishers Weekly

Expanding on his New York Times Magazine article, Sheff chronicles his son's downward spiral into addiction and the impact on him and his family. A bright, capable teenager, Nic began trying mind- and mood-altering substances when he was 17. In months, use became abuse, then abuse became addiction. By the time Sheff knew of his son's condition, Nic was strung out on meth, the highly potent stimulant. While his son struggles to get clean, his second wife and two younger children are pulled helplessly into the drama. Sheff, as the parent of an addict, cycles through denial and acceptance and resistance. The author was already a journalist of considerable standing when this painful story began to unfold, and his impulse for detail serves him personally as well as professionally: there are hard, solid facts about meth and the kinds of havoc it wreaks on individuals, families and communities both urban and rural. His journey is long and harrowing, but Sheff does not spare himself or anyone else from keen professional scrutiny any more than he was himself spared the pains—and joys—of watching a loved one struggling with addiction and recovery. Real recovery creates—and can itself be—its own reward; this is an honest, hopeful book, coming at a propitious moment in the meth epidemic.

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From School Library Journal

Journalist Sheff has written a moving, heartbreaking account of his son's addiction to methamphetamines and its impact on those around him. The CD gets a little tedious during the lengthy and detailed scientific descriptions of how meth affects addicts' brains and psyches, but Tony and Obie Award-winning actor Anthony Heald does an excellent job with the reading, his voice and intonation conveying the pain and discouragement Sheff must have felt over his son's condition. Recommended for the nonfiction collections of public libraries. [With tracks every three minutes for bookmarking; audio clip available through www.blackstoneaudio.com; the Houghton Mifflin hc, released in February, was an *LJ* Best Seller.—Ed.]—Ilka Gordon, formerly with Marcell Community Coll., Cleveland

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Roseann Flowers:

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