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



Synopsis

"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 POSTLorenza 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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I read and enjoyed Carcaterra's Sleepers and followed it up with a reading of this book. I found the contrast between the two books startling. Carcaterra has chosen to write from a first person point of view, which is certainly appropriate in a memoir. But he doesn't follow through with the conventions and limitations of this POV. He constantly gives information that he, as the narrator and a character within the story itself, could not possibly have witnessed. If he learned these facts and anecdotes by being told by someone else (as he must have), he needs to acknowledge that with "as she told me" or some similar explanation. I was repeatedly pulled out of the story by thinking, " Now HOW could

he know that?" Further, I was deeply disturbed by the loving detail lavished on descriptions of every beating Carcaterra's mother ever took from his father. I don't need repetitious blow-by-blow descriptions to understand that the abuse was constant and long-lived. I was a little sickened by what appeared to be relishing of recounting the horrors. Finally, as was mentioned by a previous reviewer, I was bothered by the contention in this book that Carcaterra's entire life was unutterably changed by being told in adolescence of his father's crime. By my calculation, this revelation must have come shortly after Carcaterra was released from his time in a juvenile detention center (as depicted in Sleepers), where he suffered horrific abuse. No mention is made anywhere in A Safe Place of the dear friends described in Sleepers, nor of the crime, trial, and sentence that all went through together. This redoubles the doubt of the accounting of this part of Carcaterra's life. Is one book true and the other false?

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