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Rachel Murphy

'Kiss boys two times after I have gone'

'Please teach the boys to say what they mean'

'Mummy loved orange Club biscuits, jam and jelly and lemon curd'

On her deathbed, Kate Greene's only concern was for her two little boys, Reef and Finn, and her loving husband, Singe. She knew she'd be leaving them behind very soon.

Over her last few days, Kate created Mum's List. The couple talked and cried together as she wrote her thoughts and wishes down, trying to help the man she loved create the best life for their boys after she was gone.

It wasn't the first time Singe and Kate had faced the spectre of death. Four years earlier, doctors discovered a large lump in baby Reef 's abdomen. Kate, pregnant with Finn, was so distressed that she gave birth dangerously early. Both boys pulled through, but afterwards Kate received the diagnosis that every woman dreads . . .

Mum's List: A Mother's Life Lessons to the Husband and Sons She Left Behind Details

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From Reader Review Mum's List: A Mother's Life Lessons to the Husband and Sons She Left Behind for online ebook

Cjandres says

The telling of the motions and emotions of a tight knit family going through hardships and the losing of a mother and wife. Reading this inspired me to attack such hardships with courage, happiness, and love. I think that the book was as honest as one would want to be in such a situation. St. John Greene told just enough to convey his memories but not too much so that him and his family wouldn't be vulnerable to the public. I liked the book for all the emotional cries but also for the realization that one can move on from the hardships and look forward to happiness in the future.

Elly French says

I know this will be terribly unpopular as a review, but whilst I completely empathised with the family and events, the actual writing of the book - by a ghost writer- felt staged and contrived. Reported conversations and analysis of thoughts and actions just didn't ring true which is a shame. I also didn't warm to the rather privileged lifestyle and experiences of the father. A very sad story about a brave family, but not a good read.

Clo says

What can I say?

I tend to avoid non fiction material because I like something I can read after a long day, but I saw a review for this in a magazine and I HAD to buy it - despite working in a library.

From the opening page, this book had me crying and I could feel the goosebumps on the back of my body and all up my arms.

Perhaps, the worst thing about reading this book, was that it stirred up the same feelings I had when my mum passed away, so although I could totally understand St John's feelings, I could also understand Reef and Finn's feelings, I guess that's why it was such a hard book to read.

I thought it was beautifully written and the whole concept of leaving the list a remarkable thing on Kate's part, I'm not sure I could even begin to write a list like that.

The story to me brings home the true meaning of love and soulmates.

All I can say is that St John Greene is a great inspiration, I have come away from this book feeling slightly upset (for obvious reasons) but inspired, because despite all his sadness he has still kept going for the sake of his boys.

What a fabulous book!

Sónia says

Vivendo nós numa sociedade em que a beleza e a longevidade são altamente veneradas, haver um livro que

fala sobre a morte, intrigou-me. Ainda mais me intrigou o sucesso que soube que obteve, depois de ter lido uma entrevista com o autor, marido de Kate. Mesmo sabendo que este tipo de *estórias* pode conter uma componente mais lamechas, coisa que, em momento algum, me agrada, decidi arriscar. E em boa hora o fiz...

O livro apresenta-se na perspectiva de Kate, uma mulher que descobre que sofre de cancro da mama e se apercebe da inevitabilidade da sua morte. Todas as emoções avassaladoras que a atacam com esta nova realidade, realidade essa que também viveu anteriormente através da doença de um filho, fazem com que lute para deixar um legado de inspirações para a sua família. Consegue-o através de uma lista que decide fazer na fase pior da sua doença. Não consigo imaginar a força que teve para o fazer, sabendo o fim que a esperava. Imagino que tenha sido um misto de conforto e frieza. Digo frieza, não com um sentido pejorativo, mas talvez porque lido muito mal com a morte e porque associo essa frieza a fortaleza. E isso é patente em toda a actividade que precedeu o aparecimento da doença. Por diversas vezes, somos levados a uns flashbacks temporais que nos permitem ver o "antes e o depois".

A frieza de que falei é levada, neste caso, mesmo à letra na pessoa do autor. Não sei se certas partes são inverossímeis (quero acreditar que sim), mas digo que me caíram mesmo mal. Só lendo ficamos a saber o sentido de união e partilha que correspondia àquele clã. Ficamos a saber como era profundo o Amor que unia aquele casal. Mesmo sendo um pedido prévio e a longo prazo, como é que um Homem que está viúvo há tão pouco tempo, equaciona logo refazer a vida com outra pessoa? Repito, mesmo sendo um pedido prévio, aquela Mulher não merecia um pensamento desses tão no imediato. Assumo-me como aquilo que chamo uma "romântica envergonhada", mas sou profundamente crente no Amor e na sua existência para além da Morte. Não acredito que tal desapareça num ápice, quando existe, e também acho que a fase tão dura que aquele casal viveu, não pode ser ultrapassada tão rapidamente. Realidade? Ficção? Não sei. Só sei que me *chocou...*

Outro pormenor que me *aborreceu* foi o número de vezes que o marido de Kate foi justificando o porquê de ter engordado. A meu ver não é minimamente razoável, até porque o cerne do livro não é ele nem os dilemas de um homem em plena crise de meia-idade mas sim a sua falecida mulher ...

De qualquer forma, é um livro que vale a pena ler, guardar e que serve para *beber* inspiração em momentos menos bons da nossa vida. Quiçá, para reflectirmos quando nos aborrecemos com tudo, havendo casos reais de tamanha provação e dor, que nos podem fazer relativizar certas coisas a que, por vezes, infantilmente, damos importância.

É uma mensagem de Esperança e, acima de tudo, de Coragem na pessoa de Kate Greene, a quem associo e associarei sempre estas palavras de Saint-Exupéry:

Cada um que passa em nossa vida passa sozinho, pois cada pessoa é única, e nenhuma substitui outra. Cada um que passa em nossa vida passa sozinho, mas não vai só, nem nos deixa sós. Leva um pouco de nós mesmos, deixa um pouco de si mesmo.

Annette says

Kleenex alert... you will not be able to read this book without one.

It was heart wrenching and yet heartwarming at the same time to share in the love of this wonderful

couple/family. To read about their lives, the love they had for one another, the trials and hardships, the difficulties they faced and had to face.

Finding the strength,courage and faith to continue moving forward I found inspirational and very moving.

Sarah c says

I listen to this by audiobook It was a sad story but it was very hard to listen too it very boring and repetitive maybe it would of been better if I read the book instead of listen to.

Rachel says

Its always a hard decision to read a true life story, particularly one that relates to the loss of someone's life and the family left behind. Its hard because you often don't want to read about such potential sadness, or believe that someone's life may ever bear enough resemblance to your own to make it understandable. The 'Its not happening to me so why should I care' mindset...

Books are generally escapism for people, definitely for me. However sometimes you need to look beyond your own needs and see life from the other side of the page... sadness of this level can also bring such relief and appreciation. Love is happy, love is sad and love can drive people to the most amazing selfless acts. Honestly written, fabulously exposing.

Read it with an open mind and tissues ready, it will hurt but it will also enlighten and teach you much about your own world too....

Julie says

A very touching story

Andrew says

I was prompted to buy this book having heard a radio interview with St' John Greene which coincided with the release of the film in late 2016.

It isn't often that a book brings me to the verge of tears. However this one did. There are many detailed reviews available. Some glowing, some less so.

All I will say is that this is a sensitively written book about a real family tragedy. I'm glad that I read the book. I quite liked the style.

I usually avoid books turned into films, However I intend to see this in film format too.

I've settled on a **** star rating. (5 for content, slightly lower for writing style)

Certainly not escapism, but if you like books based on fact, you may find this worth reading.

Louise says

Really enjoyed reading this. I started crying almost from the very first page and at first thought I wouldn't be able to finish reading without breaking down at every page but then I found that by the end of the book I was feeling heartened and inspired and not so sad and that's the cleverness of this book right there. You are immediately drawn into the author's personal story and feel and share in his every emotion at losing the love of his life but then go with him on his journey of grief and healing and come out of it the other side along with him, able to enjoy the memories without them being too painful and wanting to enjoy every moment of living that is left. A deeply personal insight into one man's Everest, beautifully and tenderly written, heartwarming and inspirational.

Barbara says

The difficult thing about rating autobiographies - especially ones with tragic plots - is that it can be seen as somehow denigrating the life of the writer or his family if you don't give a high score. That's absolutely not my intention. I can see clearly that the Greene family went through more cancer-trauma in a few short years than most people will experience in a dozen lifetimes. I can also see that Kate Greene might have been a bit unusual in leaving her 'list' of instructions for husband Singe to follow out after she'd gone. But what I'm amazed at is that this really poorly written, cliche-filled, repetitive book has apparently become an international best seller.

Had Greene written it himself, I could have brushed the writing aside as just the efforts of a man who can't be expected to be a good writer. But he didn't. It's ghost written. My goodness, this was put together by a professional writer? Seriously? Eyes are always 'sparkling', details are inconsistent (bubble gum on the day he told the boys becomes 'chewing gum' when he remembers a year later), and the same stuff gets rehashed again and again. There's no clear chronology, threads hop about all over the place and it's like the reading equivalent of getting stuck in a corner with somebody who's had too many drinks, got a bit emotional and is telling you about his beautiful, talented dead wife for far too long and in too much detail. Honestly, I didn't need to know about their sex life and how amazing they were together. What the book needed - as is often the case with cancerographies - was a damned good, unemotional editor to tell the author a few home truths and cut a lot of the fluff.

The best part for me was the inclusion of sections of Kate's mother's diary which does actually tell us about her illness. Singe provides almost nothing. I still feel that if somebody is given an 80% chance of living 10 years and then dies so soon, there's a need to at least establish somewhere in the text that there were particular reasons that things turned out so badly. Most women given those odds would be optimistic but if they subsequently read this book, that confidence can be badly knocked.

A couple of times there are absurd but damaging accusations about travel inoculations being the root cause of both Kate's and Reef's cancers which I found irresponsible. I also found some aspects of the 'list' - such as asking that the boys marry early so Singe could have fun with the grandchildren - were like an attempt to

control from beyond the grave.

Jill says

What an emotional book! Very sad however also very inspiring especially as a Mum to young boys. I loved Kate's idea of having a list and aside from the unbelievable sadness in the story being told of her illness and death, this is also a beautiful love story. It doesn't dwell on the sadness the children must feel, that goes without saying, but describes Singe's total and utter love and respect for his soul mate from the day he met her. He describes beautifully what he loved about her and their boys have an amazing account of their Mum they can keep. A painful read but I'm glad I read it.

Nicola Clough says

This book is so touching and wonderful to read and true to life. Singe has a beautiful wife and his has two children but the first has cancer and not expected to live and at the same time the mother gives birth to the second boy. They give treatment to the little boy then the mother gets cancer and she makes a list of everything she wants singe to do with the children when she has gone. So warmer and does he do everything on the list and how does he cope this is a must read really good.

Julie Schmitz says

An unpopular review, but I did not like the writing style of this book. The true life story had so much potential but was written in such a way that I never connected with the father. It seemed very contrived with picture perfect responses and conversations even though they were in the midst of a tragedy. I couldn't help wondering how he afforded all the things he was doing and how he could possibly have sooooo much time to do them. I am not judging the real man or events just saying that the way the book was written was the problem. Seemed rushed and repetitive. Almost like a student that was told to make a 250 word essay into a 1000 word essay.

Tracy Fenton says

This is a very hard review to write especially as it is a true story. Whilst I truly felt sympathy for the family and inspired by their courage and strength in dealing with the most tragic circumstances, this book really was badly written and to be honest I skimmed the last 40%. The book went on and on and on about the same stuff and I think had it been condensed into half the pages avoiding the waffle it would have actually been a good book. Nevertheless I wish the family only good health, happiness and love for ever!
