



A Chance in this world

Steve Pemberton

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A heart-rending but uplifting story of the human spirit's ability to prevail.

From the day he is five-years-old and dropped off at his foster home of the next eleven years, Stephen is mentally and physically tortured. No one in the system can help him. No one can tell him if he has a family. No one can tell him why, with obvious African-American features, he has the last name of Klakowicz.

Along the way, a single faint light comes only from a neighbor's small acts of kindness and caring—and a box of books. From one of those books he learns that he has to fight in any way he can—for victory is in the battle. His victory is to excel in school.

Against all odds, the author succeeded. He attended college, graduated, became a successful corporate executive, and married a wonderful woman with whom he established a loving family of his own. Through it, he dug voraciously through records and files and found his history, his birth family—and the ultimate disappointment as some family members embrace him, but others reject him.

Readers won't be the same after reading this powerful story. They will share in the hurts and despair but also in the triumph against daunting obstacles. They will share this story with their family, with their friends, with their neighbors.

A Chance in this world Details

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From Reader Review A Chance in this world for online ebook

Sarah Giannetta says

I recently had the opportunity to meet Steve Pemberton, as he gave the keynote speech at the National Partnership for Educational Access conference in Boston, which is also where I got the book. The book is a little hard to read at times, only because of the serious abuse Steve endures as a kid. How he made it through his childhood is unbelievable, but he does and his story is one everyone should read. I was stunned at the failures of the foster care system detailed in this book, but also relieved that there were so many good people in Steve's life who wanted to help him get to college and succeed. Definitely a good read for anyone in education, or anyone who is just looking for an inspirational story.

Judith M Kelly says

Beautifully Told

This book tells the heart-wrenching, true story of Steve Pemberton, an orphan who experienced a horrific childhood in the hands of the most vile and despicable foster parents, and his search for a place in the world by finding out who his biological parents, and the miracle of not just surviving these terrible years in the foster care system, but managing to put himself through college and becoming a CEO. I chose to read this book after Mr Pemberton appeared on the Steve Harvey show and briefly told his story. I found him fascinating and I had to get his book. To be taken through those years with him was both gut-wrenching and inspirational. His writing was beautifully done and I couldn't put the book down until I finished it. From day one, young Steve maneuvered his way through the foster care system with grace, eloquence and the kind of control you only see in the strongest adult. His descriptions throughout were vivid, and I could envision them all. I am quite sure we will see more books by Steve Pemberton. Truly worth the read.

Ben Schulman says

A Chance in the World is a book an orphan named Steve, and what he had to go through as a child and through out his life being an orphan. As a child, Steve was put in an awful home, where he was beaten and yelled at. Life there was horrible for him. He lived there for most of his childhood and while he did, he was, whipped, burned, slapped, and almost shot on a "hunting accident". It took him until he was 17 years old until he was let out of the horrible home. Afterwards it talks about how he was able to go to college and how he tries to find his family. He believed that everyone belonged to someone. Today he is a happily living man who has a family and a job. This book show that no matter where you come from, or what has happened to you, that you always will have "a chance in the world". I thought that this book was great and every one should read it, even though it might seem gruesome or scary at times. We should all know what its like to go through this and how some people have to live.

Kelly says

I'm so angry. I'm sure not everyone in the foster care system has experienced Steve's story, but 1 is 1 too many. It makes me want to better understand what kinds of reform is happening (or not happening). I also would like to understand how people like the Robinson's aren't criminally prosecuted. People have been thrown in jail for way lesser offenses. Everyone deserves a right to basic human decency.

Pamela says

I'm finished attempting to read this memoir, in its downloaded format as provided free via christianbooks.com, many months back as a reward for participating in a survey.

Such a bummer, I was really getting into it. But after two months, I must accept my reality.

The problem isn't with the story itself. From what I have read, just under the halfway mark, it appears to be aptly-written, deeply felt, and highly recommendable. The problem lies with my inability to read on an electronic device for any length of time without triggering an RSD related migraine. Using a computer sometimes does the same thing. Hence, super short reviews here and there.

I'll be looking for a print copy to read, as I really want to know how Pemberton's life turns out after his Foster Care, abusive nightmare. Until then, I'll refrain from a star rating. But if I did give one, I'd go four stars for the first half.

Tanya W says

I wish I had remembered to review this in October when I read it... I sped through it on a family vacation.

This is Steve Pemberton's heartbreaking story of the abuse he suffered in foster care. A few good people made a real difference in his life, and he was able to survive this terrible situation.

What he went through makes me wish I could be like the lady who dropped off books, or some other wonderful person who made a real difference (without even setting out to do so).

It's sad that there is not better oversight of the foster care system and that it appears that finding a loving foster family is uncommon. We can hope that because bad news is what makes news, that maybe there are lovely families serving as foster parents because they want to make a difference in the lives of underprivileged children, and that a story like this is the exception and not the rule.

To me that is the best definition of underprivileged... I mean not having your own family... not enough food or clothes or a great place to live is horrible, but not having parents who take care of you and love you is the worst! I am so thankful for my strong belief in a Heavenly Father who loves each of us and will some day make it up to those who have suffered so in this world. There will be peace, justice, and abundant love.

Carmen says

A captivating memoir about a biracial child who survives the terrifying experiences of foster care in Massachusetts. His remarkable resilience, survival, faith in God and search for personal identity make this a must read for anyone working in public service.

Patricia Gomes says

Due to Steve Pemberton being a local boy and my daughter's praise, I was excited to start this book. While reading it, I had the opportunity to see the movie and meet Mr. Pemberton. It was an incredible experience. Bittersweet, soul-crushing, you will rise with him on his remarkable journey. Read the book, see the movie — either way, bring a box of tissue as you travel with him. You will not be disappointed.

Jim Cullison says

Harrowing, mesmerizing, and thought-provoking, this rapidly devoured memoir goes toe-to-toe with Dickens in its unforgettable depiction of a hellish childhood endured and overcome. It is an eloquent and engrossing testament to the indefatigability of the human spirit at even the youngest age, as well as the power of literature to serve as a lifeline to those drowning in sadism. It portrays the invaluable kindnesses of individuals while also exposing the struggles of well-intentioned but ultimately unwieldy institutions to safeguard the most vulnerable in our society. The cliché is too often deployed in countless book reviews, but in this case it is entirely applicable: you open this book, you will not be able to put it down.

More importantly, you will come out better for having read it.

Monica says

A compelling read, but one that does not make connections to the larger world/context in which it exists. The author makes several negative comments about the difficulty and weight of the choices people in his life faced when deciding how to handle his case or to help him, but he never makes suggestions for improvement or positive change. It's not for me to judge a person's life choices, but I do wonder why Steve chose not to foster or adopt. I can't be the only reader who felt this way - yet another missed opportunity to address "the system" as it currently stands.

scc101 says

WHAT I LIKED:

Steve Pemberton shares the story of his horrific youth in foster care and how he overcame those circumstances. Very powerful story

I recognize almost all the places and even some of the names mentioned. Pretty cool!

My favorite part is when he searches for his birth family. I won't go into spoiler details but it is certainly a roller coaster with ups and downs.

WHAT I DIDN'T LIKE:

I found the writing style difficult to deal with. I'm not a big fan of narrative, whether it's fiction or non-fiction, and this writing style is probably why. There are too many descriptions of unnecessary and inconsequential things. I don't really care that someone walking along the street was wearing white sneakers that were slightly scuffed on one side. I ended up skimming over pages at a time so I could get the overall idea but skip over all the superfluous details.

Marty says

A hard and brutal read, but worth every effort

Sue says

A heartbreaking memoir chronicling the life of a young boy's experiences in the foster care system in Massachusetts, his search for his birth family, and the obstacles he encounters along the way. No child should have to live through what Steve did, and it sounds like his experiences are not atypical, which should be a call to arms for everyone in the social services and justice system. The memoir would have benefitted from some tighter editing, however. Steve's story is so powerful, yet sometimes gets bogged down in distracting details.

William Ramsay says

This is the memoir of a terrible life, of a boy who should never have made it in the world. The product of two very dysfunctional parents, sent to a terrible foster home, denied not only a normal childhood, but food and hope, Steve Pemberton should have turned to drugs and an early incarceration or death. That he turned out a stable man with a family, and education, and good job is testament not only to his fortitude, but to the strange working of our genes. The book is a harrowing read for the first quarter and then suffers for a lack of good editing. The chapters on trying to reconnect with siblings he never knew he had is too long and should have been cut down to the essentials. An interesting read, all the same, and a terrible indictment to our social services and foster care system.

JM says

I met Steve when I was 17 years old with a desire to attend Boston College. He sacrificed leaving work on Valentine's Day to wait for me to arrive on campus and ask any final questions. I was late, but he still stayed. He understood me as an inner city kid looking for a way to better myself and turn the tide of family failures to successes. That is exactly what his book is about.

Steve's story is about the determination he showed, despite the abuse, disappointments, and setbacks. His

story as a bi-racial child without a family to call is own is heartwrenching. His honesty showed throughout the course of the book. There are times in which I had to put it down because I was so moved. Hopefully his story will better inform the public not only of the injustices of the world of foster care, but also the many shortcomings of society regarding the care of its members.
