

## **MIDWEST BOOK REVIEW (Appeared in December 2005 Issue)**

Losing Innocence

Brian R. Smith

Publish America

P O Box 151, Frederick, MD 21705

1424100380, \$19.95, 201 pages

I chose this book for review because it shared many similar feelings I encountered in an abusive marriage. Since I am a survivor of spousal abuse I related with this story and the message that there is such a thing as true love. I don't find many authors that truly touch on the abuse and recovering from such emotions of life only to continue to find the right person to trust and love, forgetting that you once have gotten burned. The subject of domestic abuse is not a normal subject when looking for an enjoyable book, but Smith weaves a story that makes you laugh and cry.

Brian R. Smith pulls you into his story with raw emotion, I found myself not wanting to put this book down. Page after page he draws you into his well defined characters that you rally for until the very end. This novel has a powerful pull on the heartstrings that is filled with human drama and unexpected truths.

Brief quotation from the book:

It was her favorite photo. Five and three years old. Young... innocent... not yet touched by Jeff's wrath or his fists. God, I hope he isn't hitting them. Surely they'd tell me.

Memories flooded Mia's mind, the lazy days of summer playing whiffle ball, endless turns on the swings, learning how to rollerblade and bike... Her lips trembled at the angelic smile, on Vince's face. So warm, and loving. He always knew when she was upset, and tried to comfort her. But lately... lately that little heart of gold had begun to tarnish with the acid of his father's hate.

Jesse's grin drew her attention next. So full of love and innocence, she wished he could always stay that way. He'd done okay so far, but how long would that last with the head games Jeff played? God, she wished Jeff was dead. It was wrong, yes... she'd never wished harm on anyone. But deep in her heart, or maybe that knot in her gut, she knew that someday the vitriol that spilled out of Jeff was going to splash on her babies and burn them too.

"Losing Innocence" is a suspense/love story that will appeal to a wide range of people, especially women and/or men who have been through an abusive relationship, whether as a child or through spousal abuse. The age range is any adult or even older teenager who will get the message that there is a good life after abuse. You don't have to stay with someone that degrades you. This novel touches on ethical issues of what would a person in these shoes do?

Brian R. Smith succeeds in conveying in his novel the message that he is trying to accomplish. I cannot say what message it is, because it will ruin the ending of the book itself. It is very entertaining, one page to the next, I was either in tears or laughing. I have no other suggestions for Smith for the next time around in print, except to publish something soon.

Brian R. Smith lives in Sycamore, Illinois, is a graduate of Hamilton College and as of late, has no other published books. According to his website he is working on "The Bastard's Plaything" and "The Tree", which I am sure I will be reading once they are in publication.

What other related or relevant titles might interest a reader? "Songs of the Humpback Whale," by Jodi Picoult or "Black and Blue," by Anna Quindlen.

Mia and Lance both come from abusive relationships, neither one looking for another relationship to bring them down, both holding on to the fact that being alone is better than being hit. They find one another and fall in love, the stars must have been in the right place. Much to the chagrin of being happy, Mia's abusive ex-husband tries to thwart their happiness by using their children as pawns. The game he plays throughout the book leaves the reader with a much beloved twist at the end. Will his plans succeed and the cycle continue or won't they? That is only up to the reader to find out in the ending chapters. This novel has a powerful pull on the heartstrings that is filled with human drama and unexpected truths.

Abuse comes in many forms, physical being the one that is the most noted because of the physical scars it leaves behind. Smith also touches on the emotional scars that are caused from verbal and emotional abuse that indeed touches the heart of America. This emotional baggage is usually carried throughout a lifetime, which Smith takes note of and gives a person hope.