

The Other Woman

Tunette Powell

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The Other Woman is a bold and emotional memoir based on a sixteen-line rap written by the daughter of an addict. In this honest portrayal of addiction, Nette loses herself in the stories of her father's struggles. She vividly recounts his memories of the crack houses and prison cells he once frequented, and openly recalls how that other world stole so many years from Bruce Callis and his family. Bruce, who began selling drugs when he was fourteen years old, first smoked crack cocaine while selling the drug to an attractive woman in a crack house. In the decades that followed, he traded everything - household goods, the money meant to feed his children - to finance his habit. While Bruce wasn't watching, Nette grew up. She faced challenges of her own - being molested as a young child and searching for her father's love in every man she met. But in the process, Nette searches for a way to not only forgive her father, but to understand him.

The Other Woman Details

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Beth Olson says

The only complaint I have with regard to this book is that it's much too short !! I just wanted to keep reading. Ms. Powell describes the life of a co-dependent to a "T", having been one most of my 55 years (father, mother, first husband, two children), I am familiar with the territory. Her outlook on her father and his addiction(s) is one of tenderness (as she sometimes must assume the role of parent)and frustration (why couldn't he love his family more than the drugs?). I believe the book is summed up on page 64, when Ms Powell writes: "I wasn't embarrassed by his addiction; I was hurt by it." This is a must-read book for those who love someone with a substance abuse problem...and those who do not. Very moving, would recommend to any adult reader.

I received this book free of charge from Goodreads.

Jessica says

I received this book for free through Goodreads First Reads.

The thing is, this isn't a bad book or a bad story. It was interesting to see the effect of drugs on someone's life as told by someone close to them.

While the story of Bruce is important, I found that I didn't care about his story so much as I did Tunette's. I wanted to know more about Tunette and how her father affected her. I had the evidence (selling Christmas presents, getting thrown in jail, cheating on her mom, pawning anything and everything) that he had abandoned her in several different ways and I could guess how that would affect her, but I didn't get to see as much of her as I would have liked. She is the heroine of the book. Somehow she had this way messed up dad (I struggle to call him a bad man because I felt that Tunette didn't consider him to be a bad man) and had been surrounded by the projects but grew up and went to college and found a career and love. She mentions that she searched for love from men because she didn't have it from her dad, but then she only mentions a brief situation in regards to that. She mentions being married and having a son and that's it. There's not relating her relationships with them to the relationship she had with her father. I wanted more about her. In addition, I had a lot of unanswered questions at the end. Like what happened to Tunette's mom? She divorced Bruce and then what? Did they continue to live in the house or did they lose it? How old was Tunette at the end of everything? The heart of this story is not Bruce but the people around him.

As another reviewer mentioned, I also noticed several grammatical errors in the book, which should have been caught by an editor. I was also really confused on the timeline of the book. I understood that each chapter was supposed to relate to the rap that Tunette wrote (which was lovely--Tunette's creative writing skills show up most in the rap) but that made following the story line difficult. I couldn't understand the timing of Tunette's life related to the events happening because the chapters usually didn't clarify how old she was or what month/year the chapters were happening. I also noticed that the chapters didn't quite correspond with the lines of the rap.

Again, this wasn't a bad book. It just didn't follow the character I most wanted to know and things were a bit jumpy (there was a random chapter between Tunette blacking out when taking Bruce for weed and when she

Molly says

I heard the author speak at a young professionals retreat in Omaha, Nebraska and I felt a connection and inspiration she had that made me really consider what legacy I was leaving. She spoke that day and I began to look at my life in a new focus. I immediately purchased the book and I read it within a day. Definitely recommend to anyone.

Mardra says

Tunette Powell's, The Other Woman, is a memoir, however the story shared is more the exploration of the demons, the falls, and to some extent even the wisdom of her father.

Throughout the book Ms. Powell confesses that the power of music and words have been saviors throughout her life to help her sort through the difficult circumstances put upon her and her family by her father's destructive lifestyle. Consequently she chose to tell the story not chronologically but via "tracks:" snippets of discovery either of an event, a pitfall, or a lesson. Each track, nearly stands on its own as a mini essay surrounding a conflict or life-changing event.

With a background in journalism, Ms. Powell researched her father's life and decisions far past what she knew firsthand of his life. However, the stories are not told from a journalistic view but rather painted, with vivid details. She takes the reader into crack-houses, under the street lights, and to festive family parties with so much detail the pages pull the reader into her world.

Ms. Powell only skimmed the surface of the consequences of her father's addiction on her own heart and soul. She pricks the reader throughout with the pains she experienced, but never slices deep enough to let us inside to feel the extent of her inner turmoil. I would have liked to know more about her journey from scarred child to forgiving adult, but from what I understand that journey is forthcoming in future works.

Kori Miller says

I think Tunette's book can best be described as a memoir about her father, not herself. He couldn't write it, and perhaps never thought to do so, but she certainly could. Tunette wrote this book with a "journalist's eye," so that she could remove herself from the emotion (just a little). Readers still get a good glimpse into her feelings about her father, his addiction, and how the family coped, and in some cases, didn't cope with his problem. It's not a "feel good" read, but it's an engaging and quick one. You're left thinking about it for a few days. The incident that stayed with me most was her father selling all of their Christmas gifts one year. Read the book so you understand the lead up to that event. It's not what you might expect.

The book is organized in an unusual way. It's told out of order. So, if you're a fan of chronological order, then this book might throw you for a loop. In the end, though, everything comes together.

Tunette and I chatted about her book on Back Porch Writer. You can listen to the archived show at www.blogtalkradio.com/backporchwriter. You can also read her "Final Thoughts" at http://backporchwriter.wordpress.com.

Craig says

Full disclosure before I begin: Tunette was a former colleague of mine at the San Antonio Express-News, so I've anticipated this book on a different level than the average reader might. I believe my positive rating and review are an honest reflection of its merits, but I'd be dishonest if I didn't note that part of my enjoyment in reading this was pride in knowing her before she was an author. //

I once thought I knew what it was like to have it tough. There was a point in my childhood when both my parents, already struggling to pay bills, lost their jobs in the same week. I cut holes in the knees of my jeans as I outgrew them to make them look longer because we couldn't afford new ones, and some of my school friends made snide remarks about "welfare" after my parents signed me up for free lunches at school intended for low-income families.

But I had no idea. As author Tunette Powell would point out, I was still a "house kid" -- a product of happily married parents who were paying off a house in the suburbs, far, far removed from the stresses of the projects. This is why people like me don't write memoirs in our 20s or even 30s, and rightly so get laughed at when we do. A tough childhood is having your crack addict father sell the presents out from under the tree on Christmas Eve. Or forming a friendship in adulthood with the pedophile who molested you, perhaps because your father spent most of your childhood in prison, depriving you of the self esteem to avoid such a train wreck. Or helplessly watching your father steal a belt from Wal-Mart the same day you pick him up from his umpteenth trip to the pen.

Though still in her 20s, Tunette Powell's story bucks the general assumption about young authors. Packed with several lifetimes worth of turmoil, the memoir is raw, gritty and absolutely enthralling in its bare honesty -- whether it be telling her own story or her family's larger narrative. Through her father's recollections and prison letters, Powell vividly describes the crackhouse on the East Side of San Antonio where he took his first toke while cheating on her mother with an underage prostitute. She recalls her grandmother sleeping with a switchblade to ward off an abusive husband. She describes a world I know little about in real life. But through this book I feel like I do.

The only criticism I have is the grammar. It needs a thorough scrubbing by a copy editor before the second edition. But I blame her publisher for that, and one might even argue that it adds to the rawness of the story.

This book is an impressive accomplishment for a young, first-time author. It's a must-read for those interested in the destruction drug addiction can inflict on a family. Often bleak, it also is uplifting -- a

testament to how the author transcended the riptide that could have pulled her into the underworld that devoured her father and grandfather. I'm looking forward to reading the books that follow.