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Just before eleven on an ordinary summer night in Washington, D.C., Tucker Jones picks up the phone, expecting to hear that his teenage daughter, Kat, is back from the movies. But the caller is another parent, a man who tells Tucker that Kat was actually at a party-- and makes a shocking allegation about what happened to her there. From that moment *Breaking Her Fall* sweeps irresistibly forward to its wrenching, and redemptive, conclusion.

In a blind rage, Tucker races to the party to find Kat already departed, but his full-boil interrogation of the boys still present spills over into a confrontation-- and ends with one of the boys crashing into a glass tabletop. In a second, his rage turns to remorse, and he soon finds himself under arrest. Tucker could easily lose his home and his business, but he is most concerned about losing his daughter.

Stephen Goodwin writes with insight and rare power about the way that passion rearranges lives. As Tucker and Kat and everyone around them seeks to repair the damages of that night, *Breaking Her Fall* charts their uncommonly difficult passage from despair to reconciliation and hope with extraordinary grace.

Breaking Her Fall Details

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Author : Stephen Goodwin

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From Reader Review Breaking Her Fall for online ebook

Gail Jeidy says

This book isn't particularly literary. It doesn't contain poetic language, but it is a page-turner because the stakes are so high. It deals with a topic of timely importance to parents, for starters, in the aftermath of the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal. It shows how bad things can happen to good kids in our society and how one family got through it, and in particular how one father and his daughter got through it. Goodwin includes lots of characters and keeps all the threads going, and at 400 pages, it is a quick read, even for a slow reader, like me. We guess at the outcome, but we want to know HOW, HOW did this family survive this. It is an entertaining and a worthy read.

Carmen says

I highly enjoyed this book. This book is about a single father named Tucker. One night he gets a call from another man saying that his daughter (14) is not at the movies with her friends, but instead at a party where she is giving sexual favors to a lot of boys. Tucker drives there in a rage, and in the following moments, a teenage boy loses an eye and lands in the hospital. This book really dives into how people's actions have consequences. This realistic story explores what happens when you let your emotions get the better of you and make some stupid choices. Not only does this affect your life, but the lives of all your loved ones - and even people who you don't know. Now Tucker is facing jail - his children are scared and confused - his ex-wife wants full custody - he's responsible for a 16-year-old being half-blind AND many, many other complications that rise out of his actions on that one night. I thought the characters were very realistic and well-written. I thought the book was very intelligent. Tucker thinks he's got a handle on things, and he always thinks he can clear it up - but it's obviously out of his control, and spinning more and more wildly with every page. Very gripping. I like how he writes children, as well. He doesn't simplify them. They are very realistic. I highly recommend this book.

Danielle says

You shouldn't really call this book "Breaking Her Fall" when so little of the book revolved around the daughter. This book is more about his trials. And also I don't know a father in his right mind who would have an affair with his neighbor in the midst of a lawsuit.

Lil' Jenny Graff says

i thought i was really, really going to like this book. it's about a divorced man raising his 2 teen-age kids. he gets a call late @ night regarding his daughter and all the 'bad stuff' (don't want to give it away) she has been doing. anyway, the dad kind of loses it a bit, like any parent would after receiving this phone call. anyways, i guess the book did a great job detailing the relationships between fathers and teenage daughters. but i wasn't really into all that. it was eh, at best.

Janine says

This was probably my least favorite book this year. It started out with potential; a father finding out that his 14-year-old daughter has gotten into some trouble at a party. However, the story goes nowhere. The author attempted to show a family healing but I didn't feel anything for anyone. Bored.

Also, I hate reading dialogue that NO one would say. It bugged me in Juno, but in the opposite way. In this book, everyone's a talker and overly so.

Christianne says

Wow. Warning to all my friends on Goodreads who are parents--this one is heartbreaking. I feel sort of lucky that I can read these types of stories without worrying about my own children. BUT--though heartbreaking, it has a good, solid ending, which I always like because I need closure with novels. It's well-written, moving, and overall pretty amazing. Highly recommended as long as you moms keep the tissues handy while reading.

Mike OConnor says

The book jacket got me: A daughter named Kat and her actions which put a family in turmoil. The crisis leads the father overreact (Not in my estimation) and to cause injury to a teenage boy. Too many words for so shallow a story. Only the lack of another book on a four day trip, kept me reading this one. When will I learn.

Melissa says

This book had so much promise!! The first half of this book was so engrossing, I could not put it down. As a mother of an almost teenage daughter and a teenage son, the events of that night are a parents worst nightmare. But then there were so many things that started to bother me. Mainly - why did neither Tucker or Trish press charges or seek retribution for what those boys had done to their daughter??? No wonder the poor girl became so depressed - by not doing anything to support her they let her shoulder all of that unnecessary shame. Neither of them did anything to help her reconcile that night, and by doing so they placed blame on her as well. She got expelled from school!! Those boys got away without taking any responsibility for what happened to Kat that night. Unbelievable.

Abby is a spoiled brat, all the kids were, actually. And Trish just might be the worst, most selfish mother on earth. It became way too wordy, and I could have done without Tucker and Lily's complicated relationship, and their weird mid life crisis band....the plot line started to wander all over the place and it started to become like an episode of Desperate Housewives.

Adrian Stumpp says

This book embodies everything I detest about contemporary literature. Goodwin's sensibilities are thoroughly middle-class, and I mean that in the worst possible way. Instead of explaining what I mean by that, I'll just tell you about this book. The main character is a middle class divorcee who receives a phone call one Saturday evening from a stranger who tells him his daughter is at a pool party giving everyone head. He rushes to the scene of the crime only to find his daughter has left. He gets into a fight with one of the teenaged boys still at the house and accidentally puts out his eye. He spends the next three-hundred pages having sex with his best friend's wife while his lawyers maneuver to keep him out of prison for putting out a fifteen year old boy's eye, and trying to bring himself to somehow find it in the deepest part of his heart to maybe forgive his daughter for f@#\$ing six guys at the same time. Good christ, it's enough to make me want to watch TV.

Linda C says

Brats. What a bunch of brats. Upper middle class, well-off, well-educated, spoiled brats. The teenagers were obnoxious and the adults not much better. This book suffered from the curse of contemporary fiction-- set in 1998, it's not old enough to be considered historical, but too old to feel contemporary. Instead it just felt stale and dated.

During that time frame, there was a slew of "research" (mostly discredited now, I hope) that claimed that we were "failing" our teenage daughters. Girls were unhappy; girls were depressed; girls were suicidal; girls were starving, binging, purging, cutting. While all of that was probably true of some girls, from the vantage point of 2012, it's clear that it was exaggerated and most of our girls are doing fine. Unfortunately, that theme permeated the book.

The story centered loosely on 14 year old Kat and 15 year old Abby and the events of a particular night, when Kat drank herself senseless and performed oral sex on a parade of boys, while her BFF, Abby, was upstairs having sex with another boy. The narrator of the book, Kat's father, receives a call about his daughter, goes to look for her, and inadvertently injures Abby's boyfriend during a scuffle.

The 400 page book covered the lives of the primary characters over the next six months, while the father, Tucker, is awaiting trial on assault charges stemming from the incident.

The teenagers, Kat, Abby, and the boyfriend, Jed, were just so obnoxious that it was difficult to feel any kind of sympathy for them. Kat never once apologized to her father for what she did; nor was she ever punished. The only consequence was that she was expelled from the elite private school that she attended. Instead, Tucker continually beat himself up over how he had "failed" his daughter. Kat continually locked herself in her room and refused to go to the new school (which she was also mad about because she was never "asked" if she wanted to attend).

Uh, she was 14... why did she feel like she had a choice? That door should have been taken off her room and her butt should have been hauled into school. A door on a teenagers room is a privilege, not a right. He told her not to lock it, she continued to do so, but there were no consequences. Instead, everything was about Kat-- Kat was sad, Kat didn't want people to be talking about her, it was her business what she did and where

she went, and Tucker seemed unable to grasp the fact that he was the FATHER. He was NOT A FRIEND.

In one scene, while Tucker was trying to find a school that would take Kat on short notice (she couldn't possibly go to public school, could she?), one school administrator suggested a boarding school in Colorado where she could go on nature hikes. If she were my kid, she would have been on the first plane with a one way ticket until there was some improvement in her attitude.

There were also no consequences to the boys that gave Kat the alcohol. Although charges were threatened, if the case went to trial, that also made the book feel dated. In today's hyper sensitive environment, the boys involved would have undoubtedly been charged with statutory rape; they were 16 and 17 and she was only 14. Instead only Kat was expelled from school.

One reviewer said that this book should be required reading for every parent of a young teenager. Don't believe that. This is NOT how healthy teenagers act or think. I see young teenagers all the time-- my daughter, her friends, my girl scouts, the kids at church, role models for how you want your kids to be, not the self-absorbed brats in this book.

These were characters who had everything and understood nothing. This book was a disappointment.

Lori Anaple says

I give it two stars because I finished it. Painfully. I thought it was going to be so good too! I was excited to hear a story about a father/daughter instead of the usual mother/daughter dynamic.

This dude just never stops talking...blah blah blah blah. The entire book could have been over with as a short story.

It irritated me more than anything. Here this dude is, going through a law suit and more worried about schtupping the friend who happens to be married to his best friend. I hate that.

Trite. Boring. Mess.

Scott says

I liked this book because it's all about being a parent. I'm a dad to two beautiful little girls (and one little boy on the way). Since I only have a few short years before the teen years - the book was particularly eye-opening to me about the transformation I am about to witness. Even though I don't share the protagonist's (Tucker Jones) role as a single father - I found the story and the point of view beautifully REAL. The truth is - one event can really transform a family - as this story clearly demonstrates. Yet life is about how we all relate to the events that happen. The characters were complex, exhibiting real emotions - and doing stupid things -just like all of us. I really enjoyed the brutal honesty that was portrayed with Tucker's thoughts on being a parent.

There were some events in the story that I had a bit of trouble believing - for example - I don't think there are

very many teenage boys that would have said "I'm sorry" to an answering machine. Yet that bit of information formed a crucial part of Tucker's understanding of that fateful night.

All together a great read - and I'd like to remember to read it again when my oldest daughter is 14.

Anne says

A great summer beach read - a single father gets a phone call that his young teen daughter is at a party where she has, shall we say, performed various indiscretions with various boys, and he goes to find her, and a boy gets hurt. Therapy, legal wrangles, and custody issues ensue - and the story feels always like it could develop in any direction, with tension and intrigue that kept me hooked to the mystery, compassion and human interest that kept me engaged with the characters, and enough trash to satisfy the gossip in me.

Christina says

I'm not a big fan of books who toot their own horns but when it says, "Breaking Her Fall sweeps irresistibly forward to its wrenching, and redemptive conclusion," it's the truth. If there was one book I've liked to date this year over all the others, it's this one.

A lot of books I've read over the past three months have dealt with a mother's relationship with their child (i.e. Perfect Match, Odd Mom Out) and it was a nice change to read a book about a father and his relationship with his daughter.

Breaking Her Fall is one of those books that I couldn't put down. But the book isn't also just about Tucker and Kat trying to fix the damage from July 13th. It's about their neighbor Lily and her struggles with her teenage daughter, and Kat's best friend, Abby. It's about Tucker and his inability to love. It's about life.

Mel says

3.2***

Twill Landscaping keeps Tucker Jones pretty busy, as does raising his two nearly teen-age kids Will and Kat. When he gets a phone call insinuating that Kat is at a party and in trouble he rushes to her rescue and an unfortunate accident occurs that permeates each of their lives for years to come. The helpless feeling when one is caught up in a burgeoning lawsuit was difficult to get through, so I felt pretty victorious when I finished this one.

Hubert says

An excellent story, though it needs to be further edited down to about 100 fewer pages.

Father and owner of a lawn and landscaping company Tucker Jones receives a phone call from another parent, telling him that his daughter is not at the movies, where she has agreed to be. When Jones finds out purportedly what she has been up to, Jones decides to take matter into his own hands, precipitating a series of actions which alter his, his family's, and his friends' lives forever.

What's cool about the book is that the more gripping action-packed events happen at the beginning of the novel, then settles down in the middle, before coming to something of a resolution (albeit too quick) at the end. Though the focus is on the delicate nature of parenting teens in late 20th century America, the readers gets to learn about his other mostly difficult relationships as well.

Jones is a particularly unsympathetic character; he seems not able to communicate properly with anyone around him, primarily the children, but also the ex-wife and early on in the story, the on-and-off lover. From a structural POV having an unlikable character permeate the book so thoroughly is an intriguing prospect: the reader definitely encountered times when his behavior was so infuriating that one almost wanted to put the book down. The author deserves credit for creating a flawed, somewhat sad, character that annoys, always seemingly at the wrong place at the wrong time, and possibly incapable of doling out real love.

Throughout the book the reader gets to experience class and gender difference and attitudes. As it's written in the late 90s, I think some of the issues that came up would have been framed differently now, but for the most part it still deals with issues that are still relevant to contemporary society.

The exploration into the role of religious faith in the lives of father and daughter seemed contrite; I would have edited these sections out.

This is recommended reading.

Rebecca says

Very hard to read about this father dealing with the information he receives about his 14-year-old daughter. The aftermath made me think of Map of the World, in which a single very unfortunate event follows a mom. Interesting to read a novel set in DC. Loved the landscaping info. Kids making choices about their sexuality without much information to go on makes we wish everyone could have Our Whole lives (OWL) training. Interesting to see what the psychologist says. I especially like the joke he tells about how you get what you order in a Chinese restaurant (you reap what you sow).

Loved seeing Eva Cassidy's music appear as important part of a novel.

Cathy says

I loved this book. I had goosebumps when I finished and wanted to read it again. I found the relationships between father and daughter, father and son very real. I was rooting for this family and felt the story which takes place in 1998 could certainly happen today. Relationships are so complex and this story shows a father trying to save his daughter and keep his family safe through some very difficult times. Lily, the neighbor and her daughter Abby are also an integral part of this story and just add to the complexity of relationships between family and friends. Read this book my friends!

Jayci says

Simply incredible. There were times when I honestly forgot that this story was a work of fiction. I felt intrusive. As if I had stumbled upon an open journal and indulged in the secret thoughts and feelings of a friend. Regardless of how anyone may feel about this story, Stephen Goodwin is a master with the pen. There was nothing cheesy or fake in the dialogue and the rest of the writing was raw and real. Tucker(the narrator)spoke candidly about emotions we have all felt, and never want to admit. He takes moments in life that leave the rest of us speechless, and puts words to them. I can't wait to get my hands on another one of Goodwin's books.

Melissa Torres says

This book really caught my attention once i read the summary on the back cover. It's a life lesson book where you can relate to it. Most books are mother and daughter relationships, but this one is a father daughter relationship. How a father dealt with a divorce and has to raise his two teenage children by himself. His oldest child is named Kat and is going through her hardest and toughest time in her young adult life. Her father looses control of himself when he hears on the bad news his daughter has been doing unsupervised. He has to learn that Kat will make mistakes and he will have to learn how to deal with it and how to go through with it as well.
