FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Clarion Review ★★★★★ **CHRISTIAN**

Beach Devotions: Refreshing Your Soul with Lessons from the Beach

Laura Vae Gatz
Colorado Peeks (May 10, 2013)
Softcover $14.95 (70pp)
978-0-9831664-6-7

This wonderful collection of devotionals is complemented by gorgeous photographs.

In *Beach Devotions*, Laura Vae Gatz uses vivid photography and engaging words to provide contemplative devotionals related to a refreshing day at the beach. She provides her insights while focusing on both the natural surroundings and the man-made articles commonly found at the seashore.

Gatz is an accomplished international photographer and writer who has found a perfect vehicle to combine both talents. The thirty devotionals accomplish her subtitle's promise of "refreshing your soul with lessons from the beach."

Each chapter's musings directly tie into an experience or observation familiar to any beachgoer. Topics include Adirondack chairs, driftwood, lighthouses, seagulls, sand, volleyball, and sunsets. The two-page devotionals are highlighted by Gatz's beautiful full-bleed color pictures that directly relate to the topic. They are perfectly screened to allow the full richness of the photo to set the tone for the text while never overpowering the words.

While the pictures produce a relaxing or descriptive background, Gatz is equally adept at using words to evoke images of pleasant memories or activities common to anyone who has spent time at a beach. She then uses those observations and recollections to lead into an appropriate biblical application. Each devotion begins with a brief scripture passage and ends with a short prayer that emphasizes the chapter's theme.

Gatz uses her personal experiences as the foundations of the devotionals, and her candidness and vulnerability forge a deeper connection with her readers. "I've said over and over to my husband, 'I don't know how to not hate her. I don't know how to forgive her, to be nice to her nastiness. I don't know how to forgive her!'"

The one flaw that appears throughout the writings is the misuse of punctuation and grammar, often creating awkward sentence structures. "When I focus on daily prayer; keeping God the focus of my day by communicating with Him through prayer, throughout my day, I find that no obstacle is too hard to overcome because the Lord has provided me with His strength, His patience, and His peace." Although it can make the flow of the text feel choppy at times, the brevity of the devotions and the richness of the points being made prevent these imperfections from distracting from the overall impact.

Gatz has skillfully and effectively combined writing and photography to produce a compelling devotional book. Trying to excel at two mediums simultaneously is a daunting undertaking, but Gatz has done so with commendable results. *Beach Devotions* is as enjoyable as a day at the seashore.

JEFF FRIEND (January 24, 2015)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.

Source: https://www.forewordreviews.com/reviews/beach-devotions/