



Fostering and Us

Marie Coady

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Straightforward and heartfelt, the memoir Fostering and Us focuses on a family's contributions to dozens of children's lives.

Marie Coady's memoir *Fostering and Us* is about the highs, lows, and long-term connections formed through foster care.

Coady and her husband began acting as foster parents to prepare for adopting their two children, Dean and Marie, but also regard it as a calling. They hosted placements for periods as short as a single evening in response to emergencies and crises and as long as multiple years, as with their frequent, on-and-off foster child, Logan.

This text focuses on big events, including deaths in the family, new jobs, home improvements, and relationships with the social services system and the children who found places in the Coady home. Its themes include unconditional acceptance and kindness, as well as recognizing that boundaries are important. Care for the children always comes first.

The narration is engaging, at once personal and timeless. It doesn't edge into suggestions or advice for other foster parents, though it does showcase the wide range of circumstances in which foster parents find themselves. The lightness and joy of the book reflects suitedness to this work; even through exhausting weeks hosting multiple rambunctious children, the book portrays fostering as a good life.

Smooth-flowing, chronologically shared anecdotes span more than twenty years, from before Marie and Dean were born to when Marie had children of her own. The book's abundance of characters means that some minor and recurring characters are hard to track, but most children are captured through their distinctive characteristics, including David, Logan's best friend.

While much of the story is serious, humor keeps harder moments from overwhelming the text. The elaborate schemes concocted by children to remain with the Coadys or to get back to their biological parents are captured in evocative terms, portraying the difficulties of fostering without overdramatizing them.

Not all shared details add to the narrative; the book works better at the level of its scenes. Memorable moments hold attention in a way that the book's various overviews of what children did across seasons are unable to. The book's conclusion focuses on the Coadys' retirement from fostering and hopes of enjoying freedom not permitted by fostering meetings, appointments, and child care; its tone is sweet, and it is a positive conclusion to the memoir.

Straightforward and heartfelt, the memoir *Fostering and Us* recalls the Coadys' contributions to dozens of children's lives. It is both an informative and entertaining book.

LAURA LEAVITT (September 12, 2019)

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