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SOCIAL SCIENCES

Grant Me My Final Wish: A Personal Journal to Simplify Life's Inevitable Journey
Renata Marie Vestevich
Bella Vita Books
978-0-9766382-0-9
Five Stars (out of Five)

Life's journey inevitably ends in physical death. And the living, those friends and family left behind, inevitably have to juggle intense emotional grief with a myriad of funeral arrangements, people to contact, legal papers to locate, and an estate to settle.

This elegant journal covers all the bases pertaining to death. Its design is similar to a blank writing journal, but is divided into thirteen sections that are prompts for topics ranging from "Special Medical Wishes" to "Special Care of Pets." There are lots of blank lines to fill in: personal thoughts, wishes, plans, instructions, and general information that is helpful to those still living. Vestevich states in her preface, "We give little thought to the ending of life," and this journal is one of the most thoughtful things a dying person can leave behind.

Paging through the padded hardcover, any reader who has organizational inklings will itch to fill in his or her personal information, including bank names, insurance agents, group memberships, and 21 pages for friend/family addresses. At the end are photo sleeves for mementos of loved ones or special events. There are sympathetic poems and quotes sprinkled throughout. The "Family & Friends" section opens with, "To the world you may be one person / but to one person you may be the world." —Anonymous

Grant Me My Final Wish is professionally and creatively planned and produced. The cover and endpapers have an image of footprints along a serene beach of sand and surf. The last poem in the book, "Some People," notes that some people…"leave footprints on our hearts." The interior layout continues the calm tones: the text is in a shade of tan, and each section opener has a tasteful, consistent design. Most sections have a helpful introductory paragraph to ease the reader/writer into filling out the blanks. The author nudges with, "Save your loved ones from additional stress."

It's an unsavory business, planning for one's own death. But Vestevich's lovely book allows for a smoother transition through this planning. Her journal smartly outlines the process people often go through in dealing with their own death or the death of a loved one. Writing in

this journal is a tool to help simplify that inevitable journey and truly gives those who survive someone’s passing a chance to grant final wishes.