



My Father's List: How Living My Dad's Dream Set Me Free

Laura Carney

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My Father's List is a moving memoir about healing after loss.

On August 8, 2003, Mick Carney was killed by a distracted driver, leaving behind his family and the bucket list that he'd written when he was twenty-nine. Still grieving a year after his death, his daughter Laura remembered him as a big, exuberant man with a warm smile and twinkling eyes—someone who gave hugs like he meant it. Above all, he was a truth-seeker—though one who'd been keeping a secret.

Laura Carney describes her conflicted childhood with care, ruminating on her parents' divorce, the lies told to protect her, bullying, and a stint in a treatment center for anxiety and depression. Her decision to complete her father's bucket list was not easy for her. On it were goals that terrified her, like skydiving and riding a horse. Others seemed impossible, like corresponding with the pope. One would never happen: her father's wish to "Live a long, healthy life at least until the year 2020."

The narrative, whose emotions range from profound grief to exhilaration, also reveals the root of Carney's anguish: her sensitive spirit had absorbed her father's shame over his secret. Her narration is both vulnerable and strong as she relates how, in living out her father's unfulfilled dreams, she developed compassion for his hidden life, discovered strengths that she never knew she had, learned how much the two of them had in common, and realized the truth of the old saying that "everything good is on the other side of fear."

My Father's List is a poignant memoir about a father-daughter relationship whose love transcended death.

KRISTINE MORRIS (July / August 2023)

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