ForeWord Reviews
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AUTOBIOGRAPHY & MEMOIR

My Favorite Teacher Was an Ironworker
Rick Taylor
AuthorHouse
978-1-4634-0548-9
Four Stars (out of Five)

Rick Taylor, a doctor by profession, proves what many readers are continually learning: the best education takes place outside the classroom. With *My Favorite Teacher Was an Ironworker*, Taylor shares a heartfelt look at an unexpected legacy that begins with the birth of his son.

The author offers his experiences from early childhood to later adulthood in an easygoing pace that puts readers at ease. The clear storytelling is tinged with reminiscences and bits of humor, and it flows from past to present and back again. As he shares the richness of learning from his own son, readers are drawn in by his humility.

Readers see Taylor grow up with a love for animals and later use animals as a bridge to relationships with his family and others, highlighting the connections between animal relationships and human relationships. He would bandage turtles with cracked shells as a child, and he took his wife, Lynne, to an animal park on their first date, telling her what he knew about each animal along the way. Readers will relate to Taylor's family relationships, diverse life experiences, and intergenerational learning. While Taylor's experience is different from his father's or his son's—and from readers'—it becomes clear that commonplace life occurrences weave even the most unlikely people together.

The book is organized into sections by themes such as learning, dogs, and sports. Taylor uses his themes to question the value of traditional education and the belief that college is a must if one wants to succeed. He also wonders whether fishing is about something more than fish. He believes that life's meaning is in the richness of experience. He also explores wealth, class, and the perceptions of others. Adding depth and complexity, the themes imperceptibly entwine as the book goes on.

While not strictly necessary in this type of book, readers may miss a table of contents. In addition, the section openers have a clipped, stilted feel. Readers who love a strong beginning, middle, and end may find that the ebb and flow of the storyline lacks form and structure.

However, the quiet recollections in *My Favorite Teacher Was an Ironworker* will

enlighten readers, especially those looking back at their own lives and the lives of their children.

Melissa Wuske