

Rise before the Son: Advice for Single Mothers on Raising Successful Boys

Jenieka L. Pearson

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Rise before the Son is an affirming parenting title that explores family dynamics and guides mother-son relationships in single-parent families.

In her uplifting parenting book *Rise before the Son*, Jenieka L. Pearson offers insights on how single mothers raising sons can do so with success.

Pearson knows that raising a son as a single mother can be challenging. Her book begins by recounting her own experiences doing that work. It also acknowledges that statistics regarding success among men raised by single mothers can be disheartening, but despite them, Pearson is determined to prove to other single mothers that their boys can be successful, too.

Emphasizing the importance of separating a child's identity from that of the absentee parent's, the book urges single mothers to evaluate their own attitudes and parenting skills and to keep learning about how best to raise their sons. This is a motivating work that instills self-confidence in its audience. Recognizing that single mothers can lack self-assurance, it shows that such insecurities are perpetuated by cultures that suggest that boys can only be raised well by men.

Optimistic but realistic from the beginning, the book is most based on Pearson's experiences. Additional research and outside expertise do not play in, limiting the book's scope and credibility. The insights here are more personal. Still, Pearson's experiences provide a clear framework for the book's content.

Though it is divided into chapters for clear reading, within chapters, different ideas are crowded together. Lengthy paragraphs move between ideas and are difficult to follow. The main message becomes blurred as the book moves from one notion to the next without fleshing individual notions out sufficiently. There's little room to digest the information contained in each section. Grammatical errors take attention away from the themes and make reading the brief work slow-moving.

The events that Pearson recounts are sympathetic to the challenges faced by other single mothers, including self-doubt, judgment from society, and discouraging religious ideologies. Addressing these challenges gives the work meaning, and the conveyed need for more information on the specific circumstances that single mothers face is compelling. Positive and assertive language drives some of the text's messages home, including that "You must tell yourself every day that my boy will be powerful, successful, respected and brave because of me." This conversational style is engaging.

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EDITH WAIRIMU (August 19, 2019)

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