

Tears and Trombones

Nanci Lee Woody

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This highly readable, triumphant tale deserves a place on any music lover's and book lover's shelf.

Tears and Trombones is the inspiring novel, based on a true story, of how one young man beat the odds to become a renowned trombone player.

Joey Woodman is born into a poor Sacramento family in the 1930s. At the age of nine, he begs his mother to take him to the symphony after a classmate taunts him about his inability to afford the tickets. It is then that Joey knows he is born to be a musician, and the trombone becomes his instrument of choice.

His biggest obstacle to success, however, is not lack of talent, nor lack of funds, but rather something much closer to home: his father. Joey's father is a hard-drinking, mean-spirited construction worker who takes delight in disparaging his son at every available opportunity. To make matters worse, Joey's mother cannot overtly support her son lest she risk the wrath of her husband. Joey's mother is a product of her times; serving her husband's every need and, apart from one powerful scene, ignoring his infidelities.

Through hard work and study, and despite the forces pushing against him, Joey perseveres. Along the way, he experiences many amazing opportunities to study with great masters and perform with famous artists. Despite his growing success, though, Joey is not completely fulfilled. His life is made even more complicated by his conflicting feelings for two women.

It is clear Nanci Lee Woody has an intimate knowledge of music, as the reader can almost hear the notes floating out of Joey's trombone. Her description of Joey's playing is as authentic as the historical landscape against which the story occurs. Details about the time period lend an even greater sense of credibility to the telling, and Woody deftly captures the language that folks in that era used.

While a moving portrait of a man and his dream, ultimately, *Tears and Trombones* is a love story—between a man and his music, his mother, and the woman he loves.

HILARY DANINHIRSCH (Spring 2015)

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