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Walking After Midnight: One Woman's Journey Through Murder, Justice, & Forgiveness

Katy Hutchinson
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New Year's Eve celebrations are supposed to be happy. The night started well in 1997, as friends and neighbors gathered in the small town of Squamish, British Columbia. The author's life and family changed forever that night, and this book tells how strength came from their loss, resulting in an example for the world to follow.

Things had been good for Katy and Bob McIntosh. Bob (an attorney and avid runner), Katy, and their four-year-old twins lived in a prestigious, quiet neighborhood. But success and athletic ability meant nothing when Bob went to check on a party hosted by his neighbor's teenaged son. Within minutes he was beaten and left for dead.

A life ended too soon because of one moment of irresponsible and irrevocable rage. With hundreds of young partyers in attendance, no one came forward to identify the murderer.

Hutchinson describes the pain felt at the funeral, and her children's emotions. Her young son tried to crawl into the coffin, while his twin sister buried her head and looked away, saying, "I do not want to see Daddy in a box." The author relates her own thoughts at the viewing: "I feel light-headed and nauseous … I open my eyes and see the shell of what once was. They have done a good job putting Bob's head back together after the autopsy." Mourners are disheartened to learn that the person responsible for Bob's death is elsewhere, living freely.

"Katy, you must remember one thing. Bob is very dead," said one well-wisher, giving Hutchinson the permission she needed to "continue the journey alone." She moved, remarried, and spent years searching for the murderer, who was an angry nineteen-year-old at the time of the crime. Eventually the young man was found and brought to justice.

Once the murderer was apprehended, Hutchinson realized that he was a victim of his own circumstances and wanted to seek help, rather than punishment. Thus, forgiveness and retribution became the catalyst for a new direction in both their lives. Together, they spearheaded a campaign promoting restorative justice as they speak internationally in prisons and schools, advocating change: "They are about bringing people who cause harm into the heart of the community, not pushing them away into isolation."

Hutchinson narrates this true story with brutal honesty and without refraining from the details of the murder and its aftermath. She is to be admired for telling her powerful tale in such a forthright manner. Whether the reader agrees with these choices or not, the book is well written and sets forth an exemplary message.
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