

The Sound of Hope: A True Story of an Adoptee's Quest for her Origins

by Anne Bauer



About the Book

"The day I realized I had two mothers, I was cut in half. One mother had had me in her belly and brought me to the special nursery, while this mother I called Mommy took me home from the nursery to live. One half of myself resided here with my family, and the other half was lost, lost to a shadowy woman floating somewhere out there in the world? You see, I'm adopted."

So begins the compelling memoir of Anne Bauer, born out of wedlock, surrendered to a Catholic adoption agency at just ten days old and placed into a turbulent Irish family. Anne's household is filled with a hot-tempered father obsessed with cleanliness, an emotionally distant mother who worked nights and spent her days sleeping and secrets at every corner concerning her origins. Yet, Anne never wavers in her devotion to her family nor her desire to unravel the mysteries surrounding her own beginnings.

Anne, at age twenty-two, finally set out to find her original family against dogged opposition from her family, her fiancé and the legal system which sealed all of Anne's records. **The Sound of Hope** is a realistic journey into the hidden side of adoption that is deeply moving as it is sorrowful. The complex reactions to a long-delayed reunion, as well as the emotional fallout experienced by everyone in the adoption triangle will haunt you long after the last page is turned.

Discussion Guide

1. What was it about the von Trapp family in "The Sound of Music" that made Anne feel a special connection to them?
2. Each of the four parts to the memoir is introduced by a proverb. Discuss how each proverb relates to the upcoming storyline.

3. Given Anne's "special status" as an adoptee, how would you explain the same situation to your own adopted child?
4. Anne is taunted by her childhood friend and is told, "Your real mother didn't want you. That's why she gave you away." Have you ever experienced or heard similar things said to an adopted child? What do you think the psychological impact of such comments has on the adopted individual as a child and later as an adult?
5. In the course of the memoir, Anne's relationship with her adoptive mother changes. What do you think was the major turning point in their relationship?
6. When Anne's Grandmother warns her about searching for her birth mother, she says, "Ahh, it's a good boat that tries to find the harbor it left, but be careful, don't go looking for someone who might not want to be found." What do you think was the meaning behind her Grandmother's comment? Does her warning have any impact on Anne's search?
7. Do you feel that Anne's parents were justified in their resentment toward Jo?
8. Why do you think Anne's two adopted brothers had no interest in searching for their own birthmothers? Do you think their problems later in life had anything to do with their adoption status?
9. Throughout the memoir, Anne never wavers in her determination to locate her birth mother. Where do you think her perseverance came from?
10. What place do you feel a birthparent has in the life of the child that they placed for adoption?
11. Anne comments in her Afterword about adult adoptees being denied access to their own original birth certificates. Do you feel this is a civil rights issue? What would you do if you were denied access to your own information?

Author Bio

Anne Bauer was inspired to write a true account of her life as an adopted individual in the hopes of raising awareness of civil rights of adoptees and instigating reform in the current laws pertaining to adoptee records.

She was born in the state of New Jersey and surrendered by her birth mother to a Catholic adoption agency. At ten days old, Anne was placed into the home of her adoptive family. Her parents told Anne at a very early age about her adoption status, however, no further knowledge about her origins was divulged. She was simply told there were other parents, and yet, at the same time, was expected to pretend they didn't matter anymore --- they didn't exist.

After years of silenced questions, Anne searches in order to uncover her origins against walls of opposition from her family and society. **The Sound of Hope** is her story.

Anne currently lives in northern New Jersey with her husband and their three children.

Critical Praise

"I found this story to be fascinating?"

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