

MY BRAVE LITTLE MAN - REVIEWS

I was captivated by the strength and protective nature of the author, who was placed, along with his younger sister and brother, in an orphanage at the age of four. I couldn't put it down. **Devon Anderson

Very good read so far. A real down-to-earth story written by a real down-to-earth person! I went to high school with him!
**Derrell

This was such a great story...Very Well written...The town he was adopted was near my hometown. Great writer
**Jeanne Putnamit

My Brave Little Man is a book that was very hard to set down. Following Terry and his siblings childhood experiences show the resiliency of children. The strong bond they form when they depend on each other shows how strong the family bonds can be. It is a book that makes one realize that one should never give up on life's tough times.
**Koshpeggy

It shows what goes through the minds of the young when they flounder in the unknown realm with the lost of both parents. This story is a signpost of what can be accomplished in our lives without help from our elders.
**Sharon

An absorbing read, and a fascinating profile of a unique personality, an area, and an era. The quality of the detail is amazing--this is a first-rate memoir that allows the reader to step inside the truth of the author's own experiences of his childhood. Some of the events, like the tots taking a ride into the sky on the Duluth Lift Bridge, seem almost unbelievable, yet it's clear they really happened, and in the way they are described. His family might be called dysfunctional, but it was at the same time a source of strength. Each character is carefully and sensitively profiled. It's an often humorous, but also poignant and even hair-raising portrait of resilience. Today's children are rarely treated to such an up close and personal look at how their grandparents lived "back then." Highly recommended for young people and adults alike!
**L. Cross

This is a moving and emotional story of a young boy's loss of his family ties that propelled him onward to find his way to restore as much as possible what was lost. He found answers and truth as well as caring and strength. **M.K.
An engrossing account of a young boy seeking purpose and meaning while being tossed about in an emotional maze of difficult surroundings. It shows in a very personal way how will power, even at a very young age, can triumph over circumstances. It should inspire many. **Jck

T.A. Degner's memoir, "My Brave Little Man", is a touching portrayal of one boy's experience becoming a man all too soon. This sometimes difficult story weaves an intricate tale of what life becomes when the one who loves you most dearly, isn't fit to raise you. The love between mother and child is indescribable, suffice it to say, being torn from your mother at such a young age during the formative years can really strain the relationship. The story and anecdotes found throughout this story informs the character growth and personal struggles a boy must undertake for himself and his siblings. Through it all, Terry and his siblings thrive on the belief that one day they will be reunited and a family once again. It is heart wrenching to learn what occurs later on, but the last few chapters really wrap up Terry's life as a child and what went on behind the scenes. Overall, this was a great read for anyone who wants to know what life was like in an orphanage in the mid 50s. Further, the geographical and landmark references stand out to anyone familiar with Duluth and its history. Finally, I can say that this memoir left an impression on me - in that it has demonstrated the resolve and determination that we are all capable of, and of course it was all from a child who was less than 8 years old! To summarize, My Brave Little Man by TA Degner is a powerful story of mother and child and what happens when a bond and relationship is altered. This memoir is well written and seemingly allows the reader to be transported back into time to what life was like on a farm, in an orphanage, and on a constant search to find your mother.

**Spaceman32002

As a volunteer book reviewer for the American Adoption Congress, I very much recommend this author's story. This book suits the primary audience of the AAC (adopted adults and their families through birth and adoption) very well. The entire portion of the book is devoted to the author's (an adult adoptee) first eight years of life, and his life experience in those young years--along with those of his siblings--read as if an entire lifetime is "squished" into just eight short years. The young boy faces many adult situations and has to cope with them as best he can. His responses and reactions include signs of attachment deficiencies, anger, fear, feelings of not being in control, bed wetting problems, age-inappropriate independence and more. The policies and conduct of the orphanage (Children's Home) included in his story are a great vision of the orphanages of the decades past--good food for thought for today's policies and conduct. And, My Brave Little Man speaks to extended birth families, birth mothers, birth fathers and reunion with such. Lastly, the author speaks favorably of his adoptive parents. The author does a great job of conveying that adoption is a life-long process. Throughout the book, he links some of his current tendencies as an adult to some of the memories of his past (both traumatic and comforting memories). He expresses joy regarding his adoption, referring to it as a "new lease" on life. He recognizes, after searching relentlessly to find every piece and bit of pictures, notes, records, files, that things most likely turned out for the best--that his birth mother probably loved him, but was truly not capable of caring for her children.

The book displays the damage secrets cause, the complexity of reunions, the ambiguity of being blood-related to strangers, and perhaps most wonderfully--hope (particularly related to adoption) for those who have such a difficult beginning in life. Thanks!!

**Jamie K. Nagy

My older siblings lived a lifetimes worth of adventure and escapades in just 8 short years. A younger brother looks up to his older one, and so I hold my big brother in esteem for taking the time an effort to write his autobiograh. It took a lot of courage and commitment to see such a project through. I wish I been able to take part, but alas I wasn't even born yet. Congratulations, Terry, and thank you for teaching me about my own past - even though I wasn't there with you.

**Dennis Allen Doolittle born: Keith Allen Haataja, June 1953

The account of the author's younger years is amazing. He really was LITTLE AMAZING MAN. It is a good reminder of other kids in the same situation. It was a relief to learn that he was adopted by loving and caring parents. I look forward to reading his other books.

**Robin E. Bauer

Growing up I heard my dad's stories often, he has always been open about sharing his life experiences. I received the manuscript from him over Christmas to read. I began right away. As I journeyed through the chapters with streams of tears rolling down my eyes, I realized reading my dad's story was much more difficult then hearing it. It is still hard for me to comprehend my dad's younger years, because it is difficult to fathom that type of life. Thankfully I know the outcome, he is the best dad a girl could ask for and the best grandpa a grandchild could have. My life has been boring comparatively and for that I am extremely grateful. He took a life that started with tragedy and didn't allow that to be his heritage. Reading a book about someone else's childhood that was filled with hardship, gives you a different perspective of your own. Even when you are the author's daughter. Enjoy my dad's book!

**Nicole Amber

I would love this book no matter what, but it is a great read into the history of an orphan... It was hard to read about some of his family members because they are also mine that I see in a different light. Thanks for the history lesson.

**Amazon Customer

Terry Degner has given us an outstanding memoir in My Brave Little Man. He chronicles his journey through the early years of his life...growing up in Minnesota, the realities of a sometimes-absent family, and the stark existence of life in an orphanage. He braves his way through his early years with courage and grit, looking out for the welfare of his two younger siblings, himself, and sometimes his parents...such awesome responsibilities for such a young man. Terry leads us through the adventures, sweet and bitter, of his life; and we gladly go along for the journey. My Brave Little Man is meticulously researched, bringing to life many of the places and colorful characters Terry met along the way. The reader is satisfied, too, with the rest of the story : Terry

fills us in, in the epilogue, with what happened afterward, and lets us know how things turned out. I took this book on my 4th of July vacation, and couldn't put it down. A page-turner, and smartly written! Great work, Terry!

**Jean Childers

Excellent memoir; very rich in detail and very well researched. The author's struggles and resiliency spring from every page; can't wait to read the remaining books in this series. Very well written; highly recommend.

**D. A. Tipton

Thank you for writing this. I hope there will be more installments. I like the writing style - the memories are told from a child's perspective and are vivid flashes that paint great pictures. I really appreciate you doing the research and combining it with your own recollections to create a quick reading memoir like no other. If I didn't know it was true I wouldn't believe it. There is always another layer to the wild stories - with the existence of Dennis/Keith being perhaps the biggest one of all!

**Georgia Conley

I truly enjoyed reading this memoir. I found his story to be captivating, bringing forth feelings of nostalgia, sorrow, and amusement throughout. I am looking forward to consuming the second installment.

**Amazon Customer

My Brave Little Man is a compelling story about incredibly formative years in one man's life. I enjoyed not only reading about the trials of the author's early childhood, but also hearing his perspective as a now grown man reflecting on these experiences and how they shaped his entire life. The book also provides an interesting and informative historical perspective on social norms, economics, and public institutions (such as orphanages) during the mid-1900's. It is an easy and enjoyable read.

**R. Rushdy

Terry Degner does a great job of advocating for fellow adoptees in his book, "My Brave Little Man." Through his own personal experience he explains why older adoptees often have such a hard time adjusting to their new families, and the importance of having adoptive parents who are patient and loving, and serve as good role models. Congratulations to the Degners for doing such a great job with Terry and his sister Jean.

**J. Anderson

My Brave Little Man is the inspiring true story of shattered innocence. Full of spunk and determination little Terry shows us an interesting and compelling look at the difficult choices he was forced to make at a very young age. We share his confusion as he deals with an alcoholic and absent father. We feel his pain as he must take up an uncanny courage in the face of the loss of his mother. I'm looking forward to the second installment.

**Jim Downs, Author of The Book of Positive Qualities

I thoroughly enjoyed this memoir by a Minnesota author. I found his story to be both sympathetic and captivating. His memory of events from such a young age was remarkable and pulled at my heartstrings. I highly recommend it to a wide audience. I can't think of anyone who wouldn't benefit from reading it.

**Sara McCoy

I found "My Brave Little Man" a story that tugged at my heart throughout. Terry reveals the hard choices of a child and yet securing his independence and bravery in order to face all the obstacles! Heartwarming.

**Renee E.

This book was absolutely amazing. I loved it. It was interesting at every turn. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone looking for a good read.

**Jaericson96

Wow, what a great book you wrote. I couldn't put it down and just finished it this afternoon. I got a lump in my throat and tears in my eyes when I read about your last encounter with your mom. This is a very sad story, but you were an amazing little guy. I can't believe the things you did at your young age ~ escaping with your siblings to go find your mom, the adventure to go see her at St. Scholastica....just to mention a couple. I think of the little 4 and 7 year olds I know right now and can't imagine them doing such things ~ you were a Brave Little Man!

**Laura H

My Brave Little Man captured my attention with its simple approach by telling the story of the author's difficult stage of life – facts as they really were, how he felt and what his thoughts were. I can only imagine how vulnerable a child must feel, how brave to overcome what had happened and through it all to gain confidence and self-worth. I liked how honest and without extra dramatization the orphanage was described, in my view that is crucial to the reader. My Brave Little Man kept my attention from first to last page and was very realistic and sincere. I loved reading it and I am looking forward to the next book.

**Stefka from Bulgaria

In his memoir, "My Brave Little Man," the author takes the reader on a journey through a childhood most people in the Western world may find difficult to comprehend. The author not only made this journey, but managed to survive and mature into the strong yet caring person I am happy and pleased to call my friend today. "My Brave Little Man" is a book about character-building experiences and hope; about a little boy who became a man before his time. He shows us the power of perseverance and a strong will.

**Andrew Ogg – a fellow traveler through the mysteries of life.