



Meant to Be

By Walter Anderson
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Book Description

This true story begins when Anderson, a 21-year-old Marine sergeant recently returned from Vietnam, stuns his mother with the question that has inexplicably haunted him from his earliest years: Was the alcoholic, abusive father who had so tormented him in his childhood his real father? Her truthful answer: Walter was born of a war-time love affair between his German protestant mother and the Russian Jewish man she loved. He keeps their secret for nearly 35 years -- until the day he meets an unknown brother -- another son of his real father -- who has lived a similar, nearly parallel life.

Meant to Be is a love story, a journey of self-discovery and spirituality, and a provocative challenge to common notions about the role of heredity in our lives.

Topics for Discussion

1. Walter Anderson attributes his drive and eventual career success to his mastery over his childhood difficulties. Is there a correlation between ambition and overcoming hardship?
2. Walter confronts his mother about a secret she has kept for so many years. Are children entitled to know their parents' pasts?
3. Walter finds out that he is the biological son of a Jew. What are Walter's responsibilities to the faith of his father?
4. Walter lived with the secret of his parentage for years. How does living with a secret affect intimate relationships?

About the Author:

Walter Anderson is chairman and CEO of Parade Publications and an Advisory Board member of Literacy Volunteers of America and National Center for Family Literacy. A high school dropout, he is a national spokesperson for GED and director of the National Dropout Prevention Fund. Additionally, he is a member of the board of advisors of the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School and the National Council on Economic Education. Anderson is also the creator of a series of filmed discussions with prominent Americans called, "It's About Time" and was the 1994 recipient of the Horatio Alger Award.