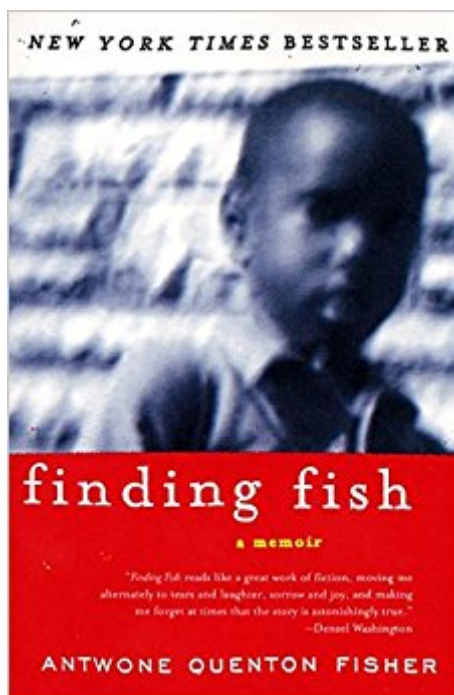


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Finding Fish: A Memoir



Synopsis

Baby Boy Fisher was raised in institutions from the moment of his birth in prison to a single mother. He ultimately came to live with a foster family, where he endured near-constant verbal and physical abuse. In his mid-teens he escaped and enlisted in the navy, where he became a man of the world, raised by the family he created for himself. *Finding Fish* shows how, out of this unlikely mix of deprivation and hope, an artist was born -- first as the child who painted the feelings his words dared not speak, then as a poet and storyteller who would eventually become one of Hollywood's most sought-after screenwriters. A tumultuous and ultimately gratifying tale of self-discovery written in Fisher's gritty yet melodic literary voice, *Finding Fish* is an unforgettable reading experience.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Thank goodness Antwone Fisher's story has a happy ending--otherwise, his searing memoir would be nearly unbearable to read. His father was killed by a gunshot blast shortly before he was born in 1959; his 17-year-old mother gave him up for foster care. Unfortunately for Antwone, his foster mother was as successful at browbeating and demeaning her many wards as she was at lying to the Child Welfare authorities. His working-class African American neighborhood in Cleveland became purgatory for a sensitive, intelligent boy who quickly turned into a withdrawn underperformer at school. In Fisher's blow-by-blow account of his childhood, his sexual abuse at the hands of a female neighbor is hardly more horrifying than his foster mother's relentless cruelty--especially because respectable, churchgoing Mrs. Pickett justifies it all as due to the boy's

wicked faults. Readers will be relieved when she dumps 15-year-old Antwone back at the Child Welfare office, even though he will endure homelessness and a scary spell of criminal employment, before an 11-year stint in the Navy provides him with a way forward. Grim though his tale is, Fisher displays throughout it the grit and stubborn integrity that kept him sane. He musters up some understanding (not forgiveness) for the dreadful Mrs. Pickett, and his eventual meeting with his burned-out mother is painfully poignant. He certainly deserves the beautiful wife and cute two-year-old daughter, cooking pancakes for him in the book's closing and redemptive scene.

--Wendy Smith --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

An unflinching look at the adverse effects foster care can have on a child's life, this stunning autobiography rises above the pack of success fables from survivors of America's inner cities. Born in the 1950s to an underage single mother serving time in prison for murder, Fisher was placed in the home of a staunch minister and his wife, who appeared to be a loving couple to the series of foster care workers who monitored their home in one of Cleveland's working-class neighborhoods. Writing in a deft mix of elegant prose and forceful dialect, Fisher is especially adept at dramatizing the tactics of control and intimidation practiced by his foster mother on the abused children in her care, such as crushing Fisher's self-esteem by calling him worthless, shaming one girl after she began her period and making the boys bathe with Clorox. (Fisher supports his detailed recollections with excerpts from the actual foster-care records.) An added bonus is the author's vibrant recreation of several key black neighborhoods in Cleveland during the golden age of the Black Power movement, before the areas disappeared under the aegis of urban "renewal." If a major feature of survival memoirs is their ability to impress readers with the subject's long, steady climb to redemption and excellence, then this engrossing book is a classic. (Feb. 5) Forecast: Boosted this season by a national ad campaign, 25-city radio campaign and a six-city author tour, interest in Fisher's autobiography is guaranteed to swell when the movie adaptation of the book (shooting this month and directed by Academy Award-winning actor Denzel Washington, who will also star) hits screens nationwide (tentatively scheduled for next winter). Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

This is one of the most memorable and deeply affecting books I've ever read. I found the very beginning a little hard to follow (a brief history of his birth parents.) But once Antwone came into the picture, the narrative flowed easily. The cruelty, abuse, neglect, and emotional detachment visited upon Antwone by his foster family was difficult to learn about, although (unfortunately) believable.

We might have expected a bleak childhood like his to have developed into a short, sad life in a gang, a bad end in prison, or permanent homelessness. But Antwone's inner strengths were apparently much greater than the negative forces working against him, and he was thus able to make conscious choices that would lead him to have a fulfilling, respectable, and respected life. I was particularly touched by his relationship with one teacher who changed his life, who helped him change his self-view from helpless victim to master of his own destiny. His later stint in the U.S. Navy was also memorable, as that service enabled him to discover talents and strengths he never knew he had. In some ways, Antwone Fisher is a mystery, since he wound up being much greater than the sum of his upbringing. Perhaps he is a living testament to "nature" having at least as much power over a person as "nurture" does, since his grandparents and many of his later-discovered extended family were highly-accomplished, loving, simply nice, people. His ultimate message is that we needn't be held back by the toxicity of the people who raised us; rather, we are free to leave them behind and make a bright new path for ourselves. I highly recommend this book!

To be fair, there are many true life, verifiable horror stories of children placed within the care of the Government foster system only to be maltreated, abused, neglected and taken advantaged of by the system and people who swore that it was "helping". This memoir is not any different. It's important that these incidents are made known and that the public welfare system is held just as accountable as everyone else - And perhaps more so. Social workers aren't held in high regard hardly anywhere and it's through their own fault that this ill regard for them everywhere exists - The few good that helps, doesn't outweigh the large majority that take their position and runs roughshod over so many and abuses the population that they are in a position to help.

A deeply touching and moving recount of his life and profoundly insightful reflection of his experiences and lessons, Mr. Antwone Quenton Fisher deserves national recognition for his demonstrated ability to rise, like the phoenix from the ashes. What an endearing, yet socially and educationally relevant story. All social workers, psychologists, educators, and social-educational organization reformers should read. He is a true testament of our God-gifted potential. Additionally, Antwone is a most impressive and skilled writer, capturing the finest and subtlest essences of every experience, event, and emotion. I salute him for sharing his story with us. A must read!

I loved this memoir! I volunteer at a crisis nursery that serves abused and neglected children and this was required reading. So glad I chose to read this. I live and grew up in Cleveland, so that

made it even more interesting to me. Plus, Antwone and I are close in age, so that made it even more poignant. It was an amazing story of success against all odds.

Antoine Fisher's story is moving, gripping and inspiring. I can't think of any person who, after reading this book, would not in some way become a better person. Antoine Fisher is a hero, a mentor and an excellent writer and story teller. His story is as sad as a story can be at times. His childhood is utterly tragic and shows the evils of humanity and the shortcomings of our culture and society. Yet, throughout his misery, he maintains an inner spark that drives him through the trials he faces, one obstacle after another. This is a story of a beautiful human spirit overcoming everything thrown against it--selfish, abusive people, a system that doesn't care, anger and bitterness, violence and apathy. Finding Fish tells how a lost soul became found and flourished. It shows how the love of people can make a difference in a life. It also shows what does really matter in the end. I think Finding Fish should be required reading for all people. I am thankful to Antoine Fisher for sharing his story. The movie was good, but it does not do the true story justice--there is just too much there to put into a 2 hour movie--so read the book.

Finding Fish is for the most part splendidly well written. The evil done to this child strains the imagination, and because of that the resolution is a bit too hastily and mildly dealt with. Such a resolution does not do justice to the the buildup of drama and therefore causes a small doubt as to the validity of the events leading up to the resolution. The reader needs more information about what became of these abusers and how the now adult victim struggles to rid himself of their presence in his life and mind.

Antwone Quenton Fisher recounts a most amazing and horrifying story of a childhood controlled by so many lunatics and morally bereft adults that you wonder how he managed to survive, much less thrive. An incredible story of moving beyond survival mode into success and self-acceptance, FINDING FISH is a memoir that will teach you about perspective and gratitude, determination and that powerful little kernel inside some of us that inspires us to reach far beyond what is expected of us. Mr. Fisher, you have written a beautiful story with not one ounce of self pity or melodrama. Hats off to you. Bravo.

Had to get this book for school, but really enjoyed it. It's a hard read, but I am impressed how Fish always saw the bright side and looked out for good. While it's horrifying to hear his experiences, it's

also quite and inspirational read.

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