

# **53 Grove Road**

by Helen Rose

## **Struggles of a painful, abusive childhood revisited in search for peace**

How does a person begin to deal with the memories of an extremely painful childhood? Ignore those memories all together and you are almost certain to suffer the consequences, revisiting the pain of the past upon present-day loved ones, or seeking solace in any number of emotion-numbing and unhealthy activities and substances.

Another choice is to fearlessly face those memories head-on, in the black-and-white of the printed page. Helen Rose, a wife, mother, friend, neighbour and resident of a small Canadian Rockies town, has chosen that path to healing and peace through her bittersweet, finely crafted memoir, 53 Grove Road.

The address for which the story is named marks the beginning of the story, her adoptive home in a small Ontario community and the place where fear, guilt, mistrust and shame began to work their way into an innocent little girl's psyche.

The grove of trees is just off to the side of a high, windswept field, where Helen returns to these horrific memories as a grown woman. Unable to shake the past, she travels to her childhood home to confront at last the hurt, confused, bitter and angry little girl that still lives within her.

53 Grove Road is where Helen's earliest memories begin to take shape, and become painfully real once again. Through the eyes of a four-year-old we first meet her adoptive parents -- the distant and cold mother completely lacking the love and warmth she craved, and the father whose fun-loving personality rarely surfaced as he spiraled into a rage-fuelled alcoholic haze.

These painful memories, however, are countered at every turn by the fierce resilience of a young girl destined to pursue a better life for herself, all the while seeking the brighter side of life, wherever it can be found. Her spirit and optimism shine through even the most painful circumstances, from leaving home as a teenager to encountering the overwhelming challenge of single-parenthood in a small, tightly-knit Canadian Rockies town.

Strength of character and spirit are further tested as Helen unearths secrets about her past – who are the birth parents she has dreamed of for so long? What events befell her in her most tender years, from birth to age 3, and how have these impacted the life she leads today?

Read on to discover a compelling and keenly felt tale that touches on issues and themes that are universal in their ability to derail a young life – abandonment, alcoholism, neglect and child abuse. Read also of the hope, courage and love – in Helen's case, for her young son -- that it takes to survive and confront the demons that remain long after the child had grown.

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