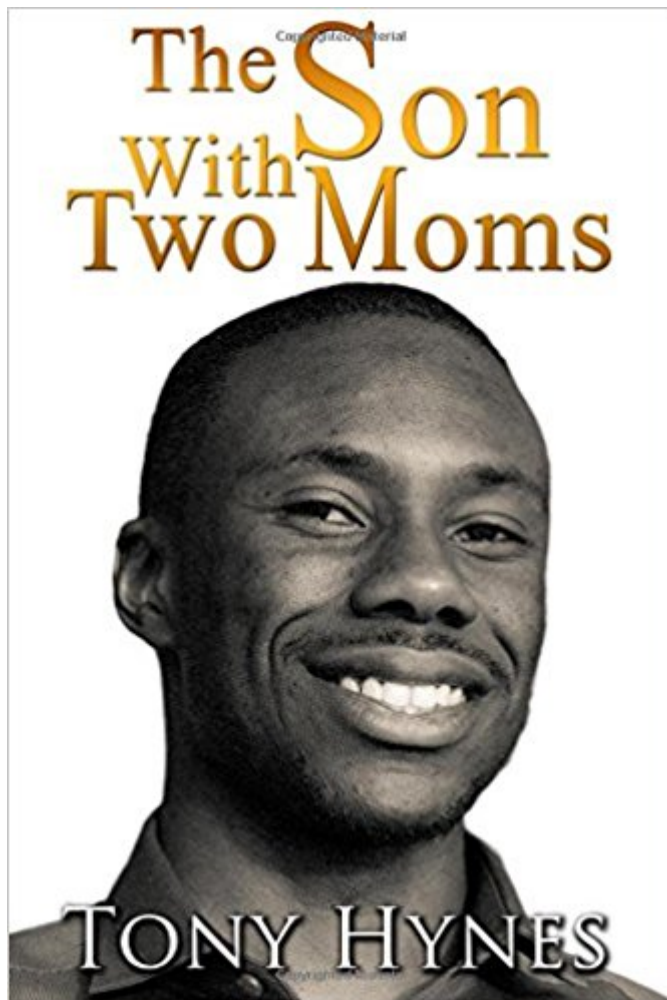


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The Son With Two Moms



Synopsis

Tony was taken in at the age of three by Mary Hynes and Janet Simons, after being separated from his mother, who suffered from schizophrenia. After that time, he was shuffled in and out of his grandmothers home before being placed in an orphanage, where he remained for one year. After a tumultuous court battle, he went home with the only two women brave enough to raise me. However, neither he nor his guardians could have imagined the trials awaiting their family after the proceedings ended.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Tony Hynes's memoir *The Son with Two Moms* is the story of a remarkable young man raised by two remarkable women. At age three, Hynes, an African-American boy, was plucked from an orphanage by Janet and Mary, lesbians in a committed relationship. Hynes was left an orphan by his schizophrenic mother. Janet and Mary placed him in a Quaker elementary school that reinforced the teaching they were giving him at home: to love one another, to live fruitfully and peacefully, and to reconcile any differences with logic and calm. Meanwhile, Tony struggled with a maternal grandmother (actually a step-aunt) who fought vehemently to have custody of him in order to raise him as a proud black, away from what she considered the terrible influence of these two women who practiced the evils of homosexuality. Thus we have a tale of a boy torn between his loving environment and his cultural heritage. And Tony weathered the storm quite well. So well, in fact, that he went to college, got a Bachelor's Degree, and earned a Master's Degree in Applied Sociology. He eventually became almost a poster boy for the fight for marriage equality in Maryland. And today, he teaches children with Autism at an

elementary school. This is a supremely intelligent and sensitive young man who disproves the theory that anyone raised in a same-sex household is bound to grow up twisted in some way. The Son with Two Moms is required reading for those who grew up in a similar situation; it is recommended reading for those who need their minds changed or those who simply are on the fence and need more information. It is a hybrid, part memoir, part sociology text.

Hynes's writing is best in the passages that explain the sociology of our population. His narrative passages, though, are compelling and noteworthy while being a bit stilted in execution. I believe that comes from the fact that he is a product of two very intelligent women, and I'm reasonably sure that choosing just the right words and using exact vocabulary was de rigueur in their home. For us, as readers, the story of his life might have flowed a bit easier if he'd chosen less descriptive adjectives. For example, in my opinion, he overuses the word "gingerly." Also, the book could have used a more skillful editor. No writer is so versed in grammar that a manuscript comes out error free. Likewise, no manuscript can be proof-read by just one set of eyes. A more skillful editor, with his/her staff, would have found grammar errors that, in the end, detract from the message of the book somewhat. Many readers will never see or be bothered by the transgressions, but I, for one, wished that Hynes's editor had reminded him of the rules of dialogue writing, and I especially wished he'd been told that "all right" is two words, not one; this, however, is my pet peeve with writers. And Hynes apparently knows the right way because sometimes he does use "all right," while at other times, he uses the egregious "alright." This rant of mine is almost irrelevant, for I'm giving The Son with Two Moms a hearty recommendation.

In the early 1990's, when Tony Hynes, as a young, Black boy, was taken in by a White lesbian couple, and eventually adopted, that phenomenon was in its early stages of development. No one had put gay couples raising children into the spotlight, and it seemed a new dynamic. This was long before Gay Marriage became commonplace. So, in this, Tony's memoirs, we as readers are taken inside a most unusual set of circumstances, at least to those of us approaching the book from the angle of convention. Tony invites us to completely open our minds, and hearts, to accept people loving, and marrying, whomever they choose. It's a poignant trip to make for a child, as he has to navigate visits to his biological family and live within the World that his Two Moms made for him. Perhaps, there was some thought put into calling this book "Three

Moms since Tony's biological Mom, though admittedly on the periphery of his life, is still accessible and present to him. However, given his specific upbringing, it is understandable why he chose his title. This is an emotional book, throughout for a number of different reasons, most of them dealing with the issue of being human. No one can read of Tony's battles with death, as a concept, in terms of one of his Moms and his Grandmother and remain untouched. No one but an abandoned child can know the hurt of having a father not even reliable enough to show up in Court for a Custody Hearing. It's because we're mortal that this book makes most sense and appeals to us. In addition, as a fellow writer, there is a beautiful literary style, that all writers can connect with in the little nuanced things that he says throughout, such as in the line on page 144, when he says, "It was as if he had been hit by a stupid pill that rendered him useless." This line was made to capture a friend's initial realization that Tony's parents are gay. No one but a writer can craft words so specific, lucid and powerful in meaning. No one but a writer can truly understand the countless hours of reading and writing, over a lifetime, that leads to the ability to craft such a line. This is a powerful book, on a number of levels, and I invite all readers to open your minds, and to go inside and travel with Tony as he travels over the odyssey of his life. It's a journey worth making. You will learn a number of things, both about Life, and yourself, in making the trip.

This is an superb first book from a new young author. Tony Hynes grew up as the son of two lesbian moms. Today, that is not such a big thing, but 20 years ago it was a very big thing. Tony is Black and his moms were white. That made things even more complicated. The details of his story are wonderfully and thoughtfully told. One of his moms, Mary, died a tragic death from cancer when he was 12. His insights into that period and the effect of death on a twelve-year-old are both graphic and sensitive. The book ends with Tony out of college. I highly recommend this book. It is just plain good reading.

Excellent book from a fantastic young author and scholar. It hits home for me also being the product of trans-racial upbringing.

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