



The Homecoming

Dan Walsh

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A reluctant war hero returns home and encounters a new chance at love.

No sooner has Shawn Collins returned home from the fighting in Europe than he is called upon to serve his country in another way —as a speaker on the war bond tour. While other men might jump at the chance to travel around the country with attractive Hollywood starlets, Shawn just wants to stay home with his son Patrick and his aging father, and grieve the loss of his wife in private. When Shawn asks Katherine Townsend to be Patrick's nanny while he's on the road, he has no idea how this decision will impact his life. Could it be the key to his future happiness and the mending of his heart? Or will the war once again threaten his chances for a new start?

Dan Walsh does not disappoint in this tender story of family ties and the healing of a broken heart.

The Homecoming Details

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From Reader Review The Homecoming for online ebook

Nora St Laurent says

Dan Walsh has outdone himself in his new book, Homecoming! I'm so thankful to have received a review copy of a story taken from a slice of American life when the world was so torn up and forever changed by war. The Unfinished Gift, the first book by this author, has Shawn Collins missing in action and his son Patrick goes to live with his estranged Grandfather. Homecoming starts at the same place the Unfinished Gift leaves off. Everyone is waiting for Shawn's homecoming.

I loved how the author put me back in WWI. Dan made the time period come alive as his characters go through different aspects of the war in England and the States. Dan's description of what Shawn, Patrick and Katherine went through was riveting. I felt their highs, their lows and the heart breaking blows of war, like I've never experienced before. I rejoiced with these characters triumphs, felt tears in my eyes and a knot in my throat when they shared tender moments in the middle of uncertain times.

I enjoyed this story written mainly in Shawn Collin's point of view and all he experienced in and out of war. Shawn survived a plane crash and was sent home for some rest. The media made him out to be a hero—he didn't feel like one, he was a guy just doing his job like anyone else. Then the next thing he knows he's on a USO Bond tour away from his family again, and in the spot light, the one place he didn't want to be. I enjoyed how Dan Walsh showed the affects of the war from many different angles. I felt I was there, seeing what happens to families and how it plays havoc with their faith in God. I enjoyed Patrick, Shawn's son so much and was thrilled by his relationship with Katherine. I admired Shawn and all he went through to do his duty and try to be there for his family as much as the government would let him. I can't wait to read another story by this author. His characters and story touched my heart deeply.

Disclosure of Material Connection:

I received a complimentary copy of this book from the publisher. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising"

Nora St.Laurent

The Book Club Network www.bookfun.org

The Book Club Network blog www.psalms516.blogspot.com

Book Fun Magazine www.bookfunmagazine.com

Renee says

Thanks to my friend Lori @ Some of My Favorite Things and Some of My Favorite Books I was introduced to Christian fiction writer, Dan Walsh. Although I haven't read The Unfinished Gift I decided to pick up The Homecoming which continues the story of Ian, Shawn, and Patrick Collins.

I'm always looking for novels set during WWII so I jumped at the chance to read The Homecoming. I liked this book. While not the most descriptive or in depth book as far as the romantic aspect of the story goes the relationship between grandfather and grandson in the latter half of the book was touching. A few times I did tear up and I loved the bittersweet ending. I loved the authenticity of the fighter plane engaged in combat over Europe and appreciated that the author didn't sugarcoat it or make it "tame" as some of the Christian

fiction I've read seems to do with battle scenes.

The Homecoming reminds me of a Hallmark movie, they are great stories but they never seem long enough! I somehow wish there was a little more. I definitely will read Dan Walsh's work in the future and I will definitely read *The Unfinished Gift* because I have the feeling that I will appreciate *The Homecoming* a lot more when I have!

I received my free copy from the publisher in exchange for my honest review.

Hal says

I really enjoyed this book. It has much to offer lovers of many genres: faith, historical fiction, WW2 aviation, relationships and sweet, tender romance.

Michelle says

This sequel to *The Unfinished Gift* was heartwarming and sweet. I am a real WWII fiction buff so the scenes that involved war I found particularly interesting, like the bombs being dropped on England toward the end. I found a lot of the material to be interesting and perfectly suited to the era. The author had obviously done his research and had me solidly grounded in the 1940s while I read this novel, especially when it came to lingo, popular music, and the current "stars" of the day. This story kind of reminded me of "It's a Wonderful Life" in tone, but minus the Christmas setting.

The spiritual thread in this novel was solid, though subtle. I found it well-balanced and inspirational. It didn't feel like a sermon to me, but like part of the story, as it should. I enjoyed watching the characters develop affection for each other and observing the continued healing of the broken bonds between father and adult son from the first book. The pacing was well done and the healing process realistically portrayed. I also felt like I'd really bonded with Katherine and her heart for wanting the family she never had. That was so touching and sweet how the author developed that aspect of her character.

The hero was amazing, too, and very humble, which made him extremely likable. His relationship with his son was tender and I grieved for him when they were separated. I loved how he got some solid advice from his dad about what to do with Katherine toward the end of the story. When the hero finally had his "oh no, I'm gonna lose her" moment, I was like "YES!" and cheered him on in his pursuit of true love. This was a great story with a lot of good heart-felt emotion. I didn't enjoy it quite as much as the first book, but I did find it ultimately satisfying.

Angel Kerner says

This book bored me to death. Most of the reviews compared it to a Nicholas Sparks book and I guess I am confused about which Nicholas Sparks they are talking about. The book was completely predictable.

Janelle says

It's been very hard for me to find time to read lately but having this book to go to on my Kindle App was comforting! It wasn't overly engrossing causing me to get behind in my home prepping, but it was good enough that when I did have some down time, I knew this cute, sweet book was waiting for me. A good read!

Lori says

I thought this was a fitting ending to the Collins' family's story. It was nice to catch up with all of the great characters we first met in *The Unfinished Gift*. Patrick has settled in nicely with his crotchety old grandfather, and they seem to be getting along relatively well. Mr. Collins' spry old neighbor, Mrs. Fortini, makes sure they're eating properly by whipping up some delightful Italian dishes.

Katherine Townsend misses Patrick terribly! Now that she's no longer on his case, she doesn't have a legitimate reason to spend much time with him. She still worries that he and his grandfather may not have settled in quite as quickly as everyone seems to think. Imagine her surprise -- and delight! -- when she gets a call from Shawn, out of the blue, asking her to be Patrick's full-time nanny while he's away for four months. She can't believe he chose her for this wonderful job!

There's a lot more "action" in *The Homecoming*, and though I'm not a big fan of war-themed stories, this one turned out quite well. The romance is very low-key, but I thought it fit the story well. *The Unfinished Gift* is definitely my favorite, but I highly recommend this one, too.

If you'd like to find out more about Dan Walsh, and/or his books, be sure to visit his website and blog.

Ruth says

In *The Homecoming*, Shawn Collins is a newly-minted war hero, recalled home to grieve the sudden loss of his wife and to care for his young son, Patrick. Shawn is a man adrift, lacking focus and purpose since learning of his beloved wife's death – an event that occurred while he was halfway across the world in a war zone, attempting to evade capture by the Germans after being shot down in enemy territory. Forced to face a life he'd never imagined living, Shawn battles coming to terms with the overwhelming changes life has thrown his way in the span of a few short weeks. The death of his wife, a near escape, reconciliation with his father, and the demands the Army continues to place on his time leave Shawn grappling with his grief and question his faith in the God who would allow such heartache to rain down in his life. From the glamour of an all-star war bond tour to life in London under the threat of German rocket attacks, Shawn must decide whether or not to accept God's offered gift of second chances and new beginnings grown from the ashes of wartime heartbreak.

Dan Walsh's debut novel, *The Unfinished Gift*, was a sweet story of forgiveness and reconciliation set in the American homefront during World War II. While stylistically *Gift* was not my usual read, I enjoyed Walsh's nostalgic recreation of WWII homefront life and was curious to see the resolution of the Collins family story. *Homecoming* contains all the strengths of Walsh's first book – the evocative, nostalgic sense of time and place, and an emphasis on faith and family - and improves on them. The book's greatest strength is Shawn's spiritual and emotional "homecoming" journey. Shawn's character is well-drawn and the emotional roller-

coaster he experiences throughout the novel is realistically portrayed, particularly in how he confronts questions of faith. I really enjoyed reading the sweet wartime romance Walsh creates in this novel. I love how he shares Shawn's wartime experiences while still giving the story a unique homefront perspective, this time seen through the eyes of a soldier on a war bonds tour, witnessing the sacrifice of those left behind to support the troops. Sure to appeal to fans of Richard Paul Evans or Nicholas Sparks, *The Homecoming* blends wartime romance with a dash of faith and is a satisfying conclusion to the Collins family story of heartbreak and restoration. These stories would make wonderful TV movies – keeping my fingers crossed that they're brought to life on-screen someday.

Kate says

This book begins pretty much right where 'The Unfinished Gift' left off, and the beginning, especially when Shawn recounted his experiences after his plane was shot down was my favourite part. I also liked the interaction between Mrs Fortini and Katherine: how she took her under her wing and encouraged her, especially to seek God's will for her life.

The other parts of the book didn't shine quite as brightly for me, unfortunately. There wasn't anything *wrong* with them, per se, but to me, it had almost a rushed quality to it. I found that I wasn't as much a fan of the romance as I'd hoped to be. Perhaps reading it right after 'The Unfinished Gift' (a 5 star read for me) was unwise, as I couldn't help but compare the 2, and find 'The Homecoming' slightly lacking.

3.5 stars

Sarah Sundin says

Dan Walsh has a nice way of including just the right amount of period details and historical backdrop, which freed me to enjoy the story, the characters, and the writing. This is a heartwarming story but never simplistic or sappy. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Rachel Thompson says

I downloaded this book for free for my Sony e-reader.

After a harrowing escape from Nazis, Shawn receives the startling news that his wife has passed away while he was MIA. He returns home to be with his son Patrick, but the army isn't done with him yet. After giving him a little time to grieve, he is reassigned to the war bond tour. Knowing that his father is too old to care for Patrick by himself, Shawn knows he must find a nanny. And he's already found the perfect candidate.

Katherine helped Patrick settle in with his grandfather after the death of his mother and bonded with the boy. She's thrilled to be able to spend more time with him. And of course, as time passes she realizes that she could easily fall in love with Shawn.

This story had good elements. The characters were likable, and the plot devices were enjoyable. I found it difficult to believe that romance could grow when the two main characters hardly spent any time together. And towards the end of the book, big chunks of time were skipped over so we could arrive quickly at our

happy ending, which made the romance less enjoyable.

I had no idea this was a follow-up to another book, since this story is so well-contained.

Kristina says

Shawn Collins did what he had to do. He did his duty--got his men out of a firefight safely and how does God repay him? He takes away his wife, Elizabeth, leaving their son, Patrick to stay at his grouchy grandfather's house until Shawn was given leave. After returning home, Shawn is promoted to Major for his prowess in battle and is remiss to find out that instead of being discharged or being stationed closer to home, he will be the main speaker in a 'war-bonds' event. With his wife dead, Shawn knows that Patrick's care will be problematic while he is gone. His father is too old to completely care for the boy and yet, who else could care for him?

Katherine Townsend's heart was melted by Patrick Collins the first time she worked with him. After giving his grandfather a stern talking to about how to handle a young boy, Katherine was sure her connection with the Collins family would forever be separated. When Major Collins asks Katherine to be Patrick's nanny while he is deployed she is excited at the chance to see Patrick again...and Shawn as well. Will something develop beyond the superficial professional relationship?

I enjoyed *The Homecoming* thoroughly. A mix of historical fiction and romance, this book was fast-paced and intriguing. I also appreciate that the author wrote a compelling love story without any extra junk. Read: I did not blush when reading this novel. I especially like that the love story was not completely improbable. It was quite believable and was written with thought and care. I would recommend this book to everyone! You will be glad you read it!

Available June 2010 at your favorite bookseller from Revell, a division of Baker Publishing Group

A copy of this title was provided by Revell Publishers for review purposes. This in no way affected the content of this review.

Nenette says

A romantic Christian historical fiction. Though very simply written - no big words, no pretentious prose - it was a good read from start to finish. Like in any Christian fiction, it tells of sorrow and heartache, and of course, redemption. This heartwarming story was set amid the chaos of the Second World War, with the beautiful ending coinciding with the Victory in England in 1945. With a story line that tugs at the heart, and reading about the goings-on in the war - I was in the verge of tears in a lot of the scenes.

I never got to fully understand the conflict between Shawn Collins and his father, until I learned that there was a prequel to this book...So while I'm still fresh from reading this, I better find out what happened before (got the copy already).

Yolanda says

This really was lacking in the poor way it was written. A decent enough story but I felt like I was reading

something a junior high student had written.

Mandy J. Hoffman says

MY REVIEW:

The Homecoming is the wonderful sequel to the book *The Unfinished Gift*. Dan Walsh picks up where the first book left off and continues to delight readers with a story that expertly weaves together the harsh reality of war with the tender love of a family.

I enjoyed this book even more than the first one as details are revealed and characters deepened. The balance between the action of war and a budding romance is perfect and well suited for listening to the audio format as a family.

The story takes a few predictable turns but holds enough suspense to keep you turning the page or listening to the next CD. I really enjoyed this audio book and the superb narration of Roger Mueller who added greater life and depth to the entire book.

While this book is listed under General Christian Fiction, I think it would make a great audio book to entertain a family with older children - 12 & up - on a long road trip. It's mix of action and love will appeal to both guys and gals alike and make a long ride seem like an adventure in World War II history!

BOOK OVERVIEW:

A reluctant war hero returns home and encounters a new chance at love. No sooner has Shawn Collins returned home from the fighting in Europe than he is called upon to serve his country in another way—as a speaker on the war bond tour. While other men might jump at the chance to travel around the country with attractive Hollywood starlets, Shawn just wants to stay home with his son Patrick and his aging father, and grieve the loss of his wife in private. When Shawn asks Katherine Townsend to be Patrick's nanny while he's on the road, he has no idea how this decision will impact his life. Could it be the key to his future happiness and the mending of his heart? Or will the war once again threaten his chances for a new start? Dan Walsh does not disappoint in this tender story of family ties and the healing of a broken heart.

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This review copy was provided courtesy of Oasis Audio.
