



A Stone for Danny Fisher

Harold Robbins

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As a teenager, Danny Fisher had all he ever wanted -- a dog, a grown-up summer job, flirtatious relationships with older women -- and a talent for ruthless boxing that quickly made him a star in the amateur sporting world. But when Danny's family falls on hard times, moving from their comfortable home in Brooklyn to Manhattan's squalid Lower East Side, he is forced to leave his carefree childhood behind. Facing poverty and daily encounters with his violent, anti-Semitic neighbors, Danny must fight both inside and outside the ring just to survive.

As his boxing becomes legendary in the city's seedy underworld, packed with wiseguys and loose women, everyone seems to want a hand in Danny's success. Robbins's colorful, fast-talking characters evoke the rough streets of Depression-era New York City. Ronnie, a prostitute ashamed of how far she's fallen and desperately in need of friendship; Sam, a slick bookie who wants to profit from Danny's boxing talent; and Nellie, a beautiful but lonely girl who refuses to believe Danny is beyond redemption -- each of whom has a different vision of Danny's future -- will help steer his rocky course.

Gritty, compelling, and groundbreaking for its time, *A Stone for Danny Fisher* is a tale of ambition, hope, and violence set in a distinct and dangerous period of American history. A classic, sexy bestseller by Harold Robbins, reintroduced to a whole new generation of readers.

A Stone for Danny Fisher Details

Date : Published August 7th 2007 by Touchstone (first published 1952)

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Author : Harold Robbins

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From Reader Review A Stone for Danny Fisher for online ebook

Janene Zahm says

It was a fascinating and compelling story with an unexpected twist (at least it was for me). I would have never even thought about reading this if my 63 year old mother said it was one of her favorite books when she was my age. It's not my favorite book but it's definitely on the top of my list.

Paul says

I've read *A Stone for Danny Fisher* several times over decades. When I was a kid growing up in Danny's Brooklyn I enjoyed the references to places and things and people I knew. I also enjoyed the sexy parts, though they were done more by inference and euphemism than the explicit language we're used to today. Still, any adult and most teenagers knew what was being described.

The book is narrated by Danny himself from beyond the grave, as it opens with his family gathered at his gravesite, and so there is no doubt as to his end, only how he got there. The stone in the title refers to the Jewish practice of placing a common stone atop the grave of someone departed, as a sort of way of registering that you have been there, and a sort of remembrance. Thus the stone of the title is the remembrance of Danny's life.

The book affected me greatly as a kid, because the happiness of Danny's childhood from the time his family moves into their new house in a new subdivision in East Flatbush when Danny was 8 to the time when his family lost the house and they moved to the Lower East Side at the age of 15 has always stuck with me as warning of how suddenly a happy and stable life can be shredded into despair.

Danny's beloved dog dies as soon as his family moves and his childhood dies along with it. From that point, Danny finds hate and love, and kindness and meanness. Plenty of meanness. He finds himself torn between loyalty and betrayal, his own and others, throughout the rest of the novel.

The characters are well drawn and vivid. Danny spends his short adult life dreaming of returning to the little Brooklyn house where he knew happiness, and he does. Almost. That quest, and its consequences, brings the novel very close to the "tragedy of a common man" that Miller attempted in "Death of a Salesman." I think Robbins was more successful.

I picked this up recently for the first time in several years because I wanted to re-read a particular section. I *didn't* want to re-read the whole thing, since it is, at heart, a disturbing and depressing story; but the story grabbed me again and compelled me to read it to the very end, rather like a violent event that you don't want to see, but you cannot look away. At the end, there were tears in my eyes. Once again.

R. Honey says

I read this in high school back when God was a boy! My high school had a huge population of Jewish kids and this was the big book everybody who read was reading at the time!

I did not figure out the stone part in the title until Schindlers List!

I do remember it being a page turner to me. Probably because next to Peyton Place, it was the most grown up

fiction I had read.

Richard Epstein says

I first encountered Harold Robbins on the shelves of people for whom I was babysitting. I devoured whatever I found, figuring I finally was going to learn something practical, realistic, and useful about sex. I was mistaken.

Nino~ch says

“A Stone for Danny Fisher” is a book of great importance for me. I was 14, who never really loved to read and it was the first time when while reading I started to coexist with the characters, I still remember their faces, even though the book had not a single illustration in it. I discovered totally new world for me, which was born from those words and lines and my thoughts and impressions and this chemistry was very strong. I consider myself rich, because this world I discovered at 14, since then is always there for me and I am grateful for this connection, which started from this particular piece.

As for now, I don't know if my feelings for this book would be the same if I reread it..I prefer to leave it untouched on the shelf.

Totally recommend it to everyone and wish you to see the faces of the characters in this book about Danny Fisher.

Swathi Chatrapathy says

I thought the initial part of the book was quite blah. There were too many stereotypes, and it seemed like a run-of-the-mill book. It was only after around half way point that the book picked up and got some depth. It's an interesting story line (almost Bollywood-ish, with a villain (Maxie) who has zero justification for being a villain. He's simply a bad guy and that's about it) and had enough to keep me going back to the book. But it was also a bit too dramatic.

It showcases the life of a badly affected nuclear family during the Great Depression. I liked how it zoomed into the greater issue and showed it in a very relatable way.

I particularly liked how the book ended, especially the lastest line, a quote by Thomas Campbell - "To live in the hearts we leave behind is not to die."

It was a good one time read, but nothing out of the ordinary.

Daniel says

I am not a huge fan of Harold Robbins. But when I heard someone say two books of Harold Robbins were par excellence; I couldn't resist picking up one among them, “A Stone for Danny Fisher”. A few pages into the book, the tale takes quick turns and has one completely glued in. It is so heartrending you can't stop tears gushing out. The last few pages play on the emotions so much; I for one just couldn't carry on. I had to take adequate breaks to simmer down my emotions. The story is all about a sensational amateur boxer Danny Fisher, who gets bitterly involved with the underworld mafia. Amidst all this, how he battles his souring

relationships with his family and miserable poverty is totally worth a read. A tragic story that lends a different perspective of the world we live in! I gave four stars, which I feel, the book truly deserves. .

Tory says

I like Harold Robbins... He writes the best trash ever.

Calle says

Harold Robbins has a reputation for writing "trash" and "smut" and he did write some books that may be labelled as such, but he also wrote some great books, with good stories, believable characters with quite a lot of depth, novels that keep you turning the pages not because there's a lot of action but because you really care about the characters. "A Stone for Danny Fisher" is one of those books. Perhaps not his best, but certainly a good read. Recommended.

Trivia: The Elvis movie King Creole was loosely based on this book, although the setting was changed from New York to New Orleans and Danny Fisher is a singer (what else) in the movie instead of a boxer as in the book.

(Review from August 2012)

velvetgypsy says

I never tire of rereading Harold Robbins' books especially 'A Stone For Danny Fisher'!

Mike says

I don't know how many times I've read this book over the years. I first read it when very young so I guess that has made it special because it affected me more than either the writing or the story ought to deserve. Not that it isn't a well told tale by a writer who knew how to tell a story. Harold Robbins wrote several huge best sellers and was looked down on by most of the high-brow critics; he's not alone in that. But this tale, like 'Of Human Bondage' has a place in my heart because the characters spoke to me and showed me the power of writing when I was young and impressionable. I have just finished it again and still enjoyed it. Of its time it was a five star read and remains so for me today. There was an Elvis film adaptation that didn't do the story justice.

Roger says

First time I read this I was a teenager. Have read it many times since then, and it simply felt as if it was time to crack the book again. It never withers, the story remains.

Nidhi Jakhar says

I needed this break from the heavy stuff that I have been reading lately. I did have my misgivings when I started the book since Harold Robbins is mostly associated with fiction of the pulp risque sort. However, the book was a nice read; a classic tale of grit, ambition, survival during the Great Depression and WWII periods in USA.

Danny is the affable endearing guy; who is swept off by the turn in his family's circumstances; spiraling towards poverty. While he dabbles in the mean seedy crooked underworld to make ends meet, he remains essentially the sweet regular guy who dotes on his girl and aspires to regain the love of his estranged father.

Never a dull moment; it is a story which is timeless in appeal.

Ruth says

C1951. FWFTB: boxing, amateur, poverty, survive, Depression. I have read many Robbins' books and this was another one that I managed to get my hands on via a Charity shop. This is not like the later novels in that there are no gratuitous sex scenes – just some good writing. This is not the happiest book in the world bearing in mind that the title of the book comes from the Jewish tradition of placing a stone on a grave. I suppose Mr Robbins background at Universal Pictures made it a dead cert that this book would be made into a film called "King Creole" starring Elvis Presley.

Interestingly, the Wall Street Journal stated that "Robbins's books are packed with action, sustained by a strong narrative drive, and given vitality by his own colorful life."

Recommended but not if you are having a bad day. FCN: Danny Fisher (poor boy making good by means of his talent for boxing), Sam Goetlib (mentor, coach and backer)

Alice says

I have to admit that I was a big Harold Robbins fan in my 20's. I really liked most of his books. They are all Pulp Fiction & very risque for their day. A Stone for Danny Fisher stands out tho. I recently reread this & it was as powerful now as it was. Not too much pulp fiction stands the test of time, but this one does.

Gerold Whittaker says

I found this to be a real page-turner not because there was any larger-than-life heroes or earth-shattering catastrophe's going on: just normal people going about their day-to-day duties, written in such a way that you

could not wait to see what was going to happen next. Set between the years 1925 to 1944, the story tells of the hardship of growing up and surviving in New York during the depression era leading up to WW2. Crime, racketeering, black marketeering, gangs and poverty - all woven intricately into the story.

Written in 1952, a movie called called **King Creole** starring Elvis Presley was made in 1958. Having watched several snippets of the movie on YouTube I would say the movie is based loosely on the book! Regardless of it's age I really enjoyed the book though I personally did not enjoy the ending.

Renee says

I absolutely loved this book. I must confess that the main reason I read this book was because of one of Elvis Presley's movies. Anyone who knows me knows that I am an Elvis fan and anything connected to Elvis must be delved into. The Elvis movie, King Creole, was loosely based on this book and the part of Danny Fisher (a boxer) was originally intended for James Dean, but due to Dean's untimely death, the movie was scrapped for a while until it was rewritten to fit Elvis (a singer). King Creole was also Elvis's favorite movie and the last movie he made before his 2 year stint in the army. Prior to reading this book, I didn't know anything about Harold Robbins except for the tie to King Creole and a small reference in an episode of the 70's British sitcom Fawlty Towers. Well, anyway, I digress, but this is how I came to read 'A Stone For Danny Fisher' and loved it. I could see the characters from the movie and could see the parallels but also could see how they changed things to make it work for the movie. The last sentence of the book absolutely blew me away and isn't this what life is all about (?), and I quote: "To live in the hearts we leave behind is not to die."

Loved it.

Mo says

I blush to think how many Harold Robbins books I read 30 years ago. They were all pretty racy, to say the least. I remember this one being the best of the bunch. It actually was a very compelling story.

Robbie Bashore says

3.5 stars. This is a good coming-of-age-and-beyond story. In the right hands, the story could become a movie that eclipses the book. (I think there might already be a movie, but I don't know how good it is.) Although ASFDF was easy to read, I wouldn't classify it as a beach book. The story line is too dark, and Danny's predicaments and behavior are too frustrating.

I confess that I had trouble relating to or caring about Danny much. Perhaps 20-something men would have an easier time of it.

I enjoyed some of the Yiddish and period slang. I also liked getting the perspective of a boy repeatedly adjusting to new life situations. I only wish he had learned more from them.

I know the dog symbolizes something--security, home, or whatever. You can discuss that with your book club. What other symbols did you notice? What about the stone?

The author bookended the main story with the philosophical and theological musings of posthumous Danny

Fisher. I had trouble reconciling that Danny Fisher with the one seen in the rest of the book. Perhaps the disconnect is its own theological lesson.

Laura says

I had no idea what to expect when I picked this up in audio from the library. I read a few of Harold Robbins' more commercial, salacious novels from the late seventies, yet hadn't thought of him in years. But this novel is an entirely different animal: this is 1950s cinéma vérité with a heavy dose of Robbins melodrama thrown in for good measure.

A Stone For Danny Fisher is a brutal coming-of-age story covering both The Great Depression and WWII eras. Danny Fisher is a sensitive, likable Jewish boy who, when his family falls on hard times, discovers that he not only has a natural talent for fighting but also for the clever manipulation of everyone close to him. But Danny is too clever for his own good, and has a serious tragic flaw that always propels his happiness just out of his reach.

There were moments that I had to stop listening to this story because it became too intense, too real. As a late baby boomer, I had grandparents who struggled through the Depression, but they were reluctant (or unable) to communicate the true horror of it to me. Robbins made me want to immediately convert all my money to cash or gold and stuff it inside my mattress. Several reviewers compare it to *The Jungle*, but *A Stone For Danny Fisher* has a stylistic point of view that *The Jungle*--with its emphasis on social polemic--lacks. It's much more than a period piece. It's an endless roller coaster ride of jubilation, discontent, and despair. And I mean that in a good way.

Robbins could have easily trimmed this book by a good 100 pages. It feels relentless, sometimes exhausting. And the use of the second person at the beginning...well, I found it annoying. In fact the entire conceit of Danny making observations from beyond the grave is too heavy-handed for my taste. But even with its flaws, I recommend it highly for fans of good writing, noir fiction, and early 20th century NYC.
