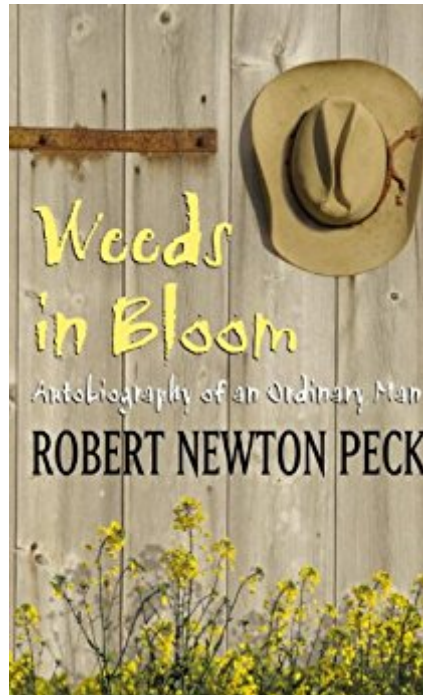


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Weeds In Bloom: Autobiography Of An Ordinary Man



Synopsis

With over 65 books published, including the breathtaking (and somewhat autobiographical) *A Day No Pigs Would Die*, Robert Newton Peck has enjoyed an illustrious writing career. Now, in an autobiography as unique as he is, Peck tells his story through the people in his life. From his roots as a poor Vermont farmer's son to his years as a soldier in World War II, from his time slogging away in a paper mill to his semi-retirement in Florida, Peck shows us people who too often go unseen and unheard in the country's poor and uneducated. "For decades, I've examined the autobiographies of my fellow authors. Bah! Many could have been titled *And Then I Wrote . . .* So instead of my life and lit, here is the unusual, a tarnished treasury of plain people who enriched me, taught me virtues, and helped me hold a mite of manhood. They're not fancy folk, so please expect no long-stemmed roses from a florist. They are, instead, the unarranged flora that I've handpicked from God's greenhouse . . . weeds in bloom." From the Hardcover edition.

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Literary

Customer Reviews

I loved the humanity and love Rob has for his characters. The book is funny but at the same time you feel the pain of the people Rob talks about. I grew up in Vermont so I connected with those people. Now I live in Florida and can see and hear the places Rob talks about in Florida. All ages can enjoy this book.

This was a very interesting look into Robert Newton Peck's personal life. It was interesting to find how much of his writings was a reflection of his life experiences. His political view was refreshing and I wish more people in this great land of America believed the same way. We would not have the troubles we have in America today if they did. His view on life as well was interesting. Overall, this was a great book!

I totally love Bob Peck's style. His tight prose style is not unlike a hatch on a submarine. Necessary with no parts that aren't necessary. Like reading Norman Rockwell paintings.

I love Robert Newton Peck's work. He simply makes characters I love and relate to. In this book he puts a face on the different people of his life. People he knew for years and people he only knew for a day.

Very much liked the book-- liked the author's writing style.

Robert Newton Peck is my kind of author. He writes about common people and tells a good story. Real life events, not some make believe story. If that's what you like to read, then you'll enjoy this book.

"MY BOOK IS YOUR AMERICA. An album of my old friends and your new ones. Real citizens you deserve to greet, and know, and possibly remember. You shall know me by the people I have known." With over sixty-five books published, including the highly acclaimed novel *A DAY NO PIGS WOULD DIE* and a series of Soup books that won him the prestigious Mark Twain Award, Robert Newton Peck is a well-seasoned author with an established readership. His books have explored a variety of subjects from his boyhood experiences in rural Vermont to tales about making ends meet while growing up on a farm, as a cattle rancher, or as a soldier during the French and Indian War. *WEEDS IN BLOOM*, Peck's latest literary endeavor, is a simple yet enjoyable autobiography that

unfolds as a series of sketches of various people who have influenced his life over the past seventy years. True to his word, *WEEDS IN BLOOM* has no plot. Instead, each chapter focuses on a character who fits respectively into one of three periods in Peck's life: his "Vermont Boyhood," his "Early Manhood," and the "Florida Years." Although some readers may miss the safety that accompanies a linear story line, others will feel less bogged down by the lack of a traditional arc, and will delight in using their own imaginations to continue where Peck has left off in each tiny vignette. It is as if he has knowingly created 25 beginnings to 25 possible stories, and by reading through them, his readers are given access to the essence of his life by getting to know the people he has encountered along the way.

In Part I: Vermont Boyhood, Peck explores his childhood in all its rugged, wide-eyed glory. Here, we bear witness to his life at home with his family, complete with all the trappings of a carefree adolescence: practicing baseball in the sweltering summer heat, playing in the dirt until dusk, and learning life-long lessons from his elders. Two of the most memorable chapters in the book are in this first section --- "Miss Kelly," when Robert writes his first poem and shares it with his teacher, Miss Kelly (who proves to be a lasting inspiration for Peck), and "Keepsake," when he and his best friend Luther sneak into a truck stop bathroom to buy their first condom at the age of ten. (A humorous side note: Peck actually kept this same condom with him until well after his return from the Army, when he promptly buried the torn and ratty thing in the backyard as a tribute to his boyhood.)

Part II: Early Manhood charts Peck's life in the army and the years immediately following his return. In "Dear Elliot," we meet a dear friend and fellow soldier who touched the lives of those around him by simply sharing his care packages from home. Unfortunately, he was killed in battle, but not before altering Peck's life for the better. In "Saw" and "Paper," Peck tells of his grueling yet enlightening experiences in the saw and paper mills, and in "Dr. Granberry" we are introduced to a football scout for small colleges that would change Peck's life forever by pushing him to go to college and providing him with a scholarship.

Part III: The Florida Years covers the last third of Peck's life up to the present. For the most part, these stories take place in Florida and bear the fruit of his past journeys. As most storytellers are apt to do when looking back on their lives, he sounds wiser and well-worn in these passages, and the people (and animals) we meet in this section are weathered as well. The last entry entitled "Just as I Am" is a delightful list of thirty-three tried-and-true beliefs and expressions that he has stumbled across and stuck to throughout his life, the last of which being: "Wish not for apples. Grow strong trees." All in all an interesting and personal retrospective of an accomplished author and well-loved cowboy, *WEEDS IN BLOOM* will surely satisfy young adult readers, particularly those fond of autobiographies and nonfiction. --- Reviewed by Alexis Burling

This autobiography is a wonderful tribute to the people who helped shaped his life, left the big impressions and taught life lessons he felt important enough to pass along. Very good twist on an autobiography.

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