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Snakes, Alligators, and Broken Hearts: Journeys of a Biologist's Son

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Book Review

Title: Snakes, Alligators, and Broken Hearts:

Journeys of a Biologist's Son

Author: Sneed B. Collard III

Illustrator: Tessa K. Collard

Reviewer: Tessa McMillan

Publisher: Bucking Horse Books

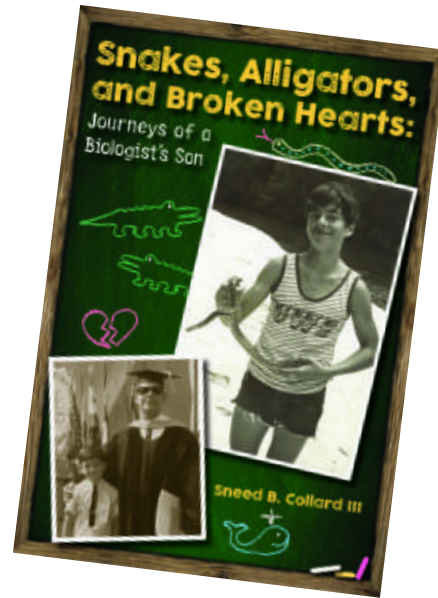
Publication Year: 2015

ISBN: 9780984446063

Number of Pages: 176

Interest Level: Intermediate, Young Adult

Rating: Excellent



Review

Sneed B. Collard III was born to biologist, Sneed B. Jr. and Patricia Collard. Naturally, Sneed was raised to love animals and be curious about his world. Unfortunately, his parents divorced when Sneed was in third grade. Sneed had a difficult time coping, especially when both parents married new spouses and moved to opposite coasts. For most of his childhood and into adolescence, Sneed's life was split between living with his mother during the school year and visiting his father during the summer. Sneed treasured the summers with his dad as he helped with his father's research or vacationed at unique locales with his dad and stepmother. Sneed wanted desperately to live most of the year with his dad and his father promised to make that happen. However, his father's drinking habits caused him to become unreliable and short tempered at times. This shattered Sneed's heroic views of his dad, but it also caused Sneed to forge unbreakable decisions about his life and future.

Collard's autobiography is touching, witty, and honest. Even though biology is a unique part of his life, Collard's main tale is blatantly familiar to readers who have endured or are enduring a divorce. Collard realistically narrates a child's mind in feeling lost as his divorced parents move on to create new families. Collard struggles to find his place because he is a product of that dissolved marriage. Yet Collard credits a minimally rebellious life to sensitive teachers, adults, and friends who helped him handle his unpleasant situation. Aside from dealing with divorce, Collard also details his childhood reactions to political events, national tragedies, and societal changes. On the humorous side, Collard describes his awkward interactions with girls, accidents with animals, and fantastic adventures in Boy Scouts. *Snakes, Alligators, and Broken Hearts* is a thoughtful memoir written with love and keen reflection. Appropriate for ages 12 and up.

*Contains biblical swearing and teenage smoking.