



Volume 60 | Issue 1

Article 31

4-28-2017

Reid's "A dream of miracles" (Book Review)

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Recommended Citation

Gaskin, Christine (2017) "Reid's "A dream of miracles" (Book Review)," *The Christian Librarian*: Vol. 60 : Iss. 1 , Article 31.
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl/vol60/iss1/31>

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DeArmond, D., & DeArmond, R. (2016). *Don't go to bed angry: Stay up and fight*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press. 179 pp. \$14.99. ISBN 9781426790935

Dispelling the premise that good marriages never experience conflict, Deb and Ron DeArmond give readers permission to fight – and fight well – using key strategies outlined in this introductory text to safeguard and strengthen marriage. Rather than seeing conflict as cause for separation, the authors propose that “it is possible to achieve a level of communication that unites us, even in the midst of our differences” (p. 37). The book is a well-rounded compilation of tools and advice for the struggling marriage, stemming from the authors’ combined 30 years of experience in various roles of ministry. Deb is a well-known executive coach, writer, and speaker, and has written other recognizable titles, including *Related by Chance*, *Family by Choice* and *I Choose You Today: 31 Choices to Make Love Last*.

A bulk of the book is dedicated to identifying communication styles, as well as the traps that cause dissention in a marriage – like manipulation, silence, or aggression – and how to avoid them. Tangible strategies for fighting are offered, making the read worthwhile to gain personal rules of engagement and understanding for how to manage an argument. The strength of this title lies in its ability to name and diffuse the major issues that hinder the free flow of conversation. It offers questions and simple prayers to encourage spouses toward discussion post reading. A small reference list, including a link to the author’s website, and suggestions for next steps is included in the appendix.

The book could effectively be used for small groups or couples counseling, falling under the self-help umbrella of Christian publishing. Although the authors’ application was biblically sound, exegesis was lacking. The verses selected seemed to offer a sampling of scripture to support their intents without a commitment to deeper knowledge of Bible context. With that said, it is highly accessible for the general reader. It is recommended for public library settings.

Reviewer

Carrie Consalvi, Calvary Chapel Bible College

Reid, R. (2016). *A dream of miracles*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson. 323 pp. \$15.99. ISBN 9781401688318

A Dream of Miracles, the third in the series ‘The Amish Wonders Novels’ aptly illustrates the conflict between modern culture and the traditionally conservative ways of the Amish.

When mother and widow Mattie Diener is unable to use her herbal medicines to cure her three-year-old son Nathan of his fever she takes him to her regular family physician and there begins her traumatic encounter with an unsympathetic modern medical world. She is thrust under the control of Child Protective Services and only through the help and efforts of experienced Bo Lambright is she able to eventually disentangle herself. Throughout this process an unmistakable attraction occurs between the two that is eventually resolved without the beliefs of either being compromised.

The inclusion of a glossary of commonly used Amish/Pennsylvania Dutch words allows the reader to become immersed in the Amish culture. The quick-paced modern world clashing with the slower, simpler Amish world creates dramatic tension that is further enhanced by the mutual confusion of the two societies who are seemingly unable to understand the other. Several threads help tie this story together. One involves an attempt to gain mineral rights to Amish land and is using local political machinations to force the Amish community's acquiescence. Another involves the matchmaking efforts of Bo's mother manipulating him into modern society despite his affinity for the slower pace of Amish life.

The various traditions and everyday Amish beliefs are introduced throughout the book via small illustrations of the Amish ways. A helping neighbor, a simple way of supporting the family, the older teaching the younger via quilting, etc.

All of these factors skillfully interweave the story to a satisfactory conclusion of both the social and personal conflicts. Structured for easy reading with manageable chapters, I found it altogether a very pleasant read.

Reviewer

Christine S. Gaskin, Southern Methodist College

Hill, D. B. (2016). *Dribble drabble: Process art experiences for young children*. St. Paul, MN: Red Leaf Press. 106 pp. \$15.95. ISBN 9781605545288

As suggested by the title, this popular level work is a collection of art projects designed for children that focuses on the skills and practice of making art more than the product itself. It is more than simply an arts and crafts book; it attempts to engage the senses and the mind. Contained within the book are instructions for 145 different projects divided into different techniques, most of which use only common household items or, if necessary, supplies that can be acquired inexpensively. This is by design, as the author concedes in the forward that most programs which utilize this type of resource operate with a limited budget. This would be an excellent