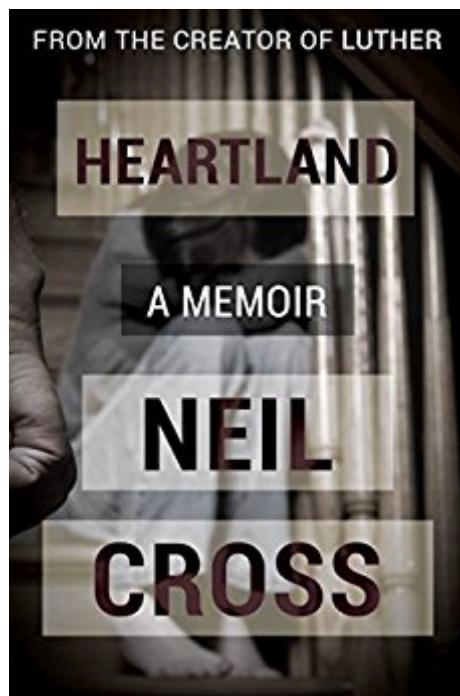


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Heartland: A Memoir



Synopsis

From the creator of *Luther*: Told with absolute veracity and unsparing candor, *Heartland* is the memoir of an isolated little boy and the brutish stepfather he couldn't help but love. When Neil Cross was born, his mother suffered from severe postpartum depression and later admitted to trying to kill herself and her baby son. Then, when he was five, she went out and didn't come back, leaving behind her children and their heartbroken father. Two years later she returns and gains custody of Neil, taking him to live with her new partner, Derek Cross, who showers him with attention and love in a way that Neil has never known. Derek teaches him about music and books; he is patient but firm, and more reliable than Neil's mother. But as Neil grows older he realizes his stepfather is more complicated than he seems. For all his love, Derek is a manipulator, an adulterer, a racist, and a con man. And he is the father whom Neil now loves. With devastating honesty, Neil Cross explores the circumstances of this love: "one of pleasant rewards but consequences too dire to predict."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I am not normally a reader of Biography or Autobiography but did enjoy this one. Would like to read how Neil became an author as this is not covered in the book. Just beginning to make my way through Neil Cross stories and so far am enjoying them.

...unless you want to put your kids through the kind of hell Neil Cross went through. The beginning of the book is better than the ending and there are some odd detours and byways that never get resolved or explained (such as the Mormon Church) but this is a well-written, compelling and horrifying look at what divorce does to kids.

Many therapists suggest that a family full of rife and disharmony is one in which the parents might want to consider divorce. Perhaps that works for most people, but the children are always left with some residual issues. In Bristol, England in the 1970's, Neil Cross, at age five, found himself without a mother. One day she just got up and left. No explanations, his father was morose, but tried very hard to care for him and his sisters. Then dad met Margaret and she and her two boys came to live with them. Margaret made a lovely tea each night for dad, and her two sons, but not for Neil or his sisters. This was what life was like, no one really cared for him. And, then one day two years later, his mother reappeared, and took him to Scotland to live with her and his new father, Derek. For all intents and purposes, Derek was wonderful, caring and loving for awhile, a good provider. But it turns out he was a serial husband. Life for Neil was never easy. His mother was a lost soul hanging onto whatever man would have her. We follow Neil from age five to his teens. His two fathers never really knowing Neil, nor do they want to. Derek Cross is considered a monster by many. His actions, loving, but his belief systems are rotten. Racist, leaving his families as he wishes, moving on, and in his wake he leaves people falling apart, no longer believing in anything, nothing solid that is. But his memoir by Neil Cross, I believe, is an attempt to rid himself of his furies, and he does well. Not much to hang onto, but it seems Neil Cross has gone on and prospered. Recommended. prisrob 01-22-15

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