



How to Catch a Frog: And Other Stories of Family, Love, Dysfunction, Survival, and DIY

Heather Ross

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Much of Heather Ross's creative work has been inspired by her being born into an eccentric family of artists and idealists in a rural corner of Vermont during the 1970s. According to Heather, that environment was defined by stunning natural beauty, creative and innovative living, and daily lessons in self-reliance. It also included equal parts of general dysfunction, a self-imposed but nearly inescapable poverty, and little exposure to basic life skills.

When, as a twenty-something, Heather complained to her mother about a long list of things she had missed out on and that had compromised her chance of ever leading a "normal" life (immunizations, a healthy respect for authority), her mother waved a hand and replied, "Well, you should thank me, because you have a lot of good stories instead." *How to Catch a Frog* is a collection of those stories, plus others that show Ross's eventual route to success as an artist, entrepreneur, and mother, all animated by Ross's delightful illustrations and how-to instructions.

How to Catch a Frog: And Other Stories of Family, Love, Dysfunction, Survival, and DIY Details

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Author : Heather Ross

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From Reader Review How to Catch a Frog: And Other Stories of Family, Love, Dysfunction, Survival, and DIY for online ebook

Joellen says

Let me start by saying I couldn't finish this book (I read half). I have a lot of respect for Heather's work as a fabric designer. And I even thought her ability to tell a story through writing was entertaining. I appreciated her openness about her background/ family story. I just felt she was too quick to generalize groups of people and that saddened me. She mocked children that were the result of incestuous relationships and basically said they were a bunch of stupid hillbillies. She portrayed all Christians as ignorant and would mock the very missionaries who recognized Heather's awful home life, taking time away from their own homes to help two children in need. Not cool, Heather. Not cool.

I would have loved to have finished all of the essays, but the above attitudes just left a bad taste in my mouth.

Tia says

What makes a book 4 stars not 5? The 5 star books are the ones that are so good I still think about them when I'm done and I can't wait to tell others about. So I will say: read this book! There's just something about the tale of Heather's childhood that draws you in. She shares milestones and mishaps and it's a story about people and childhood survival. Her creative success was inspiring to hear about. I love her different characterizations of her Aunt Jane or her friends the Canfields. Her mothers response when she was bit by the horse gave me brief love for her mother. Heather Ross is a great writer and I loved this book.

Becky says

I was totally smitten with this magical memoir!

Mary says

Such a refreshing change from the last dysfunctional memoir I just read. Ross grows up in rural Vermont with very few parameters and precious little in the way of possessions, support and even victuals. Despite having no support or direction she works her way through life to become a fabric designer, author and all around balanced woman. Three cheers for the resilience of her spirit!!!

Tamara says

My Review

Charming and comforting.

Amidst all of the family chaos and tough relationships and harsh winters, there was still this effervescent love of life and adventure that made me want to live in a cabin with no front door or ride a horse bare-chested or take baths in a forest covered in snow.

Favorite Quote

My sister shared my dedication to the protection of The Cute, especially The Baby Cute.

Dorre says

Could not love this book more...

Kerry says

Changing my review as this book seems to be sticking with me in a few different ways: the imagery of the woods of Vermont and California are still swirling around my mind, also connections with students at my school who have similar relationships with their parents...good to have a reminder of that perspective.

Brooke Reynolds says

As a disclaimer: I know Heather in real life and I also designed this book. Heather had an extraordinary childhood growing up on the hills of Vermont. I loved every minute of this book about her journey as an artist, and her experiences now as a wife and a mother. We all come from somewhere.. I loved learning about how Heather came to be the kind, talented, wonderful woman she is today.

Janice says

This was a collection of stories from the author's life - and some were spot on! I really enjoyed the section called, "How to start a children's clothing company" - the success to failure and determination that failure isn't a bad thing is a key life lesson. I only wish I was creative or of the "arts", but the lessons here hold true for whatever field you're in. The courage to try overrules the sense of failure!

The other section I loved, maybe more so than the one above is, "how to not turn into your mother"...yes, the ties that bind and gag!! The circle of life we think about as we are pregnant can deeply impact us. It's important to get perspective - that we are NOT our pasts and we are NOT our parents. Funny to have read this book and that section, on day of my daughter's own ultrasound for her first child.

There are some real life lessons in this book - on how to do this or that, how family can mean so much, but can be quickly gone, that home isn't necessarily a place, but where your heart is, and more.

Pamwendy says

This book is so authentic that, it was uncomfortable to read in parts. Ms Ross' voice is unapologetic and she takes responsibility for her journey. Thank you for telling your story. I hope there are more to follow.

Chloe says

I randomly picked this up at BookPeople after my boyfriend asked me to help him find an autobiography (despite my apparently superior alphabetical searching skills, we did not find it), and I'm so glad I did. I'm almost certain that no matter what else I read this year, this will continue to be my absolute favorite. It's inspiring, engaging and touching. Definitely the best autobiography I've ever read.

Mousy Brown says

I totally loved this book...the contents, the stories, the cover and the illustrations. Everything about it was perfect for the time and place I was reading it...at the beginnings of our summer holidays, with the heat of the sun pouring in through the windows. The mixture of tales, some happy, some sad, the good and the bad honestly told, made me laugh and cry and left me thinking long after I closed the cover. I didn't really know what to expect when I started (shallow enough to have chosen the book by its cover!) but I will now be recommending it to all my friends, especially all those that grew up in the 1970's like the author and I did...

Zer says

What a lovely memoir. I also grew up in Vermont, in Johnson, I wonder if I ran into Heather at the grocery store? or if she picked berries at the farm I grew up on... You should read this book. It is a brave telling of an individual life, and teaches you that failure is not a bad thing.

Kate Rau says

What a delightful surprise this book was! I've long been a big fan of Heather Ross's textile designs and read her blog for years, so of course I wanted to read her book when it came out.

To be honest I expected it to be little more than cute little anecdotes among many DIY projects. Instead, this was a thought-provoking and captivating look back at her magical but deeply dysfunctional childhood. Heather and her twin sister learned early on to survive essentially on their own with very little food, comfort,

shelter, guidance and love from the adults in their lives. Fortunately Heather came through with her sense of wonder intact which she shares in both her playful designs and this beautifully written memoir. Two thumbs up!

Lizzy says

Great insight into Heather Ross's life and how being true to herself and taking risks paid off. It's the sort of background information you don't get from a blog who's authors often feel like they lead perfect lives and never suffered failure. She's honest about her lows and dysfunctions and shows that her successes are well earned.
