

FIRST PUBLISHED BOOK

WISHES OF LOVE

A MEMOIR OF LOVE, HOPE, AND FAMILY

LIAM SAWYER



Wishes of Love

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This book is for June and Buzz. My parents who never stoped believing in me and all the good that I could do. There is a song by Celine Dion that will always make me remember the love you have for me.

*"You were my strength when I was weak
You were my voice when I couldn't speak
You were my eyes when I couldn't see
You saw the best there was in me
Lifted me up when I couldn't reach
You gave me faith 'cause you believed
I'm everything I am
Because you loved me"*
-Celine Dion

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Foreword

“Wishes of Love” tells the story of a young boy from Europe and his journey into America, wishing for nothing but love from newfound strangers in a strange new land. Liam Sawyer details his adoption story and helps reinforce the theme that DNA does not make a family, but rather love. He starts his story from as early as he could remember, in a vast mountainous range all the way to the elaborate environment that is New York City. He tells of the mysterious and strange foreigners that came into his orphanage and whisked him and his older sister, who played a significant mother figure in his early childhood, away to start a brand-new life. His journey tells of that of the unexpected and how nothing but change and new things were brought into his life from there on out.

From the get-go Liam’s story is relatable and allows you to put yourself into his shoes to realize that we’re not alone when going through stressful or overbearing situations. As he began his new life in America, he shows his progress in developing a strong and loving relationship from his newly adopted parents, all the while

trying to assimilate into a normal life that involves going to school, meeting new friends, and learning new things, especially an entirely new language. Just as I clung to my parents on my first day of school and threw quite the hissy fit, he has no shame in describing what he calls “banshees wailing at midnight” when he and his sister were left alone at school and were scared at the thought of being left behind again at another orphanage. Little would they know that in a few moments they would see their parents waving from their front porch right outside one of the school windows. As he attempts to navigate through these new challenges, he also tries to reconcile with the ones he had before, trying not to let it get the best of him.

As he continues his story, he also experiences great deals of loss, frustration, and trauma. If anything, his life shows that of being full of unexpected twists and turns, thrown at him at the most inconvenient times and when everything has seemed to fall in place just for once. He takes you on an emotional roller coaster that hits you when you least expect it, just like how he had experienced it in real life.

Relationships have played a key role

for him, whether it was with his mother, father, or sister, he details the excruciating hardships that he had dealt with, as well as the precious moments he was able to garner before things took a turn. From dealing with the typical regret in saying “I hate you” to our parents when we’re younger to having a relationship with them that makes them your best friend in the entire world, he not only shows how love can be given, but the ways in which we express it without explicitly stating it.

Despite not going through the exact things that Liam had experienced, I found myself connecting and relating to the same feelings, making me feel not so alone through the pain and hardships I faced when I was younger. After dealing with such traumatic events, it’s not hard to regress back to these thoughts and dwell on the ideas of what could have been or what could have been done differently. It’s especially hard trying to mature and move on when you’re also forced to confront everything from your past and forced to handle everything in one heap.

As Liam became a teenager, he became faced with these difficulties and had

to tackle newfound ones too. He struggles with something we all do when we reach young adulthood in terms of finding our identity and being scared of how it affects everyone around you, and not just yourself. We see how he learns to accept his identity and come to terms with it as well as how he decides to communicate it with those around him, that being friends and family. His past would also be no stranger as it would make frequent appearances to haunt him from time to time, but he knew that he had to confront it, even if that meant seeing someone professionally to talk about it all.

As young adults, it's hard to balance life. From academics to family to your social life, we are put up with the task of managing it all. So much pressure builds up around you, whether ones that you created on your own, or from others, and you have to figure out how to process everything without forgetting the things that made you, you. Liam's sense of self-reflection has proven to show the great developments and strides he has made in adversity that he would have never thought possible. He knows how to find that light at the end of the tunnel and although he recognizes things may not last

forever, he knows that the impact that person or one event has will forever be the thing to remain and be carried with for the rest of his life. He has learned to tackle change with ease and acceptance without being too resentful and has embraced that these changes were necessary in order to become the person he is today.

Liam's story is extremely heartfelt and relatable and he enacts a movie reel in your head as if you're watching his life play out right in front of you while you're reading. He carefully crafts and depicts these moments from his life to be wonderfully articulated. From the people that took him in who he had little to no telling of the journey that they would take him on, he was able to find love amidst the crazy ride that is his life, and he hopes that any reader can see that this is possible no matter what circumstance you're facing.

Isabelle Gutierrez
April 5, 2020

Take Me Away

It was early in February when me and my sister were called down from our bedroom to the main meeting room. My sister, named Caitlyn, had chickenpox and was pretty much quarantined, so she had to stay in a separate room while we had visitors. Me, on the other hand, I was so excited to have someone come and specifically ask for me. Walking down the hallway, I could see all the other kids staring at me with a wondrous look in their eyes. The two strangers came into an embrace as I welcomed them to the orphanage with a smile ranging from cheek to cheek.

Nestled in the plains of Southern Ukraine, the town that I was born in, Lypovenke, was so small that it was like looking for a needle in the haystack trying to find it on any map. Filled with twenty or less shack type of buildings, we didn't have heat, didn't have any stores and didn't have any way to buy food. Waking up every morning with my sister and my other three brothers, we would shuffle into the nearby woods with nothing but a fabric shirt and pants. We didn't have shoes, gloves, or hats, and in

winter months, the weather could be harsh, and the land was usually filled with snow. We would watch closely for any animals that might come our way. Being the youngest at the time (two years old), I would watch out for any berries and plants that might be hidden away in the forest. Hearing the whistle of the bow and arrow, I knew that we had gotten dinner for that night and we could finally go back to our house. Going on for about two years, I had no idea how others lived or that there was even anything else out there in the world. I didn't know how easy life was for others as I had a clear idea that everyone lived as I did.

One morning when I was about two and a half, my birth parents had told us that they were going out for the day and they would be back later in the evening. Waiting all night sitting in front of the door, getting jumpy at anything that sounded like footsteps, no one came that night. The next day was just like the last, waiting and waiting. Slowly the days turned into a week and then weeks, waiting for our parents to come home. All of a sudden, there was a knock on the door and expecting my parents, I ran to open it with excitement but found

two, intimidating men with badges on asking for our parents. Knowing that they had not been here for weeks, they had no choice but to take us to an orphanage as we were considered to be orphans now. At this time, I had a total of three brothers and one sister. The youngest brother (only a couple months old) was sent to a baby orphanage away from us and the two older brothers were sent to another. My sister not leaving my side and always taking care of me was sent with me to a different orphanage. Being three at that time, I had little idea of what just happened, but I knew that I was excited to meet new people around my age.

Arriving at the orphanage, I was amazed at the size of the four-story brick building. I gazed at the building at what seemed to be numerous minutes comparing it to the one-room shack I had been born in and had lived in. I was led to the bedroom and immediately, I ran and jumped on the bed that was given to me. I no longer had to share a bed with my sister and younger brother. My sister was given the bed next to me so we could continue to be together. However, there were about fifteen beds in each room so we were not alone. The

bathroom in the building had two sinks and a rusty metal tub with brown water and we would not change the water until the next week started. The other floors were filled with more kids, older ages going up to the top floor. We were then led to the dining room which had small square tables with oak chairs that held about thirty kids. I had scoffed the food down when I had first gotten it as it was my last meal I would ever eat in my life. However, the food would be the same every day. We were given borscht, which is a traditional soup made from beetroots and was always garnished with some green herbs. My sister took up the role of acting like my mother and never left my side. Being three at the time and my sister being four, we were too young to go to school so we spent all day playing with whatever we could find. The days blended in and I often wondered if this was going to be my new home or if I would be given away again and left without anyone. Through the next two years, children would come and go, people would visit and every time I had hoped it would be my time to be taken by one of the foreign visitors.

About the Author



LIAM SAWYER WAS BORN ON FEBRUARY 5TH IN UKRAINE. HE WAS ADOPTED AT THE AGE OF FIVE WITH HIS SISTER CAITLYN. HE CURRENTLY LIVES IN STATEN ISLAND, NY WITH HIS MOTHER JUNE AND HIS DOG DEACON. HE ENJOYS TRAVELING TO DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD, SPAIN BEING HIS MOST RECENT CONQUEST. LIAM IS STUDYING ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AT MANHATTAN COLLEGE IN RIVERDALE, BRONX AND HOPES TO OBTAIN A JOB IN THAT FIELD.