



## Pure Heart: A Spirited Tale of Grace, Grit, and Whiskey

*Troy Ball, Bret Witter*

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Troylyn Ball and her husband, Charlie, an engineer and real estate investor, had spent their entire lives in Texas. But after a near fatal trip to the emergency room with their mute, wheelchair-bound son Marshall, they admitted the dust and the heat were too dangerous. To save their boys, the Balls cashed out, sold their beloved farm, and moved to Asheville, North Carolina.

Nearing fifty, Troy thought her chance at adventure had passed. But in this booming little Appalachian Mountain city of hippies, farmers, artisans, and retirees, she unexpectedly discovered a support network and something she'd never had in twenty-five years of providing round-the-clock care for her special needs boys: the freedom to pursue her own dreams. She struck up a friendship with a legendary eighty-year-old raconteur from the mountains, met his friends, and soon found herself in a rickety country shack with an ingeniously inventive retired farmer trying to create the best recipe ever for traditional mountain moonshine.

Full of eccentric characters and charming locations—from a "haunted" cabin in the mountains to the last farm in the world to grow heritage Crooked Creek corn—*Pure Heart* is a charming story of a woman who set out to find a purpose in the most unexpected of places, and ended up finding happiness, contentment, and a community of love and respect.

But when the real estate bubble burst and the collapse of her husband Charlie's new venture in Asheville left them deeply in debt, Troy realized her ten-year business plan for Troy & Sons Platinum Whiskey wasn't enough. If she was going to save her family—and she was definitely going to save her family—she needed to become the most successful woman in the legal whiskey business. And she needed to do it fast, before the bank took her house, her business, and everything she'd worked so hard to achieve.

## Pure Heart: A Spirited Tale of Grace, Grit, and Whiskey Details

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## **From Reader Review Pure Heart: A Spirited Tale of Grace, Grit, and Whiskey for online ebook**

### **Claire Talbot says**

Pure Heart is a whiskey maker's term for "the best - the middle of the run". Starting slowly, Troy Ball starts her life story - a daddy's girl from Texas who inherited his big dreams of entrepreneurship. One short bad marriage, being reunited with her first real sweetheart, Troy marries, and has two sons - both with special needs. Although she doesn't really specify the ailments, you learn that Marshall and Colton are very dependent on Troy, and making sure they are healthy, safe, and happy is one of her primary concerns. She gives up a lot personally to make sure the Marshall and Colton are loved, and taken care of. When allergies and illness start to threaten the boys' already compromised health, Troy and her husband Charlie take a leap of faith and move across the country to Asheville, NC. This is when the book came alive for me!

Loving the Southern mountains, I eagerly read about Troy's new neighbor, Forrest Jarrett - the man who would inspire her to start her quest to distill moonshine. The area came alive for me in Troy's writings, and to be honest - I can't wait to revisit Asheville and explore some of the places she talks about - including Asheville Distilling!

At first I thought the book would be too religious for me, but that was not the case. Troy does lead off each chapter with an inspirational thought from her son, Marshall, but this was not a "I've been Saved" Southern memoir. I don't mean that in a bad way - to me part of the great beauty in this story was Troy herself - over 50, home for much of her adult life with her boys, reinventing herself, believing in herself and following her dreams. How inspirational is that?

One of my favorite reads so far in 2017. Bravo, Troy Ball! Hope to meet you in Asheville someday soon!

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### **Kasey Brinkley says**

I think I might have enjoyed this more as an audiobook read by the author (I feel this way about most memoirs and autobiographies). The writing was basic making it a quick and easy read. Nice to read about a strong female entrepreneur.

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### **Ramin says**

Pure heart is the story of a female entrepreneur who doesn't give up not only the great small business of distilling Moon Shine but also the life of two special needs and one normal sons. It takes you up and down the road from a Texan ranch to the North Carolina one. Marshall made my wife and I cry, literally cry, when he hit the animal shaped button on the toy and made the sound commensurate with that animal. Pure Heart purely touched our hearts.

I liked Troy for being stubborn, looking out for her children and family, building her own small society, being smart in building and using the connection, being a Mom! and of course distilling Whiskey!

I couldn't get much about her personal relationship with Charlie during the transition. Well, he was there when he was supposed to be. But, what about when Troy was driving back and forth to the ranch, farm, the state offices for her licensure, etc. What was happening between them after they both were getting home? During the night? Were they able to keep their relationships normal after the daily exhaustions of handing the kids' needs, running the errands, and taking care of business?

I liked the way she dealt with the challenge of providing and readjusting the bottles, corks, and labels especially.

Well, she made it anyway; they made it anyway.

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### **Kayla says**

This book reads like a dreamy, rose colored version of someone's glazed over memories. There is no climax, and no drama. I gave it two stars because I enjoyed the history of North Carolina and moonshine making.

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### **Karen says**

I am of two minds about this book. It was a pleasant read about a woman who seemed to have it all, money, confidence, and the ability to make things happen. But, she really does not have it all. Troy Ball, a daughter of a self-made man who began, succeeded at, and failed at multiple ventures, inherited her father's knowledge of sales, entrepreneurship, determination, and grit. What she did not have - to many of us - is good luck. But this is just a way of looking at her situation.

Troy and her husband, Charlie, have three sons, two by birth and one by adoption. When Marshall, their first born son, was born, they discovered many severe issues. They learned to take care of him, and to give him what he needed to thrive in his own way. Then they had a second son, Coulton. He, too had incredible needs. To me, his needs seemed even more severe than Marshall's, if this was possible. As they learned how to raise their sons and discover what they, especially Marshall who is a published author (he bangs his head on a board to choose the letter he wants,) needed to live and grow. They were not expected to live. Eventually they adopted Luke who does not have these issues.

Charlie and Troy grew a successful business in Texas, but because of the climate, they needed to move their frequently ill children to a new part of the country. They sold everything and moved to Asheville, North Carolina. They found a welcoming home there and great new friends. In particular, Troy found moonshine! This is her story of working over years to create a legal moonshine distilling business making the best moonshine she believed possible. There were not only legal hurdles, but Troy and Charlie lost everything in their real estate business and were on the edge of homelessness, when things finally came together.

This is a very easy read, and I do not know how it ended up on my shelf because it certainly does not fit my usual choices. It is interesting and I now know more about distilling whiskey than I can possibly use. I do recommend it, and, by the way, it is a completely clean book! Amazing in this day.

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### **Jill Joplin says**

Amazing true story. Meeting the author and tasting the moonshine next week!

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## **Marie Piper says**

Troy Ball started a moonshine distillery in Asheville North Carolina as a mom in her 40s. *PURE HEART* is her memoir and the story of the creation of Troy & Sons distillery. It's a pleasant read, a fast read, and I'd suggest it as a gift book for people who are interested in spirits or who need an uplifting tale.

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## **Leigh says**

Hoping for a tale of female entrepreneurship with some Asheville and moonshine history, I was completely disappointed. I do appreciate the determination with which Troy and her family have overcome significant struggle, and I admire her drive to do something new and follow an unexpected path. However, the vague anti-science, put-your-faith-in-god allusion in the beginning coupled with a poorly structured, badly written personal narrative and the tone-deaf privilege throughout just turned me completely off. I think a little more reflection and a little less "I met this random person and moonshine is AMAZING" would have benefited this book.

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## **Tim Jarrett says**

It's not every day that you pick up a book about an entrepreneur who decides to bring heritage moonshine—legally—to market. Even rarer that the entrepreneur is a mom with two special needs kids who settles in your father's home county. And when the book features your uncle as a major character, with a chapter named after one of his sayings? Well, then we're doing a little better'n'a hundred.

*Pure Heart* isn't great literature, but it's a great story of Troy Ball's determination and ability to overcome obstacles. And she (and her co-writer Bret Witter) capture some of the larger-than-lifeness of my uncle, Forrest Jarrett, with his insistence that "a bird can't fly on one wing," his mountain barter system that has him doing favors for people all around the county, often in the form of gifts of produce or other goodies—the "pet 'n' poke."

It's a delight to read about Troy's triumph over her obstacles and slightly more of a delight for me personally to see my larger-than-life uncle on the printed page. Now if only someone would capture more of his story...

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## **Jessica says**

Troy Ball grew up in Texas and was a Texas girl through and through. When she met her husband and they started their family everything seemed to be falling into place. But, both of their sons has severe special needs and it was a long time before doctors could even figure out what was wrong. Troy devoted herself to her son's care, but still managed to start several businesses along the way. Troy was an entrepreneur at heart and learned how to be a great salesperson from her father. Austin, TX is one of the worst places to live if you have allergies and her sons both had breathing issues, so the family decided to move to Asheville, NC. In Asheville is where Troy met a few mountain men who had family histories brewing local moonshine. She realized there was a gap in the market - no local, legal moonshine and that's how Troy & Sons Platinum whiskey was born. There were a lot of struggles, both personally and professionally, along the way, but Troy

persevered. She became the "first woman licensed in the state of North Carolina to distill hard liquor, and only the fourth woman licensed in the entire United States." (p. 176) This is a story about family, both biological and the one you create, hard work, and how when those two things come together amazing things can happen.

I wasn't familiar with Troy & Sons before this, but her story is so amazing and unique that I will have to check it out now. Even if you're not a big drinker this is an uplifting and unique story that you won't want to miss.

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### **Karen Parisot says**

Troylyn Ball is a truly remarkable woman. She has so much energy, drive, love and devotion for her family and friends and it really shines through in her memoir. Her book touches on her early years growing up in Texas, her marriages and children, and the family's relocation to North Carolina. It details how in mid-life, after decades of caring for her family, she's driven to start a new business. The overarching theme is right there in the title, Pure Heart, and it's the way she has lived her life. An inspirational story for everyone who has dreamed of being an entrepreneur or who just appreciates a really good life story.

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### **Northwestreader says**

This book wasn't really what I thought it would be, but it was interesting. I learned more about moonshine than I will ever need to know. Likewise, I learned all about how Asheville, NC was revitalized. I became more familiar with all the intricacies of getting a liquor license. It was really a book about female business ownership and entrepreneurialism. And bureaucracy! It was all interesting, just not what I thought it would be about.

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### **Cara says**

Interesting story where I learned about (1) moonshine which was fun (2) raising special needs children which is inspiring and a testament to love and (3) the heart behind being an entrepreneur and innovator. Oh yeah and the indomitable spirit of women! Next time I'm out, I'm looking for a cocktail made with Troy & Sons moonshine....and definitely making a stop at their distillery on my next trip to Asheville!

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### **Laurie says**

Lots of really interesting information on the process of "moonshining" and the history of the Asheville, NC region. Troy's personal story is wonderful but presented in a bit of an overly sweet format for my taste. I'm an Asheville resident and am looking forward to visiting the distillery!

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### **Stephanie Barko says**

Enjoyed the review copy that Texas Book Festival shipped me as prep for moderating the author's session at the Fest on Sunday, November 5, 1 PM in the Texas Tent. Ya'll come see us in Austin!

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