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# The Heart Needs No Words-The Adoption Story Of A Teen With Cancer

THE HEART NEEDS  
NO WORDS



THE ADOPTION STORY  
OF A TEEN WITH CANCER

CINDY LOCKE



## Synopsis

Starting at the age of 11, Ivan bounced between residential treatment centers, psychiatric facilities, and group homes in Alaska and Montana. A childhood of abuse, neglect, and abandonment had taken its toll on him. Just before his 15th birthday, when life seemed it could not get any worse, Ivan was diagnosed with Ewing's Sarcoma, a form of bone cancer. Alone in the world and now facing the fight of his life he was moved to yet another state for cancer treatment. With the help of his caseworker he was reunited with his older brother, whom he had not seen in many years. After finishing a year of cancer treatment, Ivan was again separated from his brother and sent to a new foster home. Emotionally shut down and nearly nonverbal, Ivan entered this new home. Despite the hopelessness of his life, a young man emerged who was not the broken, disturbed child he was portrayed by the records to be. A teen with a zest for life and love to share was waiting for a chance to belong.

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## Customer Reviews

I was one of Cindy's kids - the one with the behavioral issues (which I eventually outgrew). I left

when I was 15 but to me, she's the only mom I've ever known, even if I never made it easy for her. I never met Ivan personally but felt like I got to know him via Mom's book. I noticed that she focused mostly on herself, Ivan, and Seneca, which I do understand since the story's about Ivan. But I do wish she included a few more stories of Ivan's interaction with Emily, Jordan, Sarah, and Kailey, together and separately. I do a lot of reading and (both published works and fanfiction websites) Mom might not have perfect grammar and whatnot but she's far from being one of the worse. The story is engaging and she stayed on topic. That's what matters, right?

This is a story told with grace, honesty, and respect for all. Cindy shares a sliver of her life while telling her relationship with a boy in need of love, care, and stability. We readers grow to understand that Cindy needed the boy as well; she makes it clear that she and her amazing family gained much from their all-too-brief time with Ivan. While most of us might not have the emotional or physical fortitude to undertake fostering medically or emotionally fragile children, we can relate to Cindy's feelings and experiences while raising an emotional teen-ager. I was inspired by Ivan's clarity in knowing how he wanted to confront his death; I was awed by Cindy's ability to support him throughout.

This book is so straight forward and so honest to the heart of a beautiful and agonizing experience. Cindy invites you to see the joy, challenges, desires and pain of someone who decides to let another all the way into their lives. Fostering is a tremendous challenge but what Cindy and her family does is not fostering but embracing new family in a way we can all learn from. My heart is blessed and encouraged by reading this book.

I was the school psychologist and counselor for 26 years at the elementary school where Cindy's children attended school. Over those years, I worked with Cindy on many occasions and was honored to work with many of her children. I know many school staff who interacted with her during these years. There is really only one word that we could use to describe Cindy and her work. The word is "saint" and we don't use it lightly. Cindy is one of the most remarkable and exceptionally loving human beings I have had the privilege to know in my life. Having this opportunity to read about her and her family's time with Ivan in this book was a personal gift to me. I belong to a book club of mostly retired teachers from this school and we recently read this book and invited Cindy to come meet with us as we discussed it. We only deepened our awe for the selfless service that has been Cindy's way of life since she was a very young woman. The story of Cindy's time with Ivan

demonstrates so many of her finest qualities, particularly courage, patience, perspective, perseverance, sensitivity, excellent judgment, incredible respect for each person's right and need for dignity. And, of course, always love. I would think most people would learn a lot about all of these things by reading this extremely moving story. Thank you, Cindy, for taking the three years of your life it took for the writing, to offer the world the gift of Ivan's story. You are such a blessing! Linda Babin

A compelling book of true love, compassion, and understanding of a young man's soul. A beautiful and loving true story. I personally wish I could have known this precious young man. My husband and I have been close friends of Cindy and her parents for over thirty years and have watched her many young people. She dedicates this book to Ivan, but knowing her, we feel it is also a dedication to Cindy's life of becoming involved with youngsters who are rejected by society and their families due to illnesses that are debilitating and often fatal. Due to her abilities to nurse not only their bodies, but also their souls, we have watched her bring many young people back to productive loving Christian lives and overcome their physical liabilities. This book is about one of her many children and how he fought not only for his life but his salvation.

I work in an emergency shelter for kids ages 12 and under. Cindy's story touched my heart and showed me what it looks like to live on purpose and with a purpose. So many people are living and dying alone in this world and that isn't right. We are called to carry one another's burdens. And Cindy has shown us how to do that. Thank you Cindy for sharing such an amazing and personal story with us.

A personal story that reads of journal experiences reflected in the adoption, foster care and medical processes as well as memoir moments that adopt the reader into the story, making it one's own. The author's use of narrative and storytelling allows for the use of a two-way, interactive relationship that kept me invested from beginning to end..seated on the Locke's family couch alongside Ivan and Seneca, surrounded by the love and support of the Locke family..a non-stop read through.

This wasn't written by a professional writer, rather someone with a heart of love. This is a touching story of hope and heartbreak, and through love, one comes to understand each of the primary characters. Everyone in this tale has good motives, no one is the 'grinch' which is not always the

case with dealing with government entities. Would recommend.

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