

FAQ with “Finding Daddy Warbucks”

Author David Hwa

What inspired you to write this story?

When I was a kid growing up in Kansas I remember going to the drive-in with my family and watching *Parent Trap* starring a young girl named Hayley Mills. I remember enjoying watching a young, headstrong girl shakeup the adult world. So armed with that memory, I wrote *Finding Daddy Warbucks*.

Do you have kids of your own?

I do not have any kids of my own. I am single, never married. I have been around the kids of my friends and my two sisters, and now the kids of my oldest nephew. Often I find children to be much smarter than adults give them credit for. But then you see the gaps in their knowledge of the world and it reminds you that they’re still just children.

How did you get inside the head of a little girl and bring her to life?

Hayley is pure inspiration. Ultimately, every author must draw upon their imagination and mix it with their experience and background to create characters that resonate. Hayley’s character is larger than life but also believable. And you want to believe in her because you can feel what she feels. That is what brings her to life.

Lung cancer awareness plays a role in your story does it play a role in your own life?

I have not had any personal experience with lung cancer but I do remember hearing that more people die from lung cancer than the other top three cancers combined. That fact surprised me. I remember when I was a child, my sisters and I hounded our parents to quit smoking, and they eventually did. So I hope this story can bring some awareness to the dangers of smoking and lung cancer.

The story contrasts wealth and a luxurious lifestyle against the middle-class struggle to survive in a poor economy. Is this a comment on our society and the current economic malaise?

The struggle to survive financially is something almost everyone faces. I’ve lived through several recessions and financial bubbles. And I have been financially affected by all of them. It has always been a struggle to find financial security and continues to be so. The universal allure of exorbitant wealth is the age old question of whether money can buy happiness and it goes back to our childhood and the Grimm’s Fairy Tale Cinderella. The belief that wealth and money cures all remains a popular fantasy. The idea that money does not cure all is a hard pill for people to swallow, and so, the allure of wealth persists. *Finding Daddy Warbucks* examines this allure and how financial struggles impact our lives.

Your story deals with the loss of a parent. Have you lost a parent and how did that affect you?

I lost my father while I was going to law school. He died on Christmas Eve at the relatively young age of 65. The loss was brutally hard on my entire family. He was a dominant and calming presence in our lives and losing him changed all of us. The issues I struggled with following the death of my father have defined my life. Losing a parent shakes you to the core and forces you to reassess everything. It is also a hardship that most of us will have to face at some point in our lives. Hopefully, *Finding Daddy Warbucks* will help others through the process of surviving the loss of a loved one.

This is an emotionally moving story. How do you get the reader to feel such strong emotions?

Most of us have strong, deep, emotions that we closely guard and hold under wraps. We spend our lives running from one task to another, just trying to keep all the balls in the air. The last thing we want is to peel back that protective shell and expose our deepest hopes, desires, affections, and fears. But in certain areas such as the cinema or reading we are free to feel those emotions. The cinema is much more effective at tugging those heartstring and for a book to do it is something magical. So there is your answer—magic.

Why did you decide to use a Bible scripture as a running theme for your story?

Hebrews 10:39 has always been a scripture that I have leaned on during difficult times. “We do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved.” Using it in *Finding Daddy Warbucks* felt natural to me and since my characters are an extension of me, it felt natural for them to use it as well.

Is your story trying to send a spiritual message?

I do believe in an afterlife and that our loved ones watch over us from the other side. I have seen enough in this life to be convinced of that. Losing the people you love is a traumatic experience. Realizing that they continue on in the afterlife can be very comforting and reassuring. I think it is very important that we make peace when a loved one passes. Holding onto guilt, anger, or regret only poisons your life and serves no purpose. As hard as it may be, we should strive to make peace.

Washington, D.C. and Virginia is the backdrop for your story, where did you get your knowledge of the area?

I lived in Alexandria, Virginia and worked in Washington, DC for about ten years. The Washington metro area is both beautiful and historic. It is impossible for a book to capture the sheer beauty of the area. I lived in Old Town Alexandria, in a historic townhome that dated back to the 1870s. I loved walking the quaint streets of Alexandria which are lined with buildings and homes that predate our nation’s independence. The chapter that describes the Virginia Gold Cup comes from my memories of attending that event every May with my friends. I have very fond memories of Alexandria and Washington and miss the friends I left behind dearly.

You have been an attorney for most of your life so have you always wanted to be a writer?

I can't say that I've always wanted to be a writer. I can't say that about anything. Life has a way of moving me where it wants me to go. Over the years, I've learned to just go with the flow and not fight it. I dabbled in writing years ago, when I lived in Los Angeles, but it never took. That was well over fifteen years ago. I picked it up again after leaving my Washington law firm and moving to Colorado. I think this time it will stick.

How did you end up in Colorado?

I grew up in Kansas and went to college in Colorado at the University at Colorado in Boulder. I also picked up a Masters of Business Administration at Denver University. I had been thinking about coming back to Colorado for years. After the recent economic downturn did a number on my Washington law practice, I decided that it was a good time to return to Colorado.

Can we look forward to more books about Hayley and her family?

I have two more books planned for Hayley and her family. It was difficult coming up with another story that matched the emotional depth of *Finding Daddy Warbucks*. Only time will tell if the following books are worthy sequels.