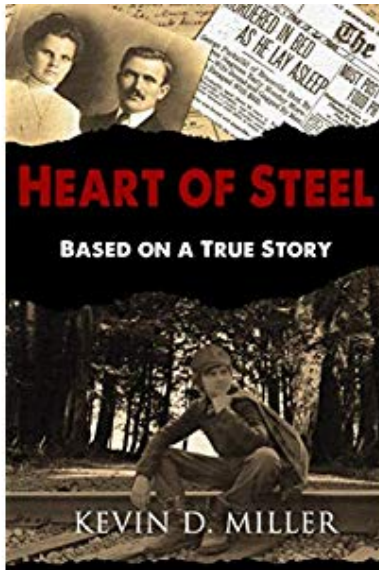




Readers' Favorite[®]

Book Reviews and Award Contest

Book Review Mini-Critique



Below you will find ratings (scale of 1-5) with descriptions for the major parts of your book followed by your Readers' Favorite review. Although these are general ratings we hope they will give you an insight into how others may view the different components of your book.

These are the opinions of your reviewer, and although your reviewer is not an expert literary critic or professional editor, they are at the very least, an avid reader of books just like yours.

Title: Heart of Steel
Subtitle: Based on a True Story
Author: Kevin D Miller
Genre: Fiction - Historical - Event/Era



Appearance: The appearance of a book can make a significant impact on the experience of a reader, whose enjoyment is often enhanced by an enticing cover, an intriguing table of contents, interesting chapter headings, and when possible, eye-catching illustrations.

4

Plot: The characters of a book should be well defined with strengths and flaws, and while they do not have to be likable, the reader does have to be able to form a connection with them. The tone should be consistent, the theme should be clear, and the plot should be original or told from a unique perspective. For informative books -- those without plot and characters--this rating refers primarily to your concept and how well you presented it.

5

- Development:** Development refers to how effectively you told your story or discussed your topic. The dialogue should be realistic, the descriptions should be vivid, and the material should be concise and coherent. Organization is also a key factor, especially for informative books -- those without plot and characters. The order in which you tell your story or explain your topic and how smoothly it flows can have a huge impact on the reader's understanding and enjoyment of the material.
- 5**
- Formatting:** Formatting is the single most overlooked area by authors. The way in which you describe scenes, display dialogue, and shift point of view can make or break your story. In addition, excessive grammatical errors and typos can give your book an amateurish feel and even put off readers completely.
- 4**
- Marketability:** Marketability refers to how effectively you wrote your book for your target audience. Authors may include content that is above or below the understanding of their target reader, or include concepts, opinions or language that can accidentally confuse or alienate some readers. Although by its nature this rating is very subjective, a very low rating here and poor reviews may indicate an issue with your book in this area.
- 5**
- Overall Opinion:** The overall starred rating takes into account all these elements and describes the overall reading experience of your reviewer. This is the official Readers' Favorite review rating for your book.
- 5**

Review:

Reviewed by Grant Leishman for Readers' Favorite

Heart of Steel: Based on a True Story by Kevin D Miller takes us back in time to rural Ohio in 1920, to the Puchalski farm just out of Southington, Ohio. Family patriarch George Puchalski, a Polish immigrant, has made a success of his "American Dream" as a respected businessman and farmer in the rural district. George, however, has his demons, with a wandering eye, a violent temper, and an alcoholic disposition, which are expressed with rage and violence against his wife and children. After one particularly violent episode in which his wife and daughter are both viciously beaten, the family is in turmoil. When George is murdered in his bed one night and his wife arrested for complicity in his murder, the five siblings suddenly find themselves orphans. It falls on twelve-year-old Stanley William Puchalski to step up and become a "little man" in order to protect his siblings from the abuses inherent in orphanages of the time. We follow Stanley's rites of passage into adulthood as Stanley William Puchalski transforms himself into Stanley William Miller and the five children seek to put their violent past behind them forever.

Author Kevin D Miller has taken a gamble in writing about such a hidden and violent past from his ancestors. This is never an easy task as it is difficult to be objective when dealing with family histories, with so many sensitivities to be aware of. In Heart of Steel, Miller handles the difficult teenage years of his grandfather with clear pride but also tempered with an understanding that this young man, forced to grow up so early, was also stalked by demons similar to his father. He was able to give the character a wonderful balance between his big heart and his burgeoning wild side. I particularly loved the determination and courage Stanley showed in taking responsibility for his four siblings at such a tender age. The author's pride in his grandfather's courage shines through this book like a beacon, as does the love between his grandfather and grandmother. This story is one, first and foremost, of love - a mother's love for her children that would drive her to commit an unspeakable act and the love of five siblings for each other and ultimately both of their parents. I thoroughly enjoyed the overarching theme of forgiveness that ran through the narrative. This is a fantastically easy book to read and one I would highly recommend to anyone who loves historical fiction and family drama, or simply anyone who loves a good tale, especially with a basis in fact.