

Essays on losing parent

A FAMILIAR look, an affectionate word is etched forever in the memory of their children.

They come from those who knew us best and have known us the longest.

This collection of essays on losing a parent by orphans in middle age is not depressing, as I first thought it might be, but uplifting.

Although it is a natural progression to lose a parent, most often when children are in middle age, still it comes as a shock, no matter how well prepared we believe we are.

Author and journalist Susan Wyndham has compiled a collection of essays by 14 well-known Australian writers on what it meant to them to lose a parent.

The catalyst for the book was losing her own parent and the colliding emotions it brought.

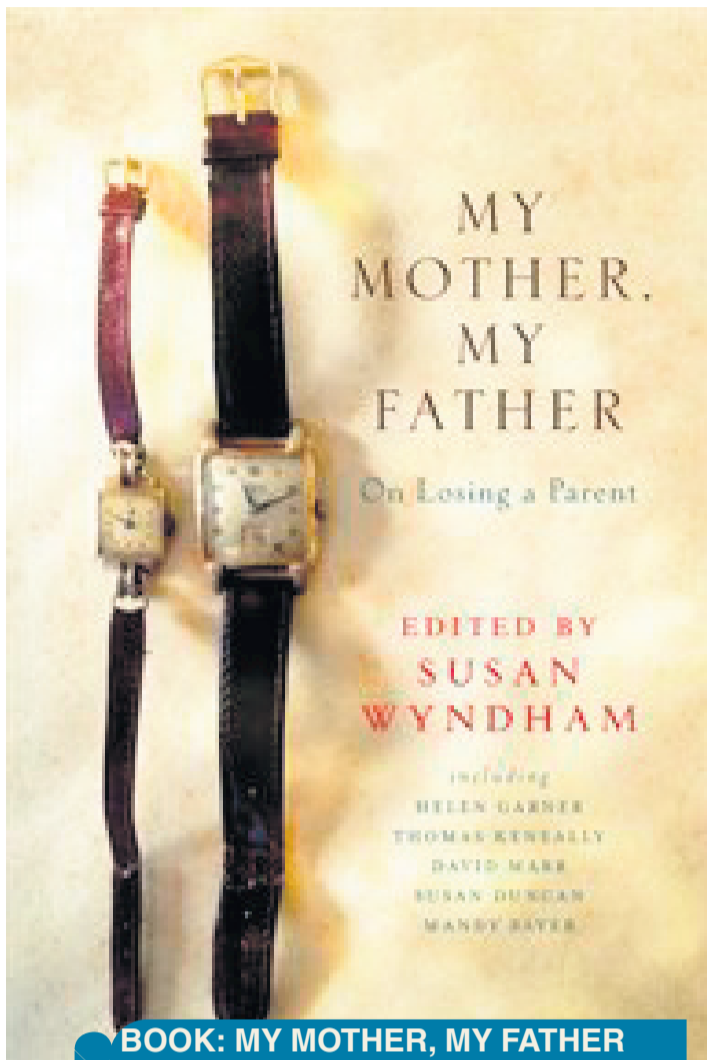
Each writer brings a different perspective on the emotions associated with this traumatic time; a loss that is universal but unique to the person who is facing the loss.

Among them, Thomas Keneally's story of his father stands out in his customary beautiful prose; Helen Garner's story of her mother is evocative of a bygone era and Mandy Sayer's dark humour all mirror a rite of passage that every one of us faces.

Does grief ease with the passage of time? Does it help to talk and share the pain? Does it leave a lingering sense of guilt or failure?

But as Susan Wyndham says, with loss there is also growth.

Her book is dedicated to all parents, everywhere.



BOOK: MY MOTHER, MY FATHER
EDITOR: Susan Wyndham
PUBLISHER: Allen & Unwin Aust
RRP: \$29.99
REVIEWER: Mary Ann Elliott

HEROES

AUTHOR: Tony Stephens
PUBLISHER: Slattery Media Group (RRP: \$32.95)
REVIEWER: F.J. O'Dwyer

THIS publication profiles a glorious selection of inspirational Australians; people like Faith Bandler the daughter of a South Sea Islander, Bill Dean a Governor-General and Marie Bashir the NSW Governor.

They have had the ability, through their deeds, words and ordeals, to generate change.

Feisty individuals such as Fred Hollows and Mum Shirl had a firm belief in what was right.

The humility shown by those who served this country is remarkable whilst Weary Dunlop, Alec Campbell and Len Hall will forever represent mateship.

There are many others from all walks of life who have faced adversity or led by example. Read their stories and be inspired by these exemplars.



Dark, twisted journey

FATAL FEMALES

AUTHOR: Libby-Jane Charleston
PUBLISHER: Hardie Grant Books,
RRP: \$24.95
REVIEWER: Laura Hunt

DELVING into the world of murder and murderers is fascinating.

But when those killers are women, who are traditionally thought of as nurturing and caring, there's an extra intriguing element.

Libby-Jane Charleston is a Sydney writer and journalist who started out as one of the country's youngest newspaper columnists.

In Fatal Females, she has looked at 13 of the most infamous female felons who have fascinated the nation, from Russian-born librarian Lucy Dudko who hijacked a helicopter to break her boyfriend out of jail, to Anu Singh who murdered her boyfriend after opting out of a murder-suicide, and then blamed it on a psychotic episode.

Particularly heinous was Katherine Knight, a former abattoir worker who stabbed, skinned, chopped and cooked her partner up to serve to his adult children.

Still hungry? Two young students known as the Collie Killers also stayed with me.

The two schoolgirls from the West Australian mining town of Collie murdered their school friend before burying her in a shallow grave under a house.

Neither showed any remorse for the crime, which was completely pre-meditated.

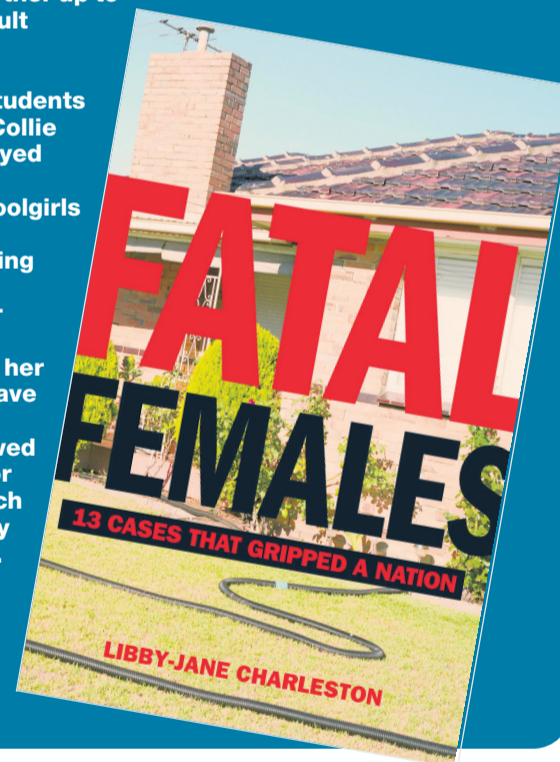
As for Elisa Baker, who killed her disabled stepdaughter

and staged a kidnapping to cover it up, she was an evil human being.

This is a fascinating look at some very dark characters indeed.

Charleston has dissected the women's motivations (when there was any), allowing the reader to go on a dark and twisted journey into the world of these particular female criminals.

This was a fascinating look at some very dark characters indeed.



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