

Piano Lessons: Music, Love, and True Adventures

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✓ Verified Book of Piano Lessons: Music, Love, and True Adventures

Summary:

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Piano Lessons is Noah Adams's delightful and moving chronicle of his fifty-second year--a year already filled with long, fast workdays and too little spare time--as he answers at last a lifelong call: to learn to play the piano. The twelve monthly chapters span from January--when after decades of growing affection for keyboard artists and artisans he finally plunges in and buys a piano--through December, when as a surprise Christmas present for his wife he dresses in a tuxedo and, in flickering candlelight, snow falling outside the windows, he attempts their favorite piece of music, a difficult third-year composition he's been struggling with in secret to get to this very moment.

Among the up-tempo triumphs and unexpected setbacks, Noah Adams interweaves the rich history and folklore that surround the piano. And along the way, set between the ragtime rhythms and boogie-woogie beats, there are encounters with--and insights from--masters of the keyboard, from Glenn Gould and Leon Fleisher ("I was a bit embarrassed," he writes; "telling Leon Fleisher about my ambitions for piano lessons is like telling Julia Child about plans to make toast in the morning") to Dr. John and Tori Amos.

As a storyteller, Noah Adams has perfect pitch. In the foreground here, like a familiar melody, are the challenges of learning a complex new skill as an adult, when enthusiasm meets the necessary repetition of tedious scales at the end of a twelve-hour workday. Linger in the background, like a subtle bass line, are the quiet concerns of how we spend our time and how our priorities shift as we proceed through life. For Piano Lessons is really an adventure story filled with obstacles to overcome and grand leaps forward, eccentric geniuses and quiet moments of pre-dawn practice, as Noah Adams travels across country and keyboard, pursuing his dream and keeping the rhythm.

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