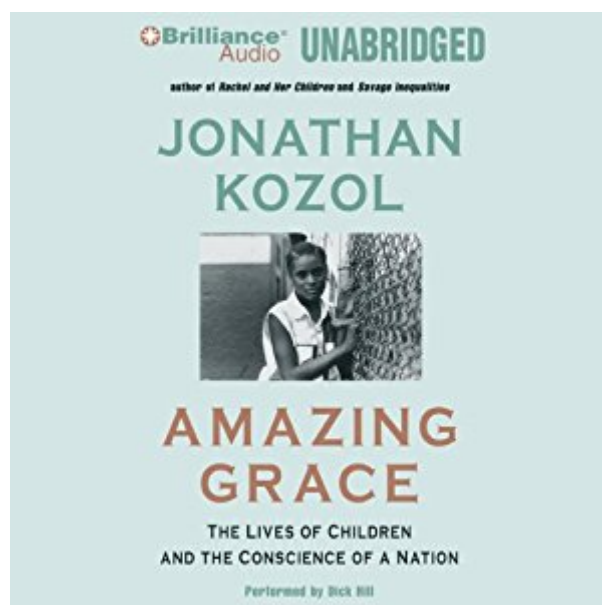


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Amazing Grace



Synopsis

"Amazing Grace" is a book about about the hearts of children who grow up in the South Bronx - the poorest congressional district of our nation. The children we meet through the deepening friendships that evolve between Jonathan Kozol and their families defy the stereotypes of urban youth too frequently presented on TV and in newspapers. Tender, generous, and often religiously devout, they speak with painful clarity about the poverty and racial isolation that have wounded but not hardened them. "It's not like being in a jail," says 15-year-old Isabel. "It's more like being hidden. It's as if you have been put in a garage where, if they don't have room for something but aren't sure if they should throw it out, they put it there where they don't need to think of it again." Without rhetoric, but drawing extensively upon the words of children, parents, and priests, this book does not romanticize or soften the effects of violence and sickness. "Amazing Grace" makes clear that the postmodern ghetto of America is not a social accident but is created and sustained by greed, neglect, racism, and expedience. It asks questions like - what is the value of a child's life? what do we plan to do with those whom we have decided are superfluous? how tough do we dare to be?

--This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 9 hours 18 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Brilliance Audio

Audible.com Release Date: February 19, 2010

Language: English

ASIN: B003954T3C

Best Sellers Rank: #80 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Nonfiction > Education #98

in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Poverty #152 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Sociology > Urban

Customer Reviews

This is a story about a very different kind of community, in one of the poorest neighborhoods in the country. The question most readers are left with in their hearts is to ask, can this community be changed? And if so, what would it take to make that happen? A useful parameter in this text is that it is written, presumably, from the voices of the children who are in this unknown-to-us reality of dire

impoverishment. A valid criticism of the book is that there is not even an indirect suggestion for "what's next" in terms of response to poverty, or change. I assign this book as part of my Community Psychology course, and most with whom I'm discussed this book, when asked what was most memorable, reference the teddy bears in the trees. There is a park where single mothers buy drugs and clean needle exchanges take place, and there is a set-apart place in the park for the children of the women, in order to keep them distant from the transactions. Community members have hung teddy bears on the branches of the trees there, and it is depicted as a fun place for the kids to play. It makes me think of the daycare in the upscale grocery store, where parents leave the kids while they go buy what they need... At this point late 2009 the content is over 15 years old (Published in 1996, obviously written before published). Demographics have changed and we know of other U.S. communities akin to this one. Still, it's an important book to read to remind us of a sombering relationship of social science constructs: sense of community does not always empower.

I was given this book when I started to work as an inner city physician . I was wanting to understand more about what brings one to a place in their life where they had lost a sense of who they were. I also wanted to know more about what helps people survive. Jonothan Kozal's books are so beautifully written, gentle and extremely moving . They have taught me a lot about the questions that I have and the people I serve. I believe they should be included in every school curriculum.

It is hard to believe these living conditions are still taking place in our country. It is a sad commentary.

Excellent book! My daughter got it for a college course but I also read it and loved it. Really enlightening and awakening!

A good book. Hard to read, but an accurate account of how trick and trap takes down entire cities. Whether by design or default, lots of folks moved to major cities in search of a better life, had same for perhaps a generation, and then were trapped when the jobs left.

I love this book and have read it many times. I brings to life a way of life that many people will never encounter or understand. It shows that most poor people do not chose to live in poverty and in fact haven't always lived this way. No matter how hard you try sometimes bad things just seem to happen. Even in her dire situation people in this book still find a bit of good in other and while there

lives seem unimaginable, they are still helping others. Always leaves me wanting to do more! Thank you for all your books Mr. Kozel!

This was a required text for my Intro to Sociology course. I'd have to say it was the best required text I had that semester. Even though it was published in the 90's, it is still very relevant to our society today. I loved the personal stories of the characters and the inside perspective of living in extreme poverty.

and I did. I'm not sure I made it to the very last page as it is sooooo depressing, so sad, so TRUE. I recommend it highly to anyone who thinks this is "post-racial America" and to all who care. The streets are dangerous now. Not just in huge cities, either. These kids and their parents are as brave, as strong, and as smart as they can possibly be. And yet, there just is no "out".

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