



High Dive

Tammar Stein

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Arden has a plane ticket to Sardinia to say goodbye to her family's beloved vacation home after her father's sudden death and her mother's deployment to Iraq as an army nurse. Lonely for her father and petrified for her mother's safety, Arden dreads her trip to the house in Sardinia—the only place that has truly felt like home to her. So when she meets a group of fun, carefree, and careless friends on their summer break, she decides to put off her trip and join them to sample the sights and culinary delights of Europe. Soon they are climbing the Eiffel Tower, taking in the French countryside on a train chugging toward the Alps, and gazing at Michelangelo's David in Florence, all the while eating gelato and sipping cappuccino. Arden tries to forget about the danger her mom faces every day, to pretend she's just like the rest of the girls, flirting with cute European guys and worried only about where to party next.

But the house in Sardinia beckons and she has to make a choice. Is Arden ready to jump off the high dive?

High Dive Details

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Author : Tammar Stein

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From Reader Review High Dive for online ebook

Ali says

In this book, the main character, Arden is on a flight to Sardinia. On her plane, she meets three girls who drastically change her mind. They invite her to stay in Paris with them. Now that she was done with school, she figured it wouldn't hurt, so she accepted their offer. For weeks, she struggled with getting hotel rooms, money, and food. One day, the most aggressive girl, Lola, took things too far. After the situation, Arden thought it would be best to go to Sardinia. The trip had been fun, but she was ready to go home. But when she arrived, she was pleasantly surprised...

One connection that I can make is text-to-self. If I were put in the same situation as her, I would have reacted the same way. When Lola upset her, she felt that she didn't belong. Her instinct was to leave, even if the others didn't want her to. I'm the same way. When one thing happens, I can be very dramatic and take things too far. I think Arden was right to leave, but she should have given her another chance. I would realize my mistake as soon as I got on the plane.

I gave this book three stars. I gave it this ranking because it kept me interested throughout the entire book. However, just barely. I kept expecting something exciting to happen, but nothing would. I would only recommend this book if you wanted an easy, fun read. Not horrible, but not the best book I've ever read.

Becky says

Stein, Tammar. 2008. High Dive.

"The phone rang at 6 a.m. Even though I expected it, my heart leapt at the shrill sound. I lunged for the receiver, picking it up before the ring ended, and looked over at my roommate. She'd burrowed deeper undercover. I could see only a skein of hair on the pillow. Good.

I glanced at the clock to begin the countdown. My mom and I had exactly fifteen minutes for the phone call. Technically, everyone was allowed two fifteen-minute DSN, the military phone system, calls a week, but we rarely managed two. Usually it was one call, which you might think meant we could talk for thirty minutes, but the army doesn't work that way."

Arden's mom is stationed in Iraq. Arden's dad died several years ago in a car accident in Germany. So when our novel opens our heroine, Arden, finds herself a bit confused, a bit lost, a bit angry, a bit sad, and a lot worried. Her mother has decided to sell the family's vacation home in Sardinia (yes, Italy), and Arden has volunteered to help her mom out by closing the place up. She's in college. And as an army brat she's used to taking care of herself, used to change, used to making the best of whatever comes her way. So a trip to Europe on her own shouldn't really be a problem, right?

Arden is about to get a dose (or two or three) of spontaneity. On her plane trip, she meets three college students, three young women from UT who will be vacationing in Paris. They clicked so well on the ride over, they ask Arden to join them. Though she was scheduled to just lay over in Paris and then catch another plane to her destination in Germany, Arden decides to be un-Arden, to try something a bit scary, a bit new.

With this decision, most of Arden's plans go out the window. And this uncomfortableness begins to open up

her heart and mind and soul to the possibilities of life--good, bad, ugly. She begins to think about her dad's death, to think about her mom, to be honest with herself and her mom about her worries. War is dangerous, yes. Everyone knows that. And as a nurse, Arden's mom could very well be hurt. But war also changes a person, scars a person. Arden is afraid her mom might be radically different when her tour in Iraq is over later in the year. No doubt about it, Arden's burdens are genuinely heavy.

During these few weeks in Europe--Paris, Florence, Sardinia--Arden learns a bit about life and a lot about herself. It's her chance to become a better, more honest, more vulnerable, healthier Arden.

Rich in detail and featuring well-crafted characters, High Dive is a great book highlighting the nuances of life.

Honeypie says

Another good quality find at Php 100! :) -16Oct2013

High Dive is the story of Arden. Her father died a few years back, and her mom's a military nurse deployed at Iraq; she has to go back to Sardinia, their family's permanent / vacation home, the only home she's known, to handle its selling. En route to Sardinia, she meets girls on their way to a vacation in Europe, and she's persuaded to come with them. Given that her schedule is not really tight in terms of going back to Sardinia to sell the house, she takes them up on their invite. And from there begins her "adventure" of self-discovery, acceptance, and courage to face her fears and to be true to herself.

So why High Dive? I HAVE NO IDEA. It's not like she's the type of girl who evoked a fearless attitude, someone who takes what's thrust into her. But.... I STILL HAVE NO IDEA. Hahahaha!

It was a worthwhile novel, though. Given with a mom who works at Iraq, you are shown a glimpse of someone who has an immediate family affected by the war. And once again, it'll make you feel more... blessed.

There were also bits of stories during Arden's trip to Europe with the girls she met. And once again, it made me want to visit badly. Actually, Paris was not "advertised" well. I wonder what Parisians would think of that. Haha! I think I ought to find a book that *worships* Paris; give it a chance to redeem itself. :))

This is definitely worth the buy. Php 100 for a hardbound. Add to that, the quality of the book is still good. Maybe I should wait for books to go on sale on Fully Booked. Hmm...

What was a crappy hotel room or selling a vacation home compared to life in the barracks, working twelve-hour shifts? She had to deal with dying Iraqi babies and soldiers with missing limbs and burned-off faces. I had to deal with the fact that my vacation wasn't as fabulous as I'd hoped.

I wondered why faith and killing so often went together. I wondered what gave people that confidence.

I knew I could tell you and you'd feel bad. But how much can I feel sorry for myself when the person I'm complaining to has survived so much worse? It's a sport. It's a game. I lost. Time to get over it.

Cynthia says

There's numerous things to unpack from this book, but my feelings towards it was so genuine. The ending just made me cry, my heart feeling so swelled. I really liked this book a lot - the writing, the story, just everything about it. Everything about Arden was just so relatable (in terms of her personality, way of thinking).

Cindy Mitchell *Kiss the Book* says

Stein, Tammar High Dive, Pg. 198: Alfred A. Knopf (Random House). Language-PG, Sexual Content-PG, Violence-G.

Arden is headed to Italy. She and her mom have decided to sell the old summer house. Since her mom has been deployed to Iraq she has to close up the house. On the way to Italy, Arden meets some new friends and they persuade her to stay in Paris with them for a few days and a simple trip becomes a great adventure.

This is a good book but it just keeps on going. The title doesn't match the book, but it's still an okay book.

MS, HS - OPTIONAL. Student Reviewer-MP
<http://kissthebook.blogspot.com/2008/...>

Hannah says

This is an interesting, good book about a girl who has been moving around the world her whole life. Its funny, exciting, sweet, and even sad at some parts...a really good book.

Lauren says

High Dive by Tammar Stein is a book about this girl who goes to Paris on a surprise trip. She just got out of collage and her father died not so long ago, and her mom is always traveling because she is a doctor in the army. So she is used to traveling a lot. so when her mom asks her to go to Germany to sell their old home she goes on a plane ready to go to Germany. Although along the way she runs in to these collage girls who are going to Paris and offer for her to come with them. She soon finds herself going to Paris and dropping a lot of her responsibilities and going off to Paris and staying at this hostile with these girls. through out this whole book she goes through flash backs; back to when she was little and back to when her dad was alive.

I can relate this book to another book called Girl Hearts, in this book her mom actually dies and she shows herself going through school with flash backs through out the book. In High Dive she talks about how when she was little and how she used to be when her dad was still alive and she used to be and how things used to be. and in girl hearts the book actually starts out in a flash back, getting used to flash back and thought the

book it goes like this.

i gave this book 4 stars because i thought it was very interesting to see what it is like to travel throughout the world. also having a mom who was in the army really how it affects the family in this book. in this book although i think that it was a little confusing with the flash backs it could get a little confusing with the setting.

Sara says

I never know how a randomly selected book will be, but I enjoyed this one quite a bit. It might even be worthy of 4.5 stars. Arden, a college student whose dad has and mom is now deployed with the Army, is heading to Italy to help sell her family's vacation home when she meets three other college students on the plane, planning to travel around Europe, and Arden takes them up on their invitation to join them. Soon, she's exploring all sorts of tourist spots and not-so-touristy spots around the continent, trying to fit in with the other girls, who are quickly becoming her friends, and not worry so much about if her mom is in danger.

I really liked the writing and story in this novel. It flowed really well, and the descriptions of places were so well done that I almost felt like I was there (or at least I *wanted* to be there). The plot was on the thin side, which was okay because of how well it was done, although I did feel like Arden's new friends weren't as fully drawn as they could have / should have been; it wasn't until I was over halfway through the book that I really felt like I could distinguish one personality from another, and there's no reason it had to be like that. I did enjoy the friendships, though, and thought the author did a great job portraying the character's emotions and bringing to life other individuals and scenes through memories and email correspondence. My only complaint (other than about the 3 girls) is that I wish the ending would have gone on a little longer; though there was an epilogue, I wanted to see what happened in between the book's ending and the epilogue's beginning. Oh well. I'd recommend this book to others easily!

Kelly says

Arden is a character with wit, intelligence, and adventure-driven. Stein writes a fast-paced but descriptive story of a girl who goes out of her way to take on an adventure in Europe with three strangers. The book is well-written and perfectly paced, and Stein does not dwell on details but inserts enough to make the story colorful and vivid. The entire plot hinges on one character choosing adventure, and from there, the story unfolds to develop her character and her story past to present. The characters with whom Arden interact are also well developed and become individuals.

One thing that struck me as unnecessary throughout, though, was Madison's pregnancy. I almost felt like Stein needed to add another hook to the story and it was something not resolved in the end. The story was so well written without this subplot and since the subplot never develops, it should have been left out all together. The couple of pages this subplot adds would have been better used on other aspects of the story or even in description. The military subplot with the contemporary elements made it a relevant story that does not get political the way a lot of similar story lines do. Well done, and definitely for anyone with an interest in adventure, growing up, alternative family life, or, well, Europe!

Valerie says

There are not many books that I've read about military brats so this was different. It was nice to see her knowledge of everything in Europe but she wasn't snobish about it.

In the beginning I just felt so bad for Arden. I'd hate to be stuck in Paris and not have any fun. However things do get better as things progress. The three girls she meets on the plane and decides to join have very distinct personalities. Each one brings something to the story.

The military life has seemed to take a great toll on Arden. It affects her more than most military brats I've seen. That isn't to say that some people are not affected at all, just not as much MOST of the time. I can understand though because her mother is the only person she has left. If she were to lose her then she would be all alone and then what would happen to her.

Some parts of Arden's observations of military life I thought were right on the money. Others I thought were a bit exaggerated but not by much. It's a good read.

Tyler says

I can't even really pinpoint exactly why I liked this book so much but I really really did. With how short the book was I was afraid I might feel unfulfilled at the end but I totally didn't at all. This was a cute read that wasn't superficial and had some real stuff going on. I'm pleasantly surprised at how much I enjoyed this book... travel stories for the win :)

Tammar Stein says

When I started High Dive, we were at weird time, nationally speaking. The Iraq War was going strong and military families experienced huge personal sacrifices. But while the media did a superb job getting the story out about the soldiers' experiences at war and the casualty rate was common knowledge, the pain and suffering of the spouses and children left behind was completely unacknowledged. I had to change that.

I was that child whose father left to go to war. I was that spouse left behind on a six month deployment (and I was lucky it was only 6 months.) I saw too many of my friends raising toddlers on their own, constantly worried, half of their mind on news from the combat zone.

High Dive is about Arden, a military brat left to her own devices in Europe. It's about the joys and hardships of travel, chance encounters, the differences good friends can make in your life.

I hope you enjoy it!

Cara says

I'm kind of biased because I could really relate to Arden. Not so much her personality but her situation. I've

had a parent deploy to Iraq and I understood a lot of what she had to go through, but I didn't take it the same way she did. Arden is already away at college when her mom is deployed and she has already lost her father, so she's dealing with a lot of feelings that seem to be suffocating her (though she doesn't know it). With all that moving around military brats do it's hard to keep many friends, so she feels more alone than most people would. One thing is for sure that Stein got right was the feel for the military community. It was so comical and déjà vu like to see her mention things like the cheesy AFN commercials, Fort Riley, Heidelberg, the DEFAC, and so many other references I can't even recall.

The beginning of the book seemed too rush. Like she was hurrying things along to get to the middle of the story. This bothered me to no end. I kind of felt like it was being unfair to the character in a way. Like we really couldn't see who she was because things were moving along too fast. Another thing that bothered me was how she mentioned how nobody really understood, which is true but you don't have to be mean about it. I get it because if I didn't have a parent in the military I can't say for certain I would care that much about the war. It's sad but it's the truth. I did think the author handled the whole political aspect of the war well. She didn't take sides but rather concentrated on the people who are affected by the war.

In some parts of the trip I could really feel for her. Some people assume traveling is so much fun but the truth is it can really suck sometimes. Once we get into the meat of the story that's where things start getting good. Even though we don't get that much romantic action in this book there is of course the love interest. I really enjoyed the way they had a little history before they met up again. That does happen from time to time when you move around, so that was nice touch. Don't worry things work out for the both of them. I don't want to give anything away, but suffice to say that Arden learns that she needs to open up and like the title of the book refers not to be afraid to get off the high dive.

It feels like 4 stars. It's the first book I've seen out there that touches this subject so it should get props for that:)

Ash says

This is hard for me to review because I liked the book, but I think it was mostly because I could relate to Arden's situation. At times it was sad and in Arden's voice you can hear the weight of the world that she feels like she's carrying. Then you see all the great things she does and sees while she's traveling. The book was pretty accurate when describing how travel is in Europe (as in it kinda sucks). It was funny to read the military jargon that I only hear when I'm on post or talking to my family. Along with the mention of those stupidly cheesy AFN commercials, and it's totally true that you can guess where someone is from just by the way they look! The Texans that Arden makes friends with during her trip change from interesting, to shallow, to complex. At times they seemed vapid (actually, mostly just Lola), but then you get more insight. Arden talks a lot about how she worries about her mom who is in Iraq, but it felt like she overdid it at times. I can understand that though. Sometimes Arden seemed too judgmental of people. Mostly about them not understanding her situation. I liked how the author wrote about Iraq without actually taking sides. It's great to see Arden traveling and how she starts to see things differently. How she changes for the better. At first she's very cautious, both with trusting people and taking chances. I was pleased with how it all played out, even if I guessed at it. Again, I think I liked the book mostly because I could relate to Arden. I'm not sure how this book would look to other people but I think that it's definitely worth giving a chance.

Kristin Sumrall says

Few books have ever evoked the sense of nostalgia that this book gave me. Reading of Arden's travels through Paris and then Italy made me think back fondly to the semester I spent abroad in Europe. To be honest, I was not expecting much from this book. However, this book surprised me immensely. While a quick, light read, *High Dive* is truly a coming of age story that explores adulthood and independence. I would definitely recommend this book.

WHAT I LIKED: Arden was a character that made it very easy to empathize with. Her struggles with her family life and her irritation at her European travel not going as planned was very understandable. I feel that she had grown a lot by the end of the book, even though the whole book only takes place within a few weeks. The writing style of this book was very easy to read, and Arden's narrative kept me interested from start to finish.

WHAT I DISLIKED: This was an enjoyable read but it is not a book that I will think about a year from now. It lacked the depth and emotion to make the book truly stick in my mind. Did I enjoy it? Certainly. Would I read it a second time? Probably not.

FAVORITE QUOTES:

"It's not always pleasant to do necessary things. But part of being adult, of being independent, means that you see what needs to be done and you do it. No muss, no fuss."
