



Smartass

Memoir of a Mouthy Girl

by Emily Sayre Smith



Non-Fiction - Memoir

280 Pages

Reviewed on 08/01/2025

Book Review

Reviewed by Lucinda E Clarke for Readers' Favorite

Emily Sayre Smith's *Smartass: A Memoir of a Mouthy Girl* is not so aptly named, because she was an obedient and thoughtful child. Born to the Reverend and Mrs. Parke, unfairly, she became the scapegoat child. When her father failed to keep his stipend in the church, they moved from one city to another. Her mother, Virginia, holder of a degree in Bacteriology, is a frustrated non-working housewife struggling to provide for Emily and her sister Charlotte on a pittance. The parents fight most of the time, often violently, while the mother spends time in a mental home, and the father is hospitalized for his back pains. Emily is the one who holds it all together. She is an overachiever, wise beyond her years, but feels helpless to change their situation. She is only a child. Her one desire is freedom and independence, and to excel at her one love, ballet. But can she ever achieve that?

I knew within the first two pages that I was going to love *Smartass: A Memoir of a Mouthy Girl* by Emily Sayre Smith. The author has a delightful voice in her writing. You are there with her in the moment. I related to her feelings and reactions. Living with dysfunctional parents, she reasons mentally as an adult, and her internal reasonings ring true. The words flow smoothly from beginning to end, yet despite her difficulties, there is an underlying sense of humor in many places. Her life story, up to the age of twenty-three, is both varied and interesting, and she shares the honesty of her anguish, hopes, and fears freely with the reader. At no point does the story stall. As the family moves from city to city, and she struggles to make new friends, her love of ballet is the glue that holds her life together. She honestly describes her low self-esteem and her self-doubts, along with her desire to escape her toxic family. A thought-provoking book that draws back the curtain on families who fail to succeed and parents who cannot cope with life. It's a reminder that many suffer in similar situations. I loved this easy-to-read, attention-grabbing book, and I highly recommend it.