



Readers' Favorite[®]

Book Reviews and Award Contest

Book Review Mini-Critique

Below you will find ratings (scale of 1-5) with general descriptions for the major parts of your book followed by your Readers' Favorite review. Although this is just a Mini-Critique, we hope it will give you an insight into how readers may view the different components of your book.

These are the opinions of your reviewer, and although they are not a literary professional, they are an avid reader of books just like yours.

Title: A Sterling Life
Subtitle: John Danz, Seattle Theatre Pioneer and a Grandson's Journey of Discovery
Author: Mark Hester
Genre: Non-Fiction - Biography



Appearance: The appearance of a book can make a significant impact on the experience of a reader, whose enjoyment is often enhanced by an enticing cover, an intriguing table of contents, interesting chapter headings, and when possible, eye-catching illustrations.

5

Plot: The characters of a book should be well defined with strengths and flaws, and while they do not have to be likable, the reader does have to be able to form a connection with them. The tone should be consistent, the theme should be clear, and the plot should be original or told from a unique perspective. For informative books -- those without plot and characters--this rating refers primarily to your concept and how well you presented it.

5

Development: Development refers to how effectively you told your story or discussed your topic. The dialogue should be realistic, the descriptions should be vivid, and the material should be concise and coherent. Organization is also a key factor, especially for informative books -- those without plot and characters. The order in which you tell your story or explain your topic and how smoothly it flows can have a huge impact on the reader's understanding and enjoyment of the material.

5

Formatting: Formatting is the single most overlooked area by authors. The way in which you describe scenes, display dialogue, and shift point of view can make or break your story. In addition, excessive grammatical errors and typos can give your book an amateurish feel and even put off readers completely.

4

Marketability: Marketability refers to how effectively you wrote your book for your target audience. Authors may include content that is above or below the understanding of their target reader, or include concepts, opinions or language that can accidentally confuse or alienate some readers. Although by its nature this rating is very subjective, a very low rating here and poor reviews may indicate an issue with your book in this area.

5

Overall Opinion: The overall starred rating takes into account all these elements and describes the overall reading experience of your reviewer. This is the official Readers' Favorite review rating for your book.

5

Review:

Reviewed by Nino Lobiladze for Readers' Favorite

A Sterling Life by Mark Hester is the biography of John Danz, a keen American entrepreneur born in Czarist Russia in 1877. John's birth name was Israel Danowsky. His Jewish parents, Leib and Jenni Danowsky, with their two sons, Israel and Chaim, left Russia, escaping the pogroms and oppression. They arrived in the United States in 1882 from Hamburg, Germany, through the Port of Swansea, Wales. The family members changed their names and took the surname Danz. They moved to Oregon after tending a farm in Kansas for a while. Young John worked as a newsboy and a messenger. He even helped on the farms and ranches. After working as a clerk and a porter at haberdasheries, John established his own business in Seattle at the beginning of the twentieth century. Step by step, John rose to prominence. A Nickelodeon theater arranged at one of his stores brought unexpected changes to his business empire. Mark Hester took a DNA test and learned that he had Jewish ancestors. He started researching to find the mysterious grandfather he knew nothing about.

A Sterling Life offers us a historically significant life account of an enterprising person who was always ready for new challenges. Mark Hester meticulously researched the facts of John Danz's life. The author also gives us an accurate historical setting, starting with John's childhood in Czarist Russia. I learned what the Pale of Settlement meant regarding the oppressed Jewish population of the Russian Empire, among other interesting and often shocking historical facts. Mark explains why John's family chose Seattle to settle in the US and how this city was connected to the gold mining in Canada and Alaska. I was absorbed while reading about John's fight against the unions and their strikes, which took around thirteen years. Mark created a puzzling and sometimes controversial portrait of a man who never feared changes or innovations but could be strict with his children. At the same time, the author shares his personal story of exploring his Jewish heritage. I liked the touching scene on a Parisian street, where Mark met a rabbi. I highly recommend A Sterling Life to fans of historical non-fiction, biographies, and drama.