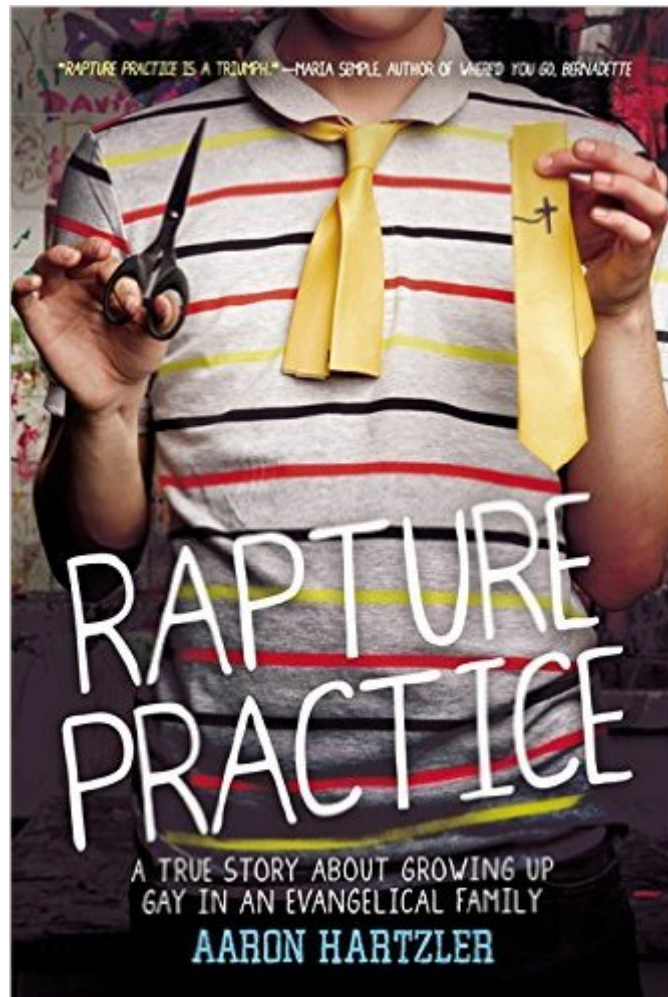


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Rapture Practice: A True Story About Growing Up Gay In An Evangelical Family



Synopsis

A true story about finding salvation in the strangest places. Aaron Hartzler grew up in a home where he was taught that at any moment the Rapture could happen. That Jesus might come down in the twinkling of an eye and scoop Aaron and his family up to heaven. As a kid, Aaron was thrilled by the idea that every moment of every day might be his last one on planet Earth. But as Aaron turns sixteen, he finds himself more attached to his earthly life and curious about all the things his family forsakes for the Lord. He begins to realize he doesn't want the Rapture to happen just yet--not before he sees his first movie, stars in the school play, or has his first kiss. Eventually Aaron makes the plunge from conflicted do-gooder to full-fledged teen rebel. Whether he's sneaking out, making out, or playing hymns with a hangover, Aaron learns a few lessons that can't be found in the Bible. He discovers that the best friends aren't always the ones your mom and dad approve of, and the tricky part about believing is that no one can do it for you. In this funny and heartfelt coming-of-age memoir, debut author Aaron Hartzler recalls his teenage journey to find the person he is without losing the family that loves him. It's a story about losing your faith and finding your place and your own truth--which is always stranger than fiction.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Aaron Hartzler grew up in an extremely conservative Christian family that did not have a tv, go to movies or listen to music. Even contemporary Christian rock because "you can't mix God's words with the Devil's beat." However, as he gets older he begins to question these beliefs. He begins to love rock music because it makes him feel happy and he can't understand how that can be a sin.

Aaron participates in church services, teaches Good News children's group, acts in his Christian private school's elaborately staged dramas all the while questioning the logic of his parents' strongest held beliefs, but ultimately finding his own way to peace and understanding with his family. All this is presented in a humorous (I can't count how many times I laughed out loud.) and sincere way to become one of the best memoir of "finding religion" that I have ever read. I also grew up in a religious Christian family and though my parents, thankfully, weren't so strict, I have often come into contact with people who believe in the ways of Aaron's parents and school administration. I could so identify with Aaron because his reaction to so much of what he saw in his life was my reaction. I often felt I was reading a more articulate version of my experience. The book is extremely well written for someone who doesn't have a background in writing (He's an actor and musician), but he manages to express so much of what I felt as a teenager in an engaging and intelligent way.

I found myself reading with many tears throughout this book, and I ended the last page with tears as well, because of its beauty and honesty. Rapture Practice is a book about family and belonging. I related, because I grew up going to a very strict Baptist school, and I found myself in a place where I struggled with right and wrong so many times. I had to wear culottes for P.E, and I was not allowed to wear pants or shorts, only skirts that were two inches below my knees. I was even driven home to change one morning, because my skirt was too short. I wasn't allowed to walk close to boys or pass notes. If I listened to rock music or played guitar, I was told that I was going to hell. So, while I played my electric guitar in my room at night, I felt a sense of freedom and guilt all in one. My dream was to be a musician, but I stopped short, because of my struggles and beliefs. I struggled daily with the understanding of who God is, and what I was truly supposed to believe and who I was supposed to be. Aaron Hartzler's "Rapture Practice" expresses so clearly how he was feeling, and what he experienced, and his struggles, in such a clear and honest manner, that one cannot help but want to raise him out of his struggles, kind of like the rapture. To this day I feel guilty, because my beliefs are so different from what I was raised with, but I know that my truth is that God is loving and kind and accepting of who I am, no matter what music I listen to, or what clothes I wear, or what friends I chose, or what path I choose in my life. Aaron's book reminded me of the fact that we need to be honest about who we are, but at the same time, we MUST be loving and kind and accepting of who people in our lives who love us, such as our parents.

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